



North West Provincial Legislature Office

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NW Provincial Legislature, Unit 1, Mmabatho

Debate
Budget – DEDECT
Hon. J Steenkamp
23 July 2025

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,

On behalf of the Democratic Alliance, I stand to firmly and unequivocally reject the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation, and Tourism's (DEDECT) 2025–2026 Budget and Annual Performance Plan.

Let me start by stating the obvious: We are in an economic crisis. The North West has the highest unemployment rate in the country—40.4% officially, and a shocking 56% when using the expanded definition. That means more than half of our working-age population is sitting at home without jobs, without income, and without hope.

Yet, the department entrusted with driving economic development in this province brings us a budget and a plan that is more of the same—more promises, more underperformance, and no meaningful results.

This budget increases departmental spending by 6%, bringing the total to over R1 billion. But what do we get in return? A track record of failed projects, unkept promises, and misaligned spending. Chairperson, you cannot spend your way out of failure without fixing the failures first.

Key Reasons for Opposition

1. Continued Underperformance Despite Increased Funding

- Programme 2: Integrated Economic Development Services and Programme 5: Economic Planning are the worst-performing.
- No delivery on the Mamusa Trade Market despite R10 million allocated.
- R36.4 million SEZ budget not released due to NWDC's unsatisfactory proposals.
- No updates on Youth Employment Services (YES), enterprise development, or academic research partnerships.
- The 100 youth placements in the tourism sector remain unreported.

2. No Clear Plan to Address Skyrocketing Unemployment

- Stats SA ranks North West as the worst-performing province for employment.
- No credible or large-scale job creation strategy is evident in the APP.
- The department continues focusing on small MSME initiatives—mobile kitchens and tuckshops—with minimal impact.

3. Governance and Financial Concerns in Entities

- North West Gambling Board projects a R7 million revenue decline with no clear mitigation plan.
- NWDC receives large transfers despite failing to conduct due diligence.
- The North West Parks and Tourism Board removed a revenue management programme without explanation, while ambitiously increasing income targets.

4. Lack of Strategic and Budgetary Alignment

- The APP is not aligned to the Strategic Plan.
- New indicators (e.g., energy investment support) lack baseline data.
- Past projects from 2024/25 were either unreported or not implemented.

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DA Recommendations

Before this House can consider approving the budget, the Democratic Alliance recommends the following conditions be met:

1. A detailed performance recovery plan must be submitted to the Portfolio Committee.
2. Full progress reports on 2024/25 projects must be tabled, including Mamusa Trade Market, SEZ initiatives, and youth placements.
3. The department must revise the APP to align with its Strategic Plan and Treasury requirements.
4. Job creation and economic impact targets must be evidence-based and measurable.
5. A formal engagement between the MEC and the Portfolio Committee must take place to address performance concerns.

Conclusion

Honourable Speaker, approving this budget would be a grave injustice to the people of the North West. We cannot pour more money into a department that has not proven its ability to spend wisely or deliver results. We cannot reward failure with more funding.

Until DEDECT proves that it is serious about performance, transparency, and economic impact, the Democratic Alliance will not support this budget.

We urge this House to reject the 2025/26 DEDECT budget in its current form and stand with the people—not with poor governance.

End.

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