

Western Cape Government

Provincial Treasury

**2024 OVERVIEW OF PROVINCIAL REVENUE AND
EXPENDITURE**

**2024 OVERVIEW OF PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL
INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

**2024 ESTIMATES OF PROVINCIAL REVENUE AND
EXPENDITURE**

Speech

'A Budget to Keep Building a Western Cape That Works For All'

Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities

Speech by Mireille Wenger

7 March 2024

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Western Cape Government
Budget Speech 2024/25
Western Cape Provincial Parliament
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'A Budget to Keep Building a Western Cape That Works For All'

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker

Honourable Premier and Cabinet Ministers

Chief Whip, Leader of the Opposition, Members of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament

Executive Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Mayoral Committee Members

Representatives from the National Treasury

Members of the Consular Corps

Heads of Department

Special Guests

People of the Western Cape

1. Introduction

Today, I have the honour of tabling before you, the 2024:

- Overview of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure;
- Overview of Provincial and Municipal Infrastructure Investment;
- Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure;
- Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B2 - 2024];
- Provincial Gazette of Allocations to Municipalities; and
- The budget speech.

for discussion and deliberation in the Western Cape Provincial Parliament and its committees.

I would specifically like to thank the hard working people who make up the Western Cape Provincial Treasury, led by our new Head Official Ms Julinda Gantana, and each Accounting Officer and their teams, for their tremendous determination to work together, for the people of this province, in building this Budget.

Our Treasury team, in particular, deserves immense thanks, and I extend my gratitude and appreciation to Ms Analiese Pick, Ms Shirley Robinson, Mr Malcolm Booysen, Ms Taryn van de Rhee, Mr Paul Pienaar, Ms Sharon van Breda and Ms Michelle Nicholas and the teams supporting them.

2. We protect and prioritise to keep building a Western Cape that works - For YOU

The Western Cape Budget 2024 sets a pathway to enable a growing economy and promote the safety and wellbeing of the residents of the Western Cape over the medium term, giving full expression to Premier Alan Winde's State of the Province Address centred on working and striving for a better future for all.

Over the 2024 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), this R255.29 billion budget places the 7.4 million residents of this Province, our vulnerable communities and future generations, at the very centre of decision making.

Within the context of pressing global concerns, subdued national economic prospects and an increasingly constrained fiscal environment, the Western Cape Government (WCG) has formulated a budget that responds to mounting service delivery demands within a reduced fiscal envelope. In addition, domestic risks which include the energy crisis, state fragility, and water-supply shortages have steadily over time impacted on provincial budgeting.

Given the increased need to protect essential services, the challenge we now face is to do even better, to do even more, with even less.

Through a robust and collaborative budget process we have adapted our fiscal strategy and related budget policy principles to ensure this Budget responds and adapts to fiscal consolidation, enables long-run fiscal sustainability, unlocks allocative efficiency, and enhances productive efficiency.

By applying these principles through a whole-of-government approach, the WCG's spending plans commit us to 'A budget to keep building a Western Cape that works for all'.

A special word of appreciation to the residents from Worcester, Eersterivier, Pinelands, Brooklyn, Khayelitsha, Diep River, Kuilsrivier, Retreat, Rosebank, Stanhaven, Langeberg Ridge, Paarl, Helderberg, Kommetjie, Laingsburg, Maitland, Summer Greens, Milnerton, Goodwood, and George, who took the time to share what's important to them, and who shared ideas and suggestions for this budget.

This budget is for you, and for every community that makes the Western Cape the caring, resilient and promising province it is today.

Speaker, it's no secret that this is a difficult Budget to table today, probably one of the most difficult this term.

It was Malala Yousafzai who said that:

"Though adversity may test us, we persist with a steadfast commitment, anchored by our core principles and the enduring values that have carried us through our most trying moments, serving as the wellspring of our courage and resilience."

And though we face tough times, we continue to build a Western Cape that works, where no child is forced to do homework under a table for fear of being hit by a stray bullet, where parents and guardians are not wracked with worry about how they will put food on the table, where those who are sick are cared for by a healthcare system that works, where entrepreneurs and businesses are supported to get up and running and to expand with confidence in a certain and stable environment that enables job creation, and where innovation and progress are the order of the day, so that more residents have the opportunity to wake up to a better tomorrow.

We will keep building that better tomorrow now, step by step, or, as former US president Barack Obama said, "brick by brick, calloused hand by calloused hand" because it is our responsibility as government to work relentlessly, day and night, to build a progressively safer, more prosperous and better future for our children.

While this will undoubtedly be difficult, the decisions we make now will make the difference between continued decline and increasing unemployment, and a growing economy, more employment, and added opportunities, in our Western Cape that works.

3. Situation Report - the challenges we must face

Speaker,

Globally, the World Bank expects international economic growth to slow, for the third consecutive year, to 2.4 per cent in 2024, due to tight monetary policies to rein in high inflation, restrictive credit conditions, and stagnant global trade and investment.

Geopolitical tensions and conflict continue to impact the global economic outlook negatively, with escalating conflicts bringing potential surges in energy prices, with knock-on implications for global activity, trade, and inflation. Climate change-related disasters continue to increase, putting abilities to respond under further pressure.

Here at home, the economic picture remains pressured. On Tuesday, we avoided falling into a technical recession by the smallest of margins, and anaemic economic growth forecasts of just 1.7 per cent in 2024.

This is far below the level of growth we need to uplift the 56.4 per cent of South Africans living in poverty, or to support the creation of jobs for the 7.89 million unemployed people in this country.

4. National budget process collapse

Speaker, in October last year, the warning signs were clear.

For the first time, when I delivered the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement, we could only give broad estimates for allocations, by cluster, because of the uncertainties created by the chaotic budget process.

We also faced unprecedented in-year cuts, compromising budgets that this House had already passed.

In-year, we were dealt a body blow when the nationally negotiated public sector wage deal was unilaterally imposed on provinces. In the Western Cape, only our departments of Health and Education received partial funding of the wage agreement of 70 per cent and 64.5 per cent respectively of what they required.

Every other department had no choice but to absorb the full cost of the wage agreement.

Our shortfall remains R1.1 billion in the current year and our fight for this funding through the intergovernmental dispute moves steadily forward, with the aim of establishing clear principles for how future wage deals are decided, in the hope that never again will core services be put on the line like this again.

We know now, from the National Budget, delivered by Finance Minister Godongwana in February, that government debt service costs will increase from 20.8 per cent of revenue in 2023/24 to 21.1 per cent in 2026/27, meaning that South Africa will spend an astounding R1.06 billion a day on servicing its debt.

What the National Government spends in one day on debt servicing, could employ **1 126** educators, **992** professional nurses, staff nurses and nursing assistants AND **125** social workers for an entire year in the Western Cape.

On top of this, the main budget revenue is projected to be lower by R46.4 billion in 2023/24 and lower by R113.3 billion in 2024/25 and 2025/26, when compared to the 2023 Budget estimates.

The significant projected shortfall reflects downward revisions due to the prevailing economic conditions and the resulting decrease in corporate and net value-added tax.

While total funding to provinces is projected to increase year-on-year by 3.3 per cent in 2024/25, by 4.3 per cent 2025/26, and by 3.9 per cent in 2026/27, the increases remain well below the average projected inflation of 4.6 per cent over the 2024 MTEF.

Speaker, in South Africa today, we are very short on cash and extremely large on debt.

Despite being the Province with the fastest growing population, expanding by 27.7 per cent between 2011 and 2022, and because of the delayed release of the 2022 census datasets, technical changes and data updates, the Western Cape's share of the Provincial Equitable Share (PES) is projected to decline by R379.61 million over the MTEF.

Simply put, as the third largest province by population, the Western Cape only receives the fifth largest PES allocation amongst the provinces.

In addition to this, due to fiscal consolidation, the Western Cape Government's budget is significantly reduced by R6.36 billion over the 2024 MTEF.

Conditional grants allocated by national government to provinces for specific programmes, have also been slashed by a net reduction of R 1.135 billion over the MTEF.

This includes:

- Cutting the Human Settlement Development Grant by R621.42 million;
- Cutting the Illima/Letsema grant, for emerging black farmers by R19.34 million over the MTEF;
- Cutting the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme by R13.35 million over the MTEF;
- Slashing the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant by R841.42 million over the next three years;
- Cutting the District Health Programmes Grant by R180.15 million over the MTEF; and
- Cutting the Health Facility Revitalisation Grant by R69.94 million over the MTEF.

What do all these cuts, fiscal consolidation measures and the reduction in the PES mean for a government like the Western Cape that is already very lean, which already has the lowest cost to employee ratio in the country, and where caring for the needs of the poor are primary priorities?

It means that this province is forced to pull back on or even cut some key plans, leaving no choice but to slow down or freeze hiring in key positions and departments, all of which come with very difficult human and social consequences.

Despite the challenges, we are determined to move forward. We must work smarter, strategically plan and implement solutions, because we must keep building a Western Cape that works for all.

Which is why our approach to the 2024/25 Budget focussed first on protecting basic service delivery outcomes and supporting departments to absorb the impact of baseline reductions and the wage bill.

Second, we are driving the implementation of programmes within the key provincial priorities of jobs, safety and wellbeing, while maintaining stability.

A stable province is a working province, and we will keep building a Western Cape that works.

Third, we have prioritised infrastructure maintenance.

And because the Western Cape carefully plans to build a province that works for all, we are able to protect and prioritise where it matters most, for our children, who are our future, for the elderly, for whom we must care, for the sick and vulnerable, because we are their safety nets so that they, too, have an opportunity to succeed.

5. A Province at work

Speaker,

We indeed have reasons to be hopeful, and to forge on because we are building a Western Cape that works and is working.

Just over two weeks ago, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), released by Statistics South Africa showed that the Western Cape continues to have:

- The lowest unemployment rate in SA, at 20.3 per cent;
- The lowest expanded unemployment rate in SA, at 25.6 per cent;
- The highest employment to population rate in SA at 55.0 per cent; and
- The highest Labour Force Participation Rate in SA, at 69.0 per cent.

Over the past five years, 78.9 per cent of the net jobs created in South Africa have been created in the Western Cape.

The QLFS also showed us that unemployment in the Western Cape is down, on the official definition, by 2.2 percentage points year-on-year - which is the biggest decrease anywhere in South Africa.

And Speaker, the unemployment rate among the most vulnerable of our unemployed residents, our African youth with less than secondary qualifications who made up 8.7 per cent (300 289) of the total labour force in the Western Cape, has improved significantly between the fourth quarter of 2019 and 2023, with a decrease of 4.0 percentage points.

The facts show, unequivocally, that we are a province that works and is at work, building a better future of jobs and dignity.

Speaker, our mission will not be complete until our unemployment figures are worked down even further, but when compared to the national unemployment rate of 32.1 per cent, we can clearly see that each and every day, our work to get more people into job opportunities in the Western Cape, is working.

6. Main budget allocations: protecting and prioritising

Speaker, in total, this government will allocate R84.00 billion in 2024/25; R84.38 billion in 2025/26; and R86.908 billion in 2026/27.

Over the 2024 MTEF to keep building a Western Cape that works for all:

- We will allocate R182.35 billion to Wellbeing, inclusive of Health and Wellness, Education and Social Services;
- We will allocate R45.35 billion to continue our work to grow the economy and enable the creation of many more jobs, across the province;
- We will allocate R21.87 billion to Innovation, Culture, and Governance, as a critical tool to enhance service delivery and do more for our residents; and
- We will allocate R5.08 billion to Safety to boost existing interventions, which includes an additional R 190.36 million over the 2024 MTEF, so we can keep building a future where we all feel safe.

Speaker, of the total R255.29 billion provincial budget over the 2024 MTEF, a full two-thirds (75.4 per cent), or R192.21 billion is being spent to champion the needs of the poor and most vulnerable residents in the province.

To breakdown this budget further, some key allocations that prioritise the poor include:

- spending at least R80.12 billion by the Department of Health and Wellness on primary health care, home and community-based care, mental health services - psychiatric hospitals, TB health services and acute and transitional care in poor communities. In the past 5 years, our primary health care services have had over 56.7 million client contacts, so we know how vital these services are.
- spending at least R75.82 billion by the Department of Education, as it addresses the learning needs of the poor through delivering quality educators, offering learner transport, and providing resources to public schools and nutrition through the School Nutrition Programme, including education infrastructure. Over 65 000 learners were transported in the 2022/23 financial year, and the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) in the Western Cape feeds almost a half a million school children every day. One of the comments I received on the MTBPS was from Tara, a Child Commissioner, who shared “I personally think it is still extremely important cos sometimes that's a child's only meal.” We think so too,

Tara, and in this Main Budget, I am happy to confirm that to alleviate inflationary pressure on the school feeding programme and to make sure that the nutritional value is not compromised by rising prices, additional allocations of R63.89 million in 2024/25, R67.25 million in 2025/26, and R70.28 million in 2026/27 will be made on top of the R1.64 billion over the 2024 MTEF from national grants.

Other allocations to protect the poor include:

- spending at least R19.14 billion by the Department of Infrastructure, to continue the focus on a housing response for the poor by providing low-cost housing, as well as maintaining and developing vital public road networks that link residents to economic opportunities. This includes an allocation of R6.46 billion to develop sustainable and affordable housing opportunities, adapting to changes in national policies affecting grant funding;
- spending R96.41 million by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, for the YearBeyond Programme, inclusive of the Afternoon positive peer networks, to continue to provide access to services in vulnerable communities and a bridge into the economy for young people not employed or economically active;
- spending R51.99 million by the Department of Agriculture, on food production initiatives, which include food gardens in communities and schools, as well as support offered to smallholder producers; and
- spending R7.89 billion by the Department of Social Development on Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) for children who are victims of abuse, neglect and abandonment; on foster care and reunification programmes, on social crime prevention and diversion programmes for children and adults in conflict with the law; to care for older persons and to support survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through psycho-social services, empowerment programmes and shelters; as well as poverty alleviation programmes, by providing nutritious meals to those in need.

7. Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

Speaker,

Our work to decouple our growth rates from that of South Africa, to lift many more people out of poverty and into opportunity, requires meticulous planning, followed through with purposeful action.

By 2035, guided by our economic action plan, 'Growth For Jobs' we are determined to enable a trillion-rand, jobs-rich, inclusive, sustainable, diverse, and resilient provincial economy, that is growing at between 4 and 6 per cent per year in real terms.

And we will do this by supporting the private sector, including formal, informal and township-based businesses, as the driving force of economic growth and job creation in our country.

To continue to build a better future we will invest in and maintain vital infrastructure to support the growth of our businesses, our economy, and our people.

Which is why we will invest in fixed assets, catalytic, and agricultural infrastructure over the 2024 MTEF, amounting to a total of R32.12 billion.

This includes a significant investment of R30.12 billion which is allocated to infrastructure maintenance and development, covering various sectors such as roads, education facilities, and healthcare.

This also includes R2.30 billion which is allocated to Public Works Infrastructure for provincial government building projects, including mixed-use developments and Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs).

The Department of Mobility receives R9.60 billion to improve safety and access to affordable transport while supporting economic growth and spatial transformation amidst climate change challenges.

While we're painfully aware that the persistent power cuts fall squarely at the feet of national government, we will not sit idly by while the economy of the Western Cape is turned on and off as Eskom sees fit.

Currently, the number one binding constraint for businesses, and especially small businesses, is a lack of a stable supply of electricity.

And so, we are on a mission to ensure the availability of affordable, reliable electricity supply, upon which the economy relies.

In fact, Mr Tshepo Marengwa from Paarl wanted to know more about what we are doing to help SMME's stay open when the power shuts off.

Mr Marengwa, the Western Cape Energy Resilience Programme aims to reduce the impacts of load shedding on businesses and citizens in the Western Cape and to facilitate a lower level of reliance on Eskom in the Western Cape.

For this, we will allocate R759.20 million over the 2024 MTEF to increase energy resilience in the Province.

I am pleased to confirm that R153.00 million is allocated specifically for the installation of Solar PV for schools and WCG health facilities.

We have also allocated R15.88 million in 2024/25; R16.30 million in 2025/26 and R18.30 million in 2026/27 for the SMME booster fund, SMME and township-based initiatives because we agree with you, Mr Marengwa, that our small businesses are the engines of our economy, providing jobs for thousands in our province.

And just as our economy cannot survive without power, it cannot grow without an expanding pool of talent, to take full advantage of the immense potential of our economy.

The Youth Interventions budget over the 2024 MTEF amounts to R2.96 billion (R968.218 million in 2024/25; R993.86 million in 2025/26; R1.00 billion in 2026/27) and is an investment in our young people to make sure they have the right skills, the right qualifications, and the right experience for jobs available now and in the future.

We are also determined to make the Western Cape the easiest place to do business in South Africa and Africa. This means we are hard at work developing and implementing systemic solutions to economic challenges and binding constraints.

To boost the work being done to rip up red tape that bogs down business, an allocation of R46.77 million is made over the 2024 MTEF to the Red Tape reduction sub-programme.

Speaker, another resident, Mr. Bongani Ntsunswana from Khayelitsha, wanted to hear more about how we are helping young people access job opportunities.

Mr Ntsunswana, part of our work to help upskill our young and unemployed young people, means we have prioritised skills development in export-oriented sectors with an allocation of R269.50 million over the 2024 MTEF through the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, who will target

Technology and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Clothing and Textiles, Artisanal Development, and Work and Skills.

This will deliver training and internship experience so that more young people can join the job market, permanently.

And Speaker, because we understand that the cost of transport is an obstacle too many young job-seekers face, the Department of Mobility has launched its innovative Job Seeker Voucher, to connect young people with work opportunities. As part of this, R7.50 million is allocated in 2024/25 to make 180 000 Gold Cards available for improved access to opportunities.

We are hard at work on the basics that all businesses and residents need and to increase opportunities for residents in every region of the Western Cape.

8. Safety now, for a better future

Speaker,

It is a sad reality that as South Africans, we all share the deep and real fear of falling victim to crime, and we take the reduction of crime in the province extremely seriously.

We will continue to work hard to make the Western Cape safer for all those who live here.

Through the Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety, we will continue to fund law enforcement operations in the Province including the Law Enforcement Reaction Units, K9 units, and other safety partnerships to bolster safety in all municipalities in the most crime-affected areas of the Province.

Over the MTEF, we have allocated:

- R1.06 billion for the continuation of the Law Enforcement Advancement Plan (LEAP) programme. Over 1 200 LEAP officers will continue to enhance safety in the Province.
- In total, we will allocate R2.28 billion to improve policing through the oversight of the South African Police Service (SAPS), the resourcing of Provincial policing functions, and the capacitation of community-based safety partnerships.
- Through the new Western Cape Mobility Department, Traffic Law Enforcement is allocated R1.56 billion over the 2024 MTEF to enhance

safety and security on provincial roads to achieve the long-term vision of reduced fatalities and serious injuries

We also know that prevention is better than cure and so, this government established the Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) to help identify, prevent and reduce violence in communities through collaboration between law enforcement and prevention efforts, targeting high-crime areas, and implementing effective violence prevention measures.

For Crime prevention and support, including for programmes that support young people to choose a better path, R1.09 billion has been made available.

Where people do fall victim to crime, we have allocated R228.54 million to fund Victim Support programmes to deliver psychosocial support services.

We have also allocated R31.88 million over the 2024 MTEF to maintain Gender Based Violence (GBV) services such as victim empowerment programmes, shelters for victims of GBV, and psychosocial support services, which, in the 2022/23 financial year, provided support to 18 525 victims of GBV.

9. Wellbeing - help at hand

Speaker,

The wellbeing of our residents is paramount, and we support this priority through its different pillars of health services, mental wellbeing, education and learning, and meeting basic needs and protecting human rights.

To achieve these goals, R182.35 billion is allocated to Wellbeing over the 2024 MTEF.

The largest additional allocations in the 2024 budget were for the Department of Health and Wellness, the Department of Education, and the Department of Social Development.

Overall, spending on the Education priority area increases by 1.54 per cent, and spending on the Health priority area reflects an increase of 2.21 per cent.

In Health over the 2024 MTEF, R94.49 billion is allocated for the continuation of the Department's healthcare strategy.

This includes:

- R21.11 billion for primary health care, such as child and adult curative care, preventative services, antenatal care, postnatal care, fertility and contraceptive services, mental health, TB, HIV and AIDS, and chronic disease management;
- R1.95 billion for home and community-based care services, which will help strengthen population outreach programmes, intersectoral collaboration and community engagement; and
- R1.34 billion to continue our fight against the leading cause of death attributable to communicable diseases in South-Africa and in the Western Cape, Tuberculosis. Additional funding for community interventions and telehealth support will strengthen current TB interventions through empowerment.

The response from the Health department specifically includes improving mental health care services and R3.96 billion has been allocated over the 2024 MTEF, including a new acute psychiatric care unit at the Khayelitsha hospital.

In Education over the MTEF:

- R98.68 million is allocated to support learners to read with meaning and to enhance their language competency;
- We are expanding our support for at-risk children, with a growing number of Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities receiving targeted assistance, underscoring the commitment to inclusive and impactful early childhood development initiatives, which will receive a total allocation of R413.62 million, bringing the total allocation for ECD to R3.81 billion over the 2024 MTEF;
- For children who require support in specialized schools, we will allocate R71.40 million in 2024/25, R74.97 million in 2025/26, and R78.34 million in 2026/27 to respond to the needs of Autism spectrum learners and to support the placement of these learners in schools that are best for them; and

- To make sure that children with Profound and Intellectual Disabilities are cared for, R70.35 million is allocated in 2024/25, R73.86 million in 2025/26, and R77.19 million in 2026/27 to ensure appropriate educational access for these learners, which includes provisions for upskilling caregivers, nutritional support, and funding for institutions

In Social Development over the MTEF:

- R1.12 billion is allocated for the child protection system over the 2024 MTEF under the Child Care and Protection sub-programme of DSD. Part of this funding will maintain the operation of the CYCCs as well as child protection non-profit organisations (NPOs);
- R669.13 million has been allocated to care for persons with disabilities;
- Mr Estian de Jongh Maritz from Langeberg Ridge wanted to hear more about the plans to help homeless people. Mr Maritz, to combat homelessness, R89.80 million is allocated to fund the continuation of services for homeless adults, including subsidies for homeless shelters, reunification services, and psychosocial support services; and
- For Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable livelihoods, we will allocate R166.61 million, most of which will go to food distribution centres and community nutrition distribution centres (CNDs). As the cost-of-living crisis continues, this support for those who need it most is a literal lifeline;

10. Recipe for success to do more with less - Innovations for a successful future

Speaker,

To give life to our key value of innovation, R68.36 million is allocated over the MTEF (R21.79 million in 2024/25; R22.77 million in 2025/26; R23.79 million in 2026/27) to enable this government to do more with the ever-decreasing fiscal envelope received from national government.

Speaker, in a broader environment of fiscal uncertainty, austerity, a rapidly growing population and declining equitable share in real terms, we are compelled to think about and design alternative and blended financing options and optimise own revenue sources to create stability for the provincial budget.

Provincial Treasury is exploring different approaches to alternative and blended financing and engaging stakeholders on the potential of outcome funds and social impact bonds. These efforts are aligned to and complement the work that National Treasury is doing to advance the scope and potential for alternative financing to catalyse and crowd in private sector financing, in particular, for infrastructure investment that is critical to boost our economic growth prospects.

A palpable problem that affects us all is climate change. The June and September 2023 floods which caused a total of R1.63 billion in damages to Western Cape infrastructure is just one example.

In response, the Provincial Treasury accessed R388.00 million from the unforeseen and unavoidable reserve to partially fund repair and reconstruction work, and we are still waiting to hear whether the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) will contribute to these declared disasters.

We have identified climate finance as an important source of alternative finance and blended finance for South Africa and the Western Cape.

US \$8.8 billion in climate finance has been pledged to South Africa, and national government has raised US\$3.3 billion so far from Multilateral Development Banks and International Finance Institutions to support climate change, energy, and just transition objectives.

This government will be actively engaged over the 2024 MTEF in accessing climate finance to mitigate climate related loss and damages, and build-back-better climate adapted infrastructure, with the Departments of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and Agriculture taking up the lead on our climate change responses.

Our Fiscal Futures project will play a key role as we keep building a Western Cape that works now and into the unknown. A key application of the tool over the MTEF is to estimate the impact of the 2022 census data on the Western Cape's PES and its broader fiscal framework.

It features dashboards for visualizing financial positions, supports scenario planning, and facilitates expenditure risk management. The process will enable us to even better analyse national revenue trends, spending pressures, and provincial revenue projections to better forecast the province's financial position into the future.

11. Conclusion - We protect and prioritise to keep building a Western Cape that works

Speaker,

As South Africans, we have in our mind's eye a vision of a future that is bright.

The details may look different to each of us, yet we all share the dream of being able to walk home safely, of having the dignity of a job, and being able to provide for our families.

We all want safe drinking water, well maintained roads and bridges needed to get to work and back, we all want and deserve a constant supply of electricity, to not only sustain but to help our businesses grow and employ even more people.

We all want a future where, if needed, we have access to quality healthcare, where we have the support for our mental health needs, and where we can be safely cared for and helped if we suffer abuse.

While this dream may seem far off, it does not have to be. With the right policies that attract and incentivise investment, that support and enables the private sector, with expertly designed and implemented plans, through determined action, the future that we are building towards is possible.

And the proof is right here, in this province, in the growing number of employed people, in the country's lowest unemployment rate, and the country's lowest inequality rate, where more people have access to the opportunities they need and deserve.

Speaker, as I conclude, I'd like to thank the many citizens from every corner of the Western Cape who had their say on the 2024/25 Budget.

To the Consuls General for their continued friendship and partnership as our major and emerging trading partners, which we value very much.

To my cabinet colleagues and the extended Budget Policy Committee, thank you for your commitment to informing and implementing this Budget to keep building a Western Cape that works for all.

To the Accounting Officers and their teams who exemplify what it means to be citizen centric.

To the entire Provincial Treasury, under the immensely talented and dedicated senior leadership team, thank you.

To my exceptional team in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Opportunities for the tremendous support they have and continue to provide me day and night.

To my colleagues in local government, at the coalface, I appreciate the good working relationships between our spheres of government for a Western Cape that works for all.

And finally, to my dear family, thank you for your enduring love and support.

Speaker,

The Budget I table today strikes the difficult balance of protecting the essentials now for the poor and vulnerable who need it the most, and prioritising our key interventions that will take us all into the future we want, as we keep building a Western Cape that works, for all.

I thank you.