

ANC's failing BRT and IPTN programmes in Mangaung and Rustenburg a middle finger to South African taxpayers

by **Sello Seithloho MP** – DA Additional Shadow Deputy Minister of Transport

Honourable Chairperson

On the 9th of July 2019 I stood before this house to debate on the budget of the Department of Transport. I highlighted the failure of the ANC-led government in the City of Rustenburg in getting the Integrated Public Transport Network (IPTN) Rustenburg Rapid Transport bus service underway after consecutive postponements and collapse of bus stations.

In a response to questions asked to the department in 2019 on whether the minister intends to conduct an oversight visit to the collapsed commuter station of the Rustenburg Rapid Transport (RRT) system and whether he intends to assess the progress made by the Rustenburg Local Municipality on the completion of the RRT project, the minister or his department responded by saying, and I quote:

“The Department is working closely with the Rustenburg Local Municipality (RLM) to ensure that the municipality is ready to implement operations on the Tlhabane corridor (where the unfinished defective station is located) as soon as possible. It is expected that the initial operations will start no later than the end of January 2020. I will conduct a full inspection once the system is operating.”

Fast forward to 2021: no busses running. There are incomplete bus stations, and the traffic is still a mess in Rustenburg. In an interview with 702, Mayor Mpho Khunou and the acting director for roads and transport in Rustenburg, had the audacity to blame the lockdown for their failure to have busses running and stations completed. This is R3.4 billion later and almost 12 years in the making.

In October 2021, the Executive Mayor will leave, and the new mayor will just shrug his or her shoulders.

An article published by News24 on 9 March 2021, alleged that a company with links to the controversial ANC benefactor Edwin Sodi was leading the construction of the Rustenburg Rapid Transport project whose delayed completion has been attributed by some to alleged self-enrichment by senior politicians and municipal officials in the North West.

Once again the ANC government shows its disdain to South African taxpayers.

But the rot does not end honourable Chairperson.

Just take a four-hour drive to the Free State, Bloemfontein where the City of Mangaung is no better than the City of Rustenburg. They have indeed Aced the art of looting, financial mismanagement, and failed cadre deployment – with 10 busses each purchased at a staggering amount of R5.5 million with absolutely no justification or plausible explanation.

In an oversight undertaken by the Department in November 2020, officials in the city scrambled around try to offer some sort of explanation as to why these busses were purchased for such an exorbitant amount each.

To make matters worse, these busses have been parked for over a year without being used while they continue to depreciate.

Unrealistic targets were presented to the portfolio committee relating to the completion of routes within the Metro, and yet, with the scenes of violent protests and destruction of property currently taking place in the capital Bloemfontein, we can already confirm that those targets will not be reached.