



Democratic Alliance
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DHET BUDGET SPEECH – 1 JULY 2025

Chairperson, members of the NCOP and—more importantly—our students in higher education institutions,

South Africa has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world. Having a qualification should be a tool out of poverty, not another trapdoor. And yet, under the current department of higher education, too many students are still left behind.

The reality is simple **it is the** Department of Higher Education, NSFAS, and the SETA under the guard of Minister Nkabane that have let down our students.

The R44.6 million in NSFAS funds that Motheo TVET College failed to disburse to students now under SIU investigation. The National Artisans and Training Academy, built to uplift artisans, train with no PPE or have to use expired products to do practical, furthermore this campus has three residences standing empty since it opened, leaving students to commute long distances without reliable stipends often paid late or not at all.

The collapse of campus infrastructure across the country unsafe buildings, overcrowded residences, and maintenance backlogs that leave students living in squalor while the Minister poses for press briefings.

Catastrophic failures at NSFAS. The result? Thousands of students are still sleeping in libraries, toilets, and open spaces because allowances haven't been paid.

The Minister's disgraceful mishandling of the Walter Sisulu University tragedy, where her department issued a statement denying that a murdered student Sisonke Mboleka was registered, only to later admit they hadn't verified the facts. A student was shot dead, and the Department's first instinct was to disown him.

The "secret SETA selection panel" scandal, where Minister Nkabane appointed boards packed with political loyalists including the son of Minister Gwede Mantashe. When Parliament asked who vetted these candidates, she refused to disclose the names, told MPs to "Google what credible means," and falsely claimed Adv. Terry Motau chaired the panel. Chair, the Minister knowingly lied to Parliament.

Therefore, today, the DA laid criminal charges against Minister Nkabane for misleading Parliament.

These are failures of today, born of patronage, protected by cadre deployed arrogance, and paid for by poor students.

In under a year, the DA's involvement in higher education as Hon. Du Plessis has outlined what Deputy Minister Gondwe has done.

This is the difference our country demands: delivery, not delay. Empowerment, not entitlement. Partnerships, not patronage.

We don't believe in exclusion. We believe in inclusion that works. That means:

FREEDOM. FAIRNESS. OPPORTUNITY. DIVERSITY.



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Making sure university and TVET curriculums match real jobs like solar technicians, coders, and welders not just paper degrees, but practical tools for employment.

If we're serious about justice, let's stop recycling excuses and start delivering futures.

This isn't a political agenda. It's a South African one. It's about every student with a dream and no connection. Every artisan-in-training sleeping hungry. Every young woman needing a campus that's safe as well as smart.

We must commit to an outcomes-based, digitally enabled, job-linked higher education model. No slogans. No smoke and mirrors. Just smart, clean, responsive governance.

Because if there's one thing the DA believes above all it's that talent is universal, but opportunity is not. And it's our job as lawmakers to fix that.

Only a strong minister can achieve this.

And Minister Nkabane is not that and should be fired!

Supporting this budget under the management of a compromised questionable minister is not something that I can be comfortable with.

Let's make higher education the engine of dignity, not despair.

I thank you.

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