

Manifesto shows how the DA gets things done

By Gwen Ngwenya – DA Head of Policy

Our country is undergoing a process of accelerating decay. It would be understated to say South Africa is at a crossroads because we are long past that. We stood at a crossroads perhaps ten or more years ago. Today we are inarguably a failing state and a long way down a road which leads to further ruin.

The truth is as a young South African, without significant change, I do not see a thriving country in my lifetime. But every election is an opportunity to reset the course for our future. Most of the areas which affect our day to day lives, the things we experience and notice first when things begin to go wrong, are administered at the local government level.

Local government is ground zero for turning our country around – if we want to see a more prosperous South Africa it must begin with the sphere of government closest to every citizen. When we went province to province seeking input into the manifesto that message was clear – local government is the gateway to national change. It begins here.

What fills me with hope about the DA's offer is that the Democratic Alliance is not only an opposition party, it is also a governing party. Unlike other opposition parties we know what it is like to govern – and to govern at a city level where the stakes couldn't be higher. And where we are not in government we are a government in waiting. That is not a passive exercise – we are in waiting as a hunter lies in waiting. We are preparing, constantly learning, and adjusting. That is what this manifesto shows – that we are ready. A ready government in waiting. Not one that still has to come to terms with what it is like to actually govern.

Sometimes when people go to Cape Town they say it feels like another country. That is not surprising. The DA has governed municipalities in the Western Cape longer than anywhere else and most with a majority. Meaning that we have had an opportunity to get things done without having to compromise on clean governance, on getting the basics right, and on providing support to the poorest households.

There is nothing special about Cape Town that cannot be repeated in every other city. It's as much a South African city like any other. But one that has known good governance and service delivery. We will do our best to make coalitions work where they are viable, but you owe it to yourselves and to your family to experience at least once in your lifetime what only a DA majority can deliver.

What I can say without hesitation is that where we govern, South Africans live a better life than they would if they lived in a non-DA run municipality. We are the only party that can say that and back it up; either because others have simply never governed or if they have, they cannot match our track record. Across the length and breadth of the country – from municipalities in Gauteng to the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape – we are already putting this into practice.

Any party can promise you clean governance, to deliver excellent performance in service delivery, to improve the economic environment in order to drive business growth and job creation, and any party can promise to support the poor. But the DA is already doing it. And we are the best at it. That is what we show in this manifesto. That we are doing what others aspire to.

GGA's performance ranking of South African municipalities has data on 15 indicators across three themes: administration, economic development and service delivery. It shows that the top performing municipality is led by the DA and so are 13 of the top 20. Gauteng has one municipality in the top 20, Midvaal, which unsurprisingly is DA-led.

On the prospects for your business and jobs where we govern there too we are proud that the City of Cape Town came out as the top performer in South Africa in the *Doing Business Survey* conducted by the World Bank. It is no mistake then that at 29.1%, the Western Cape continues to have the lowest expanded unemployment rate in South Africa, 17.3 percentage points lower than the average for the other eight provinces.

Rich, middle class, working class, or poor the DA works for everyone. The latest data from Stats SA's non-financial census of municipalities shows that across all areas of basic service delivery – water, electricity, sewerage and sanitation, as well as waste management – the municipalities across the Western Cape support indigent households at a greater rate than any other province. If you have found yourself on hard times, and your household is classified as indigent, you are more likely to receive free support for basic services in a DA run municipality than anywhere else in the country.

I am proud to commend this manifesto both as an aspirational document and as a testimony to how the DA gets things done for us all.