Democratic Alliance speech by

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DA Gauteng Spokesperson for Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation (SACR)

MEC Hlophe’s budget does not inspire hope in artists and athletes

24 May 2022

Release: immediate

Madam Speaker,

This department’s failure to meet even a single performance goal is well documented and does not bode well for the 2022/2023 financial year budget period.

Perhaps, the department should be renamed the Department of Monuments of Corruption and Failures.

Our community faces these monuments every day, such as the demolished HM Pitje Stadium, which this department is trying to sweep under the carpet and the decaying Odi Stadium, which this department quickly gave away to avoid its maintenance mandate.

This department budget is nothing but more of the same. The operational budget, specifically on maintenance, has been cut, but the already bloated wage bill has increased by 8,9%, and this with a severe and disabling vacancy rate? Expenditure for NGOs and municipalities has been decreased by 7,8% and 0,1% respectively.

How can this department afford to continue with its work and deliver on its mandate to our people if the highly paid officials cannot even achieve one single point in the previous Annual Performance Plan? Many outcomes of which have subsequently been removed from this new Annual Performance Plan. This is unacceptable and it's high time that there is a complete overhaul of the whole department and consequence management must be implemented so that those officials who are failing to deliver can behold to account.

The EPWP did not receive any allocation in the current financial year and this programme was not implemented in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years. It is worrying that the department failed to implement this much-needed programme that would have assisted to relieve the covid-19 burden in communities.  Furthermore, Gauteng has a high employment rate, particularly among the youth and the failure of this department to create employment opportunities and impart skills through the EPWP programme is an insult to the people of Gauteng.

In addition, the Gauteng Film Commission should be disbanded and absorbed, due to non-performance and duplication.

The same department which has a norm of underspending on its allocated budget is not supporting the skateboarding community in the province. There are very few skateboarding facilities around the province where skateboarders can nurture their skills. Most of the places that exist are built and maintained by the skateboarding community themselves with no assistance from the department. This department must support all the sporting codes across the province and use its budget wisely to benefit all our residents.

The people of Gauteng deserve better; they deserve a caring government that listens to their needs and acts with integrity. Sports and arts must bring people together which this department is failing to do.

Our athletes and artists do not need huge flag projects, they need financial assistance and upgraded sporting facilities to hone and foster their skills. This budget does not offer any of these to our artists and athletes hence the DA will not be supporting this budget.

Thank you.

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