

241. Hon. W Pretorius (DA) asks the Hon. MEC responsible for PW&I: Ms. D Mance.

In view of the dilapidated condition of the Fourth Raadzaal, President Brand Street, Bloemfontein, and the unspent R3 million allocated for fire upgrades in the 2024/25 financial year:

1. Why was the R3 million allocated for the fire upgrade not spent in the 2024/25 financial year, and who is responsible for this delay?
2. How many rooms within the Fourth Raadzaal are currently unusable due to structural or maintenance issues?
3. What is the cause for the water damage that is clear in many of the unusable rooms, and in some of the hallways, of the Fourth Raadzaal?
4. What amount has been budgeted for general maintenance of the building for the 2025/26 financial year, and what work is planned?
5. What is the current condition of the ablution facilities, particularly those used by the public, located beneath the Fourth Raadzaal?
6. Why is the gallery located in the main hall not open for use by the public during sittings? If due to structural issues, what are the issues?
7. Is the department aware of the rust damage to the historic main gate, and what restoration or maintenance efforts have been initiated or planned?
8. How many of the original main hall chairs of members were removed for repairs, what is the status of their restoration, and when are they expected to be returned to the building?

NO RESPONSE

RESPONSE 04/08/2025

- The budget reflected in Table B5 was R2,000,000.00, while the total estimated cost for renovations amounts to R33,627,200.00 (excluding VAT and professional fees). The allocated funds were insufficient to commence the project and were only utilised for the procurement of professional service providers. The technical evaluation for professional service providers was completed and submitted in December 2024. Additionally, there was a lack of clarity regarding the specific allocation of funds for the fire upgrade.
- 2: Unusable Rooms
- Two rooms and one store within the Fourth Raadzaal are currently inaccessible. A formal assessment is required to determine the specific causes and necessary interventions.
- 3: Water Damage
- The gutters, outlets, and downpipes are misaligned, with some sections rusted and perforated. As a result, rainwater seeps through gaps and holes in these components, causing water damage to various areas of the building.
- 4: Maintenance Budget & Planned Work
- At present, no specific budget has been allocated for general maintenance of the building in the 2025/26 financial year. However, an amount of R5,000,000.00 has been designated for the fire system upgrade. The successful implementation of the fire system may be contingent on certain maintenance work that must be undertaken beforehand.
- 5: Ablution Facilities
- Necessary repairs to the ablution facilities have been completed, including the replacement of washbasins and toilet pans, as well as repainting of the area. Additionally, a new steel gate has been installed to enhance security, ensuring controlled access to the main entrance of the toilets.

- 6: Gallery Accessibility
- The original design layout places this in a new used secure area. These items can be repeated elsewhere but the building currently doesn't allow such. The matter of public access to the gallery falls within the Legislature's oversight. No structural concerns have been reported to the department.
- 7: Rust Damage on Historic Gate
- The department is aware of the rust damage affecting the historic main gate, and restoration efforts have been incorporated into the broader renovation plans for the building. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the preservation of this historic element.
- 8: Main Hall Chairs
- The responsibility for the maintenance and restoration of the main hall chairs rests with the client department, as these items are part of their movable assets. For further guidance, it may be beneficial to consult the Legislature on this matter.