

# Provincial week in Gauteng was a failure

By Dennis Ryder MP - DA Vaal Regional Chairperson

What a joke! Mr Masondo, as Chair, and Mr Dangor as the Provincial whip should be ashamed of themselves for the way this programme was carried out in Gauteng.

The Provincial week was themed as a follow up to local government week *“Ensuring Capable and Financially Sound Local Government”*.

The report reflects: *“A key theme that emerged from the Local Government Week was the inadequacy of support to local government, and the need to focus the 2020 Provincial Government Week on the Section 154 support needed by municipalities”*.

So, let us look at the support that we gave to struggling municipalities and their residents:

- The Tuesday programme was cut short to allow for questions to the President.
- The Wednesday Programme was cut short to allow members to listen to the MTBPS budget speech from Finance Minister Mboweni (a National Assembly meeting which we could have easily caught up on in the evening).
- The Thursday programme was diverted to go and investigate a matter which, while being most serious and dire, falls outside of the responsibility of the NCOP and especially outside of the theme of the week.

So, let's discuss what the ANC were trying to avoid. The three municipalities under scrutiny were Tshwane, Sedibeng, and Emfuleni.

The Tshwane power grab by MEC Maile was overturned by the court and the Democratic Alliance led government has returned to office. Good luck to Randall Williams and his team.

The Sedibeng District Municipality was the subject of a substantial report, released on 2 November, two days after our engagement, and yet the MEC chose to not even mention it. The report proposes that the District be placed under administration, with Councillors who supported certain decisions being made personally liable for the repayment of the financial losses caused by their poor judgement. Amazing that the arrogant MEC chose not to even mention the impending report. And the mayor spoke about everything except what fall in their powers and functions.

And let's look at Emfuleni – the basket case. The report on hand records the comment from the Mayor that, in spite of the paperwork, Emfuleni has had very little support from provincial or national government.

The municipality became the focus of the media on 9 November as service delivery collapsed in large areas as a result of both Eskom and Rand Water shutting down supply one week after we were supposed to do our oversight. MEC Maile said in March that he was finalising a deal with Eskom. Clearly, he failed but didn't bother telling us.

The knock-on effects of Eskom and Rand Waters actions have been extreme. As I stand here there are areas that have been without electricity for 12 days. The suburb of Three Rivers has had no power for almost two weeks due to the total collapse of the municipality. The Phoenix Park is flooded with sewage. Boipatong is again without water.

But you, Mr Chair, felt it more important to do the work of the portfolio committee on transport than to focus on where we should be making a difference.

To show just how disingenuous you are, Mr Dangor went to great lengths to emphasise that only questions and answers were to be handled from Tuesday to Thursday, and that conclusions and deliberations would take place on Friday. Imagine my consternation when I was queried on some of our conclusions while doing a radio interview on a different matter on the Thursday morning. It turns out that Mr Dangor, rather undiplomatically chose to release a media statement quoting some of his conclusions but packaged them as the conclusions of the delegation. When challenged on the issue he could find no response.

This really is the arrogance of the ANC on display. Total disdain for the people who elected you. Total disdain for the job that we are supposed to do. Total disdain for other members of this house. Total disdain for protocol or even common courtesy. Total disdain for our Code of Conduct.

And at the end, it is the people of Emfuleni, Sedibeng and Tshwane who suffer. The people of Gauteng who pay for Maile's court cases and appeals; and are left with no real service delivery at all.

This report is a whitewash. It includes nothing to show how the MEC arrogantly diverted us and did not disclose to the delegation what the real situation is. It includes nothing to show how the mayors of both Emfuleni and Sedibeng contradicted the remarks of the MEC.

It also does not reflect the fact that no amount of administrative interventions can help until such time as Luthuli House intervenes and sorts out the political infighting in the municipality, and in the district.

It may be a small problem in the light of what is going on, but even the process of adopting your report was flawed. How can the report be ATC'd before the delegation has adopted it? Gauteng sits with The Chair, the House Chair and our whip, all ANC representatives are senior members of this house, and yet you can't get a simple process right. Your arrogance is boundless. You should be ashamed.

Political expedience tried to divert attention from the problems in Gauteng. I won't be part of that. Provincial week in Gauteng was a failure. Just like the ANC failed the people of Tshwane, and now Emfuleni and Sedibeng too.