



Democratic Alliance  
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## DHET BUDGET SPEECH- 1 July 2025

Good afternoon, Honourable Chairperson, Minister, Deputy Minister, Members and Fellow South Africans,

From the earliest marks of human thought to modern breakthroughs, South African history is carved with indisputable intelligence, innovation, and resilience.

The earliest artifact found on earth that points towards humans using instruments of counting for mathematics was found in the Lebombo mountains, between South Africa and Swaziland.

In Stilbaai, the ancient fish traps built by the Strandlopers show an in-depth knowledge of tides, seasons and migratory patterns. Evidence of early climatology and applied science.

It is in the Cradle of Humankind that we stood up almost 3 million years ago to fight against the elements and build modern civilisation.

In more recent history, we shaped international art and music movements, changing the face of medicine with the first successful heart transplant. We led the world in justice and reconciliation through voices of giants like Archbishop Desmond Tutu and poets like Breyten Breytenbach and Oswald Mtshali. Showing that empowerment through knowledge is not a new idea—it is an ancient truth.

Yet, there is a truth that we need to confront: The undeniable and immeasurable impact of our recent history robbed generations of young people of their hope, their futures, their dreams, and their self-worth; has not been addressed. It is being repeated.

We have about five million young people aged 18 to 25. Yet only 1.7 million are enrolled in institutions of higher education, including universities and TVET colleges. More **than half of our youth are locked out of opportunity** — not due to lack of ability, but because the system of corruption continues to fail them.

This does not include those excluded over the past 30 years.

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Twice this term, I asked the Minister whether she will turn the ship around to focus on the future of the youth and break the cycle of corruption. Both times the Minister answered yes. But the reality tells a different story; it tells us that the Minister has misled the House. This lack of integrity, amongst other cases, calls for the immediate removal of the Minister.

Under Minister Nkabane, the ongoing chaos in **NSFAS**, the well-documented **infrastructure dilapidation in universities and TVET colleges**, the inhumane conditions of students' accommodation and leadership paralysis in **SETA management** tell a different story.

Students being defunded mid-year is not a rumour. Dormitories with no electricity are not isolated events. Maladministration in SETAs, with learners waiting for years to receive certificates of completion,

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keeping them locked out of opportunity, is not an exaggeration. Yet when we raise concerns about SETAs, the Department accuses us of being “misled by the media.” Unlike the Department, we don’t rely on sugar-coated reports that hide the depth of maladministration, corruption and fraud.

There is a Shona proverb: “Knowledge is a garden: if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested.” The Department is failing to cultivate knowledge, failing to cultivate the future.

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The DA not only believes in the potential of all young people, we take action. We engage, we listen, and we push for data-driven, people-informed interventions. Our input is grounded in what we hear on the ground from parents, students, lecturers, employers, not from headlines.

Therefore, the Deputy Minister has spearheaded several initiatives, including:

- The Department’s **Helpdesk** has handled nearly **25,000 queries**, 90% of them from students, with an **89% resolution rate**.
- A **crackdown on bogus colleges** is underway through interdepartmental cooperation involving **SAPS, Home Affairs, Labour, the Hawks, and the NPA**.
- A **campus safety initiative** has been launched with the **Commission for Gender Equality** and Health.
- **Oversight visits** were conducted in all nine provinces, targeting challenges in TVET and Community Colleges.
- An **MOU with Old Mutual** was signed to support students, with additional MOUs with **Shoprite, Microsoft, Takealot, and Lenovo** in the pipeline.
- A mining company’s donation of buildings to Goldfields TVET, to house 500 students.

Practical steps to bridge the gap between graduation and employment have also included:

- The KZN Public Works Department, under the leadership of the DA MEC Martin Meyer, has committed to hiring qualified TVET artisans and requiring contractors to do the same.
- MOUs in progress between Ehlanzeni TVET College and the municipalities of Nkomazi and Mbombela, aiming to absorb qualifying graduates into local government.

**But these interventions are not the system, with more than 90% of this Department’s budget is transferred to public entities. Yet oversight is weak, performance is poorly tracked, and outcomes do not match investment.**



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We've repeatedly warned that SETAs must be **monitored more closely**, with proper accountability for underperformance. They must **deliver relevant skills**, real certifications, and actual pathways to jobs. Currently their return on investment is indefensible.

We need to support a budget that builds futures, closes the gap between learning and employment, and offers hope to young people.

Under Minister Nkabane this budget fails to spend effectively. It fails to address structural barriers. It fails to transform inherited inequality into real opportunity.

And most damning of all — it fails to account for the corrosive impact of **corruption**. Corruption diverts the resources meant to deliver redress. It steals not only money, but dignity and futures. We cannot support this budget under the current Minister,

In a space where we should be investing in tomorrow's leaders, there is no room for systemic corruption.

This is not a political point.

It is a human one.

(<https://sahistory.org.za/article/sona-patterns-revisiting-contributions-people-sub-saharan-africa-modern-mathematics>)

<https://www.teachwithafrica.org/education-in-south-africa/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20OECD%2C%20South,24%20divided%20by%203=%208.>

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1115545/student-participation-rates-in-south-africa-by-population-group/>

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1116077/total-population-of-south-africa-by-age-group/>

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