Democratic Alliance Speech by

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DA Shadow MEC for Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation

Gauteng SACR’s budget lacks innovation and won’t benefit Gauteng residents

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Thank you, Madam Speaker

Gauteng Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation (SACR) has for several years neglected to innovate and use its allocated budget to address the real challenges faced by the Gauteng communities in sports, arts, and culture.

The department has been allocated a 2.9% increase from R1 066 393 000.00 in the previous financial year to R1 097 407 000.00 which will yet again be spent wastefully on projects and facilities that are not properly and regularly maintained and are not operational.

The department has repeatedly failed to fulfil its role in accelerating development as there is no attempt to address the high vacancy rate and there were no set targets for the financial year under review. How will a department that does not set targets be able to measure its success rate?

It is a disgrace that projects such as the Boipatong Monument - completed seven years ago - are still not fully operational. The Kagiso Memorial and the Women’s Living Heritage Monument are also not fully operational. The department will inject R18.6 million in 2022/23 and R99.7 million over the MTEF while these monuments are not functioning.

SACR struggles to move forward because of poor planning.  HM Pitje Stadium in Tshwane is a major example that highlights the department’s lack of planning as it was prepared to spend an exorbitant R84 million to demolish a structure that is on the brink of collapsing.

The SACR MEC, Mbali Hlophe does not care nor prioritise athletes and artists who have been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic as she is more focused on wasting money on a failed project instead of building combi courts that will help with the nurturing of local talent from the grassroots level.

There is so much money going down the drain in this department with nothing tangible to show for it. It is time for the SARC to utilise money on programmes that are adding value to the grassroots development of sports and not waste millions on one day events that don’t add any value.

Yes, it is great that more libraries are intended to be built, however, is it disappointing when we know that those very same expensive, beautiful structures won’t see a day of being fully operational? Why does the department not maintain and upgrade the many libraries we have that are operational? We should invest in maintaining structures that have already been established.

MEC Hlope has a responsibility to ensure that her department’s project management unit is capacitated to ensure that all projects are completed within the stipulated timeframes and within the allocated budget.  The department must prioritise using the money for the benefit of all Gauteng residents, by cutting down spending on celebratory events by utilising government institutions as venues and cutting down on refreshments and transport costs.

Madam Speaker,

The MEC and her department lack a sense of direction and need to go back to the drawing board to fully assess how this department will achieve its targets successfully.

We need innovation, sustainability and a clear plan with workable measures that will assist in achieving some of the department's APPs which do not have sufficient details on how they will be achieved like the high vacancy rate.

Madam Speaker, this budget is a repetition of previous budgets, it lacks structure and a plan for innovation within this department and therefore the DA will not support a budget aimed at wasting taxpayers’ money.

Thank you,

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