



## Commissioner for Children

20 FEBRUARY 2024

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Western Cape Commissioner for Children calls for the prioritisation of children in National public budgeting processes.**

As the nation eagerly anticipates Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana's delivery of the Budget Speech on Wednesday, the Western Cape Commissioner for Children (WCCC) emphasises the crucial need to prioritise children in the budget. A child-centered budget not only benefits children but also has positive implications for society as a whole.

The Children's Commissioner's office has been collaborating with Child Government Monitors (CGMs) who analyse the public budget from a child rights perspective. These human rights defenders presented recommendations for a child-centered budget in the 2023 Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement for child rights realisation.

Their recommendations centered around the development of child-centered and child-friendly governance systems, taking into account the debt burden on children, prioritising social sector spending in real terms, increasing the Child Welfare and Child Protection budget, and restructuring the State from a rights perspective.

The Western Cape Commissioner for Children advocates for a more child-centered approach to governance, focusing on inclusivity and effective communication. To achieve this, the Commissioner recommends the development of child-friendly, plain-language communication methods, ensuring everyone can engage with the budget process. This approach also incorporates actively listening to children and considering their perspectives on governmental processes that directly affect their lives. The aim is to value children's input and create more inclusive and effective governance.

Previously, the CGMs called upon Minister Godongwana to shield them from the social sector spending cuts. The children advocate for the prioritisation of social sector spending in real terms, expressing concerns about access, quality service delivery, and outcomes.

The CGMs want quality education that will equip them for life and healthcare services that are near communities and are responsive. They emphasise the significance of quality education and healthcare for children, along with the imperative for respectful and dignified treatment by social sector service providers. They underscore the critical role of teachers, nurses, and social workers in fostering a human rights culture through their care and services. Moreover, they stress that delivering quality services is not only an ethical value but also a constitutional obligation.

In the 2024/5 budget allocations, the WCCC will continue to monitor the allocation of funds and evaluate the impact of budgetary decisions.

**Ends.**

**Media inquiries:**

Mthuthuzeli Ntseku

Children's Commissioner Officer

Office of the Western Cape Commissioner For Children

Cell: 073 496 5880

Mthuthuzeli.Ntseku@wccc.gov.za

**About the Western Cape Commissioner for Children:** The Western Cape Commissioner for Children is an independent governance institution in the Western Cape. The Commissioner is mandated to protect and promote the rights, needs and interests of children in the province by working with the departments of Education, Health, Social Development as well as Cultural Affairs and Sport. The Commissioner for Children reports to Provincial Parliament on activities, functions and progress on objectives.