

DA KZN supports SCOPA committee report - power without accountability is immunity and immunity must end

(The following debate took place during a Sitting of the KZN Legislature held today)

Accountability has a memory. That is why the SCOPA follow-up report matters. It is not the first conversation with these particular provincial government departments. They have appeared before SCOPA, responded to Auditor-General (AG) findings, and made commitments to the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Legislature. Today, the question is simple: what has changed, who has been held responsible, what money has been recovered, and what risks still remain for the people of KZN?

As KZN marks two years of the Government of Provincial Unity (GPU), this is not the time for applause. It is time for honest review. Our people will not judge this government by what it inherited, but by what it fixes.

Year one was about creating stability. Year two must be about enforcing.

In a GPU, accountability must be part of the arrangement, not a threat to it. That is exactly why SCOPA matters. It gives this Legislature a place to test promises, demand evidence, and ensure that departments are kept on course. GPU partners must keep one another alert, honest and focused on delivery. That is not a weakness of the GPU; it is one of its most important safeguards. Accountability is not disloyalty. It is how government earns public trust. That is how iron sharpens iron.

The DA recognises progress where progress is real and measurable. But progress is not the same as completion. This report makes one thing clear: serious financial governance risks remain.

Education

In Education, the reduction of accruals and payables is welcome. But the department is still expected to carry major financial pressure into the new financial year, with limited room left for day-to-day operations. That is not only a budget problem. It becomes a classroom problem, a school nutrition problem, a learner transport problem, and a child waiting for government to work. That is why the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) cannot be measured only by paperwork. A child cannot eat a delivery note. Value for money must mean that the learner was fed - not merely that the paperwork was filed.

Health

In Health, the report points to Supply Chain Management (SCM) weaknesses, officials doing business with the state, forensic investigations, and the need for disciplinary, criminal and recovery steps.

Yes, there has been progress on fleet availability. But accountability in Health is measured in minutes. An ambulance delayed by weak contract management is not a technical failure. It is a family waiting for help.

Transport

In Transport, the same principle applies. Consequence management must be firm. The department cannot allow claims to expire, cannot leave money unrecovered, and cannot allow accountability to end with yet another explanation and no action.

This is why SCOPA matters. When it asks for names, amounts, recovery steps, sanctions and case numbers, it is not being difficult. The committee is asking the simplest question in public life: who did what, what was lost, what was recovered and who paid the price? If those answers cannot be given, then what is being offered is not renewal. It is amnesia. It is evasion. It is the hope that the people will forget what the paper trail still remembers.

Interestingly, that is the politics the uMkhonto Wesizwe Party (MKP) asks KZN's people to trust. A politics built around its leader, who refused to account before the State Capture Commission and was found guilty of contempt of court. And let us not confuse struggle credentials with accountability. No matter how significant a person's role in the liberation struggle may have been, those credentials do not place anyone above the law, above scrutiny, or above the duty to account for their actions in a constitutional democracy.

You cannot refuse to account yesterday and sell yourself as the champion of clean government today. You cannot treat accountability as persecution when it reaches your leader but demand it when it suits your politics.

The MKP may wish that evidence and consequences could simply be washed down the drain. But no amount of political rebranding or showering can wash away history. Accountability has a memory. The audit trails remain. The court judgements remain and the obligation to account remains. That is why provincial government departments must return with evidence - not excuses and not speeches.

The DA supports this report because those who hold power must be accountable. Power without accountability is impunity and impunity must end.