

Transport, driven by the ANC holds no promise of arriving anywhere

By **Chris Hunsinger MP** - DA Shadow Minister of Transport

Tabling this 2021 Budget Vote provides a significant opportunity to evaluate the ANC Government management of Transport and how far delivery has advanced towards the achievement of the National Development Plan goals in 2030. The ANC visualised and promised “sustainability”, “inclusive growth”, “a functioning economy”, “infrastructure” and “support” – to mention a view. 15 Chapters of the NDP expressed Transport’s stake in this commitment and expressed its participation with phrases like: “Extended public transport services, linked high volume corridors, integrated effective services, maximized economies of scale, coordinated planning and management progressions, refined functions and perfected decision-making processes, commuter-friendly experiences – as some examples.”

Instead of reflecting completion stages of the last NDP implementation phases in the 2021/22 DoT priorities, the 8 key areas of focus show little evidence of this. Instead, the department is working on stuffing chairs with little forthcoming from many offices, filled staff-vehicle parking bays with hardly any inspection trips, noiseless workshops with barely any spares on shelves, consultants banging on their doors for payment, claims, suspensions, labor-law litigations and other court cases – instead of serving civic needs.

In reports and presentations, we note 100% of targets achieved, 100% of budget spent. This, only to justify the 100% performance bonus and merit rewards to benefit “the chosen view”, all financed with citizen taxes. Worst of the chosen view; those that enjoy a full salary, with benefits, while being on suspension.

This, while rows of busses, railway tracks and coaches are overgrown by weeds; lives are lost and destroyed because of potholes; 94% of our exports are done by foreign ships; and millions are left with no other choice, other than 1 - or no form of public transport.

A mere 9 years before delivery on the NDP outcomes the DoT’s 8 areas of priority reflect the failure to establish Safety, Economic Growth, and Governance - let alone achievement of this widely supported emancipation plan to reduce poverty and eliminate inequality.

For the first time the word: “Corruption” is mentioned in a Strategic Plan of the Department of Transport. This, because the concepts of ethical conduct, accountability and consequence management never appeared and were deliberately ignored. Going forward one should be alerted to sleaze-manufacturing of “reported incidents of corruption” just to meet this new & very strange target set at 95%.

PRASA’s massive R172 Billion plan to modernize our aging trains and infrastructure is continuing at a snail’s pace, with just one station completed in the last five years out of a planned 135 priority stations. At this rate, it will take more than the planned period to finish the work, by which time our systems will be outdated and will have to be replaced again.

The Department underspent over R300 million in the previous financial year - the biggest component of which was in the Public Transport program as if there are no needs to any of

the core mandates, namely - to protect: commuters and assets. Why didn't you simply pay someone to fill some potholes?

No wonder that after 6 consecutive financial years under review, the Department had been unable to achieve all its annual performance targets with internal control deficiencies and compliance to legislation being the main debilities.

Despite continuously presenting action plans in response to annual AG audit outcomes, receiving a clean audit has been nothing but a mirage. This implies that the Department has not been implementing the recommendations of the AG's and has ignored the proposals by the Portfolio Committee on Transport. Clean Audits lead to improved operations, I have yet to see the opposite.

Under ANC control the NDP failed with examples like eTolls; - where, the G-FIP project currently needs R1 Billion a year to service the debt repayment which has escalated from R22 Billion and to R40 Billion in 08 years while not one South African company, but a foreign-owned-company is benefitting as 100% shareholder month by month.

5 years were wasted on pushing the flawed & wicked RABS scheme until we defeated it. On average, the Road Accident Fund currently operates at a rate of R9 billion in-arrears per month with liabilities increasingly exceeding assets – but to this day, sub-contractors are used to process claims. Nearly every case is opposed – only to settle outside court on the day of judgment.

Driven by the ANC, transport holds no promise of arriving anywhere. Instead, budget and control should be placed in the hands of the DA to bring real change and progress.

I thank you.