

# Youth must vote to break free from poverty and unemployment

*Speech by Jan de Villiers MP, DA Shadow Minister of Small Business Development*

Chair, being an entrepreneur and starting your own business is the ability to empower yourself, it is the ability to break free from poverty and unemployment. Starting your own business can not only put food on the table for your family but also food on the table for the people you employ, and their families. The youth are often wonderful entrepreneurs because they are resourceful, innovative, hopeful, and energetically work to make their ideas a reality. They often are the first to create new innovative ways to access the market via unconventional routes, such as TikTok and YouTube, and market themselves as influencers of modern products and services, that were often designed by other young entrepreneurs.

But Chair, these inspirational young entrepreneurs, startup founders, YouTubers, TikTokers and influencers all face a common South African threat, constant and non-stop load-shedding.

There is no bigger threat to any South African small business, startup, or micro-enterprise today, than the lack of access to dependable electricity to run a business.

This Youth Day, let it be clear, a young entrepreneur has very little hope to start and establish a business when they cannot even access reliable electricity. So, the question is what is the youth left to do? How can the youth take decisive action to turn the lights back on, start and run their business, and so accelerate and embrace entrepreneurial opportunities to transform the lives of not only themselves but the people around them?

In the DA-run Western Cape, Premier Alan Winde has started to facilitate the development of independent electricity generation, so that the province will no longer be dependent on the ANC-run Eskom. So too has DA-run municipalities, like the city of Cape Town and Stellenbosch, who are steadily driving towards creating and sourcing new electricity to turn the lights back on. On the other hand, the ANC promises change, but keeps us in the dark, with literally no light in the Eskom tunnel in sight.

Chair, if you are a young person in South Africa today, there is only one way to turn on the lights and give yourself and your business a chance to access reliable and stable electricity, and that

decisive action is to register yourself to vote and vote for a party that has a plan to turn the lights back on. A party, with an evidence-backed track record of creating employment and delivering services. A party that not only has solutions but can get them done.

Chair, in 2024 the DA calls on the youth to take decisive action and vote for jobs, vote for economic growth, vote for electricity and vote for the chance to run their own business because only the DA can turn the lights back on.