



Democratic Alliance
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DHET BUDGET SPEECH – 1 JULY 2025

As George Washington Carver once said, “Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”

South Africans demand freedom.

It is time for President Ramaphosa to fire Minister Nkabane and clean out the ANC’s criminal network from the heart of government.

The DA will not allow Parliament to be treated with contempt, and we will not tolerate corruption disguised as governance.

The facts are stark and unforgiving. In 2019-2020 the target achievement stood at 78%, last year, DHET achieved only 51.8% of its targets—just 57 out of 110—despite spending an astonishing 99.9% of its allocated budget. Over the period from 2019 to 2025, the overall target achievement has averaged only 63.5%. Meanwhile, on average, 99.5% of the budget continues to be spent—highlighting a troubling disconnect between resource allocation and tangible results. This pattern exposes a department that is failing to deliver on its core mandate, despite pouring vast sums of public money into its operations.

Another glaring example is NSFAS—the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. As highlighted in the recent Daily Maverick article, “A Lifeline with Challenges,” NSFAS embodies hope for countless students but is plagued by mismanagement, fraud, and wastage. Over R128 million has been lost since 2017 through fraud and maladministration. R166.9 Millions has been wasted on office leases and R18.6 million on parking bays that should have gone directly to students. This is a national disgrace but is merely one of the failures under Minister Nkabane’s watch.

These failures have real, devastating consequences. It reveals a department that is unable or unwilling to deliver results.

Another failure in this Minister’s dossier, is the recent scandal involving the appointment of ANC-connected individuals to the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). The Minister brazenly appointed her comrades to these crucial boards—an act of blatant cadre deployment intended to serve political interests rather than the public good. When this list was leaked, she swiftly revoked these appointments, attempting to cover her tracks. But her deception did not go unnoticed.

The Ministers refusal to take responsibility was equally brazen—she shifted blame onto an “independent” appointment panel, refusing to disclose its members. Only under pressure did she reveal some names, but she concealed at least one. The panel she named was not independent at all; it was littered with cadres, proving she lied to Parliament. To make matters worse, she named Adv Terry Motau as the panel chair—only for him to publicly dispute her claim, further exposing her dishonesty.

This scandal is not isolated. It underscores a pattern of corruption and reckless governance that must be rooted out. The Minister’s actions demonstrate a blatant disregard for honesty, transparency and accountability. Traits that South Africans deserve to have in a Minister.

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We cannot allow this to continue. Our education system, our future, cannot be hostage to political patronage and dishonesty. The time for accountability is now. A member of Cabinet, must be held to the highest standards, the Minister of Higher Education has failed to live up to those standards and her actions must have consequences.

The upcoming appointments of SETA board chairpersons will serve as a critical test. Will these appointments be rooted in integrity and proven governance, or will they once again be political patronage designed to serve narrow party interests?

We stand at a crossroads. The urgency of this moment cannot be overstated. We demand transparency, will enforce accountability, to accelerate job creation. Every day that passes with weak leadership is a day lost for our youth and our economy.

Our young people are waiting. They want jobs, hope, and a government that finally takes responsibility. We must ensure that funds allocated for education and skills development are not diverted into the pockets of the corrupt but are used to create real jobs, nurture entrepreneurs, and develop leaders who will grow our economy.

The time for empty promises and talk is over. The time for decisive action is now. No more cover-ups. No more excuses. It's time to rise with backbone, to act decisively, and to end this trail of corruption once and for all!

Our nation's future depends on it.

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