

**BUDGET ADDRESS BY THE WESTERN CAPE MINISTER OF
AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, DR
IVAN MEYER 2026**

VOTE 12

WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

23 MARCH 2026

1. Honourable Speaker, Premier, Members of Cabinet and this
Legislature, leaders of business and labour, civil society partners,
and the people of the Western Cape.
2. It is my privilege to table **Vote 12: Economic Development
and Tourism** for the 2026/27 financial year.
3. Our theme is simple and powerful:
Delivering for Impact with Kindness.

4. Because kindness is not soft.

It is discipline, clarity, and the intentional building of confidence. It is the difference between a government that obstructs growth and one that enables it. It is a leadership imperative, and a powerful economic catalyst

Growth for Jobs: A Province Moving Forward

5. Honourable Speaker, our **Growth for Jobs (G4J) Strategy** is a shared commitment: every rand, every policy, and every programme must contribute to a faster-growing, more competitive, more inclusive Western Cape.

6. The results speak for themselves:

- In 2025, the Western Cape achieved **1.4% economic growth**—double the 0.7% of 2024.
- Unemployment dropped from **20.7% to 19.6%**.
- Agriculture grew by **16.2% (R3.7 billion)**.
- Finance and business services added **R3.9 billion**, with our province now hosting **two-thirds of all national BPO jobs**.

- Tourism reached a record **1.12 million international arrivals**.

7. This is what happens when a province governs with clarity, partnership, and kindness.

Navigating Global Risks

8. However, Honourable Speaker, delivering with kindness also requires vigilance.

9. The Middle East conflict continues to affect global trade. Shipping delays of **10–14 days**, rising insurance and fuel costs, and market exposure in the UAE and Iraq are placing pressure on our agricultural exporters, especially for perishables. Higher oil prices are also affecting household budgets.

10. To address these challenges, the Western Cape Government will continue to plan with data, act with agility, and invest in long-term competitiveness.

11. Honourable Speaker, for 2026/27, Vote 12 receives **R596.765 million.**
12. This budget invests in enabling growth, supporting investors, creating jobs, and strengthening the tourism and trade ecosystem.
13. We continue to support institutions that convert strategy into jobs:
 - Wesgro
 - Saldanha Bay IDZ
 - Atlantis SEZ
14. These partners are engines of export growth, industrialisation, tourism development, and regulatory stability.
15. Honourable Speaker, one such partner is Wesgro.
16. Wesgro delivered a strong 2025/26 performance, driving growth across air access, cruise tourism, business events, leisure tourism, investment promotion, trade, and film—highlighted by record

airport passenger and cargo volumes, a R1.79 billion GDP-R cruise contribution, over R750 million in secured conference bids, expanded tourism outreach into India and China, R14.6 billion in facilitated investment (with major green-economy projects), over R5.38 billion in trade declarations, and more than R1 billion in projected film export value—collectively strengthening jobs, exports, and the Western Cape’s global competitiveness.

17. **Strategic Focus Across Programmes**

Administration - We continue to strengthen governance, digital transformation, and clean audits—because a well-run department is an act of respect toward taxpayers.

Economic Planning & Development

18. Honourable Speaker, a kinder state is a state that removes obstacles, not creates them. For that reason, we focus on:

- Red-tape reduction
- Ease of Doing Business reforms
- Evidence-based planning
- Township and rural economic upliftment

Trade & Sector Development

19. Honourable Speaker, our **Trade and Sector Development**

initiatives drive:

- Export competitiveness
- Global market access
- Investment promotion
- Sector scaling in green economy, manufacturing, and advanced services

20. Each export job strengthens a family and stabilises a community.

Business Regulation & Governance

21. Honourable Speaker, the Western Cape Government regulates

firmly, fairly, and with humanity—ensuring compliance

while enabling economic activity in consumer protection.

22. **Our Economic Empowerment & Transformation initiatives'**

focus remains:

- SMME development

- Youth entrepreneurship
- Informal sector and township upliftment
- Supplier development

23. This is how we expand opportunity where it was previously denied.

Tourism, Arts & Entertainment

24. Tourism is an economy built on welcome. We prioritise:

- Destination marketing
- Air and cruise access
- Visitor safety
- Community-based tourism
- Events, culture, and heritage development
- Tourism is not just beautiful places — it is beautiful people.

Progress on 2025 Ministerial Priorities

Honourable Speaker, the progress we have made in 2025 is grounded not only in policy and investment, but in the lived work of the people

who are helping us build a confident, competitive, and kind Western Cape.

Honourable Speaker, I wish to acknowledge several beneficiaries whose contributions are strengthening our economy, deepening inclusion, and expanding opportunity:

Investment Promotion – Businesses invest when they have confidence in the region. And we have very confident businesses. Mr. Deon Cloete and Mr. Nick Ferguson of Cape Winelands Airport are unlocking a catalytic aviation platform that will strengthen agro-logistics, boost regional tourism, and position the Winelands as a future hub of high-value investment.

And to capitalise on this business confidence, we hosted the inaugural Western Cape Investment Summit to enable deal-making and to say, “We are organised, we have a plan, we are open to engagement, and there are real opportunities here.” Ms Mmakoma Komape of Ewaste Africa, whose project is on our dealbook, is advancing our green industrialisation drive by expanding electronic waste recycling and

building a circular-economy ecosystem that creates jobs and mitigates environmental risks.

Our Tourism Growth Fund supports visitor infrastructure and the development. One of our beneficiaries, Mr. Matthew Fletcher of Bike and Hike, is expanding authentic township and Winelands e-bike experiences that create local jobs, empower guides, and diversify our value-added tourism offerings.

The Just Energy Transition Investment Plan provides a framework to guide the province's transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient, and inclusive economy. One of the Province's key Green Economy advocates – Mr Lungelo Terence Matiwane of Millennium Green Charge - is pioneering the roll-out of electric-vehicle charging infrastructure and catalysing green-manufacturing opportunities at the Atlantis SEZ.

The Department, in partnership with the International Trade Institute of Southern Africa, developed an **Export Online Training Platform.**

Emerging exporters such as Ms Thokozile Entle Beshenga (TEB Ltd), Mr Lizo Dlaba (Buzwe Capital Investments), Ms Alicia Somdaka (Imbali Fashion & Scents), and Ms Chiniqwa Pretorius (Unitrans) have fully

participated in the training opportunities provided by the Platform. They are building our next generation of globally competitive firms, expanding export readiness, and strengthening future trade.

With regards to **Transporter Representative Organisations**, we have resolved to support legitimate initiatives taken by transporters to organize themselves into structures that can represent them within the broader Port of Cape Town logistics ecosystem. Industry leaders Mr. Ismail Moosa and Mr. Nazeer Veldsman of Moosa's Transport, Ms. Kim Maneveldt of Q Peters Transport, Mr. Derick Ongansie, and Mr. Basil Hanival have worked tirelessly to professionalise, stabilise, and strengthen the logistics ecosystem that underpins our export economy.

Our MSME and Township Economic Development Strategies are nearing an important milestone towards completion. It aims, among other things, to recognise the roles of ecosystem stakeholders committed to helping entrepreneurs reach their potential. Here, I would like to acknowledge ecosystem builders Mr. Luvuyo Rani and Mr. Marlon Parker, who continue to expand entrepreneurial opportunity, digital inclusion, and youth-driven innovation across township communities.

Our **Red Tape Reduction Unit** – the only one of its kind – remains committed to addressing red tape barriers businesses may face. Mr. Travis Petersen of Twin Gables Guesthouse and Mr. Dirk Koen of Karoo Management Solutions demonstrate the tangible impact of cutting red tape: enabling investment, strengthening compliance, and supporting business sustainability across urban and rural regions.

These beneficiaries exemplify the power of partnership. Their work gives practical expression to the values that guide us — clarity, kindness, and the courage to deliver for impact.

25. Honourable Speaker, allow me to reflect on the progress in respect of the Ministerial Priorities I announced at the same time last year.

- **Investment:** Our 2025 Summit showcased **R400 billion** in opportunities; 40% of businesses are now in commercial engagement.
- **Energy:** The Green Hydrogen Strategy is advancing with major investors, and R13.5 million has been secured for implementation readiness.

- **Red Tape:** The Business Helpline achieved a **78% case-resolution rate**.
- **Tourism:** The Tourism Growth Fund leveraged **R4.2 million** in co-funding for new visitor experiences and
- **Township Economy:** Foundational work for the new SMME and Township Strategies has been completed.

Infrastructure that Shapes the Future

26. Honourable Speaker, we continue to back catalytic projects that will define our economic horizon. These include:

- **Cape Winelands Airport** — strengthening agro-logistics and regional tourism.
- **Granger Bay (V&A Waterfront) Expansion** — a **R24 billion** investment projecting **49,400 jobs**.
- **Belcon Logistics Park** — an **R850 million** cold-chain and logistics asset enabling export growth.

27. These are long-term engines of prosperity.

Delivering with Kindness

28. Honourable Speaker, kindness is practical.
29. It is:
- Helping an SMME navigate red tape
 - Supporting informal traders to comply without fear
 - Creating digital opportunities for young people
 - Welcoming investors with competence and warmth
 - Ensuring every tourist feels safe and valued.
30. Kindness builds trust. Trust builds collaboration. Collaboration builds competitiveness. And competitiveness builds jobs.

Accountability and Good Governance

31. Honourable Speaker, a caring state must also be an accountable state.
32. We commit to:
- Transparent procurement
 - Strong internal audits

- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation
- Evidence-based decisions
- Disciplined expenditure

33. Every rand must work. Every programme must deliver.

A Confident, Competitive, Kind Western Cape

34. Honourable Speaker, the Western Cape is building an economy of confidence— Confidence not born from arrogance, but from partnership, compassion, and results.

Today's budget invests in:

- Jobs
- Innovation
- Tourism
- Enterprise
- Dignity and opportunity

35. We will grow — with purpose.

We will grow — with courage.

We will grow — with kindness.

Top 10 Priorities for 2026/27

36. The Western Cape Government remains steadfast in its commitment to building a resilient, inclusive, and future-fit economy. The following priorities for the 2026/27 financial year outline a decisive programme of action aimed at strengthening competitiveness, driving investment, and expanding opportunity for all residents of the province.

I. Technology & Innovation Ecosystem Fund

We will position the Western Cape as Africa's foremost centre for technological advancement by investing in innovation networks, attracting strategic investment, and enabling the growth of up to 600 tech start-ups or scale-ups annually.

II. Export Accelerator Support Programme

To deepen the province's global economic footprint, we will expand access to priority international markets and support high-potential industries to increase export volumes and diversify trade opportunities.

III. Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme

This programme will provide targeted support—technical assistance, certification, and product development—to prepare local firms for global markets, strengthening their capacity to compete internationally.

IV. Tourism Growth Fund

Recognising tourism as a pillar of economic growth, we will expand our investment in catalytic projects, product development, and infrastructure upgrades to attract private investment and advance our goal of doubling international arrivals by 2030.

V. Drones Regulatory Sandbox

The Western Cape will host South Africa's first drone regulatory sandbox, establishing a safe and enabling environment for testing, training, and technological innovation within the fast-evolving drone economy.

VI. Port of Cape Town: Maritime Logistics Strategy

We will take decisive action to improve operational efficiency at the Port of Cape Town through digital logistics planning, decongestion interventions, expanded repair capabilities, and strengthened collaboration with Transnet and TNPA.

VII. Financial Literacy Programme

A comprehensive provincial programme will enhance financial awareness across communities using digital platforms, theatre, and educational outreach to empower residents and protect them from financial vulnerability.

VIII. Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Provincial Performance Barometer

We will continue our work to reduce red tape and ensure administrative efficiency by developing a performance barometer improves the business environment.

IX. MSME & Township Economic Growth Strategies

To unlock the full potential of township economies and small enterprises, we will launch the final strategies that expand access to finance, ease regulatory burdens, and strengthen entrepreneurial support systems.

X. MSME Support Navigator

A centralised digital platform will connect small businesses with accelerators, incubators, training institutions, and government programmes—ensuring entrepreneurs can access the right support at the right time.

37. Honourable Speaker, I hereby table Vote 12: Economic Development and Tourism, totalling R596.765 million, for the approval of this Legislature.
38. Thank you. Let us continue delivering for impact — with kindness.