

**Special address delivered by Premier Alan Winde in the Western Cape Legislature.**

**22 October 2020**

**“The courage needed to get the job done”**

Speaker,

Honourable Members,

People of the Western Cape.

Thank you for agreeing to my request to address you today.

It has been 8 months since I set out this government's priorities at our historic State of the Province Address in Mitchell's Plain.

Little did we know that just 1 month later, President Cyril Ramaphosa would declare a National State of Disaster that would fundamentally change the trajectory of this country and the demands on our government.

We find ourselves now in a very different world to the one we did then.

The reality is that South Africa is now at a fork in the road and the decisions made in this moment will impact each and every one of us in the Western Cape.

As we heard on Tuesday, during Minister David Maynier's address, there are serious headwinds facing us.

Our country's economy is shrinking.

Unemployment is growing.

And South Africa is facing the prospect of a debt crisis.

We are now staring into the Hippopotamus' mouth.

The National Government will look to fund this growing gap by drastically cutting provincial budgets.

At the same time, the catastrophic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and our country's lockdown restrictions are gaining momentum, with poverty, hunger and inequality increasing in the Western Cape and South Africa.

It is this confluence of factors that has brought us to our own fork in the road, and why I address you today.

The demands on this government have never been greater, and there will be significantly less money to do the job.

This moment that now presents itself therefore requires brave decisions.

Difficult decisions.

It requires us to prioritise - to make a tough call on what we will continue to do and what we can no longer do.

This is not an easy process because we run many valuable projects and programmes across the province.

It is time for brave decisions.

Speaker,

While we cannot control what is decided at other levels of government, we can be brave here.

For this moment requires courage.

The courage needed to get the job done and to keep us moving forward.

Courage not just of this administration but of everyone in this parliament.

It requires courage from our officials.

From our businesses.

From our trade unions.

It requires courage from every single one of us.

I am here today to share with you and the people of our province how we will make the best possible choices in the most difficult of circumstances as we look to recover and move forward.

And how we will do this in line with one unwavering guiding principle in mind: that our mission is to create an environment where every single person, no matter the circumstances of their birth, can live a life of true value when they live in our province.

Because the life of every person matters to us.

I am also here today to ask for your support, regardless of political affiliation, as we navigate the road ahead.

While there will always be points of disagreement, I know that we all want what is best for the people of this province.

Let's show them that we have the courage to get the job done.

Speaker,

During a difficult moment such as this, we need not look further than the people in our province for inspiration. They are the epitome of bravery.

They stand up to the most trying of challenges each and every day and overcome them.

We have all witnessed this remarkable display of determination over the last 8 months as we fought, together, to flatten the curve and save lives.

I want to use this opportunity to thank you - each and every person in our province - for the role that you have played, and will continue to play, in our battle against Covid-19.

I especially want to extend our deepest gratitude on behalf of every person in the Western Cape to our frontline workers, be they healthcare workers or admin clerks, police officers, government officials or teachers.

You are all our heroes and we thank you.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the great pain that many residents are feeling right now as they have lost loved ones in this pandemic. We share your pain and send our most heartfelt condolences.

We also know that many people have lost their jobs, or have had to close their businesses both big and small. I know that this is an extremely difficult, uncertain time for you and your family.

As we will set out today, we are taking this very seriously and we will do everything we can to get our economy growing so that you can again access a job, or re-open a business in the Western Cape.

While this has been a time of great sadness for many, there have also been many stories of hope from which we can draw inspiration.

One such story that I want to share with you today is that of Zuliswa Maqana, a Covid-19 survivor from Samora Michel in Cape Town.

On the 20th of July, Zuliswa was discharged from Groote Schuur Hospital after 77 days. She had spent 54 days in ICU, with 51 of those days on a ventilator.

Zuliswa did not walk out of the hospital. She danced out. Displaying that indomitable spirit of our people that we are so proud of.

What made this moment even more special though, is that she did not do so alone.

Lining the corridors of the main entrance of Groote Schuur, doctors, nurses and other healthcare officials cheered and clapped for her as she left the building.

Her life mattered to us.

This is the story of the Western Cape's Covid-19 response, and it was not an exception.

Across the province our dedicated officials worked tirelessly with professionalism, compassion and sheer grit.

From our Hospital of Hope here in Cape Town all the way to George, every person – no matter where they lived – received the best possible care.

Because every life matters to us.

Speaker, Honourable Members,

As we approach our fork in the road and make the tough decisions required of us, we should draw from what is best in our province, the hard but inspiring lessons of the past year, and remember that we are capable of moving mountains when we have the courage to do so.

And mountains we did move.

When President Ramaphosa announced that South Africa was to go into a Hard Lockdown, our government did not waste a moment of time in ensuring that we were prepared for our peak of infections that were to come.

Our objective was simple: to ensure that every person – no matter where they come from– would get the medical care that they needed, when they needed it.

That every person would have the dignity of a properly equipped hospital bed and access to proper world-class treatment.

Our objective was to save lives because every life matters to us.

But this was not an ordinary environment and it required a very different response.

Our enemy was largely unknown; we were required to confront it first in this province; and we needed to prioritise with little time available.

The risks were high, and it required tough and bold decision-making.

It required the courage to get the job done.

The courage to build a world-class, state-of-the-art, 800-bed field hospital at the CTICC - in just 6 weeks.

The courage to ensure that we had enough hospital beds through 3 other field hospitals, with a dedicated facility in Khayelitsha operated in partnership with the MSF.

The courage to bring online 41 quarantine-and-isolation facilities across the province in a very short period of time.

The courage to ensure almost 800 000 medicine packages were delivered to people's homes so that vulnerable residents didn't have to travel to clinics and risk exposure.

The courage to create a dedicated Red-Dot transport service, through a partnership with the taxi industry, that would undertake over 1 10 000 trips to get healthcare workers to and from work safely, and 11 400 trips to and from our Q and I facilities.

The courage to launch the biggest communication campaign we've ever had, so that every resident had up to date and trustworthy information to keep themselves safe.

The courage to try new methodologies, by launching our own evidence-based hotspot strategy to fight the spread of Covid-19 in our communities, and to use world-class technology to track our progress in doing so. Methodologies which were later taken up across the country.

The courage to deploy Neighbourhood Watches and Crysalis Graduates to assist in ensuring mask wearing and social distancing in hotspots.

The courage to trust science and medical advice, always, and to try new projects such as our Diabetic Action Plan which saved many, many lives.

And the courage to always be honest with you, and share our data, even when the projections were scary.

The courage to get the job done.

And - importantly Speaker - we also had the courage to make tough choices.

To listen to our experts who told us that high-flow nasal oxygen was working better, when some were demanding that we find and fund additional ventilators.

The courage to only promise and plan facilities that we knew we had the numbers to staff adequately and professionally.

And the courage to trust our citizens who told us they could self-isolate safely when others demanded we build huge isolation facilities.

I am so proud of the hard work of every person in this government in ensuring that no one in the Western Cape had to suffer the indignity of not having a properly equipped hospital bed available for them.

Beryl Williams from Lotus River, who is here today, was a patient admitted to our Brackengate Hospital of Hope. She too danced out of the hospital when she was discharged. When we asked her about her experience of the Western Cape healthcare system, the first word out of her mouth was "wow" followed by high praise for our frontline healthcare workers. And she had that experience because at every step in her healthcare journey, her life mattered to us.

Speaker,

We however soon realised that we were not just confronting a public health emergency.

The Hard Lockdown, and subsequent restrictions – which at times lacked common sense– have created a second, equally dangerous pandemic that will arguably bear a greater loss of life over time.

A pandemic of growing unemployment, poverty, hunger and inequality.

Facing this reality, we knew that even more was required of us and our teams, and that in this province, this second pandemic would - and will continue to be - addressed with equal determination and bravery.

Right away, we launched a major humanitarian response, partnering with civil society and NGOs in the delivery of food parcels and other support.

NGOS, community leaders, faith-based organisations and ordinary residents together helped deliver more than 15 million meals across the province.

We persisted, even when some tried to stop us, and continued our school nutrition programme providing over 8 million meals to our children.

There were many amazing stories of teachers, school staff and volunteers coming together to ensure that children were fed safely.

But I would like to tell you the story of the Carpe Diem special needs school in George that went above and beyond to ensure that learners, many of whom have mobility issues and comorbidities, were able to access food and nutrition when schools were closed.

Principal Elzeth Grobler initially arranged to have the food which would normally be allocated to each child, delivered to their homes but soon realised that they would need to feed whole families and not just the learners.

As the lockdown progressed and the need for food grew, the number of food parcels the school supplied increased- providing nutrition to families of some 200 learners in their school.

This illustrates the real impact of our decision to continue feeding children. And the real impact of government and citizens tackling shared challenges hand in hand.

Speaker,

We also launched over 2000 food gardens across the province, so that household by household, communities could become more food secure.

But this would not be enough, nor would it be sustainable, as long as the economy continued to be restricted and jobs lost.

And so, we didn't stop there.

We stood up for small businesses and lobbied for key job-creating sectors of our economy to open safely.

When some wanted us to go back to level 5, we backed the people of the Western Cape and fought for jobs.

We developed detailed health and safety guidelines for businesses so that they could open safely and created a hotline for employees to report businesses which didn't.

And because we know that the education of our children is essential if we are to fight poverty and inequality, we backed our schools to open safely too: providing 2.4 million masks and nearly 1 million litres of sanitizers to schools across the province.

We stood up for you and spoke the truth to power.

In the President's Coordinating Council.

In meetings with Ministers.

In direct engagements across our province.

We backed the people of the Western Cape because every life matters to us.

I share this experience of the last 8 months with you because it showed us what is possible when we work with the courage that will be required from us all in the months ahead.

We cannot go back to the status quo, where projects take many years to get off the ground. We are facing a crisis and there is simply no time.

We have proven that we can govern with agility, innovation and efficiency and we can do it cleanly, with an excellent governance record. We don't steal the people's money in this province.

The bottom line is that we must not slip back to the old ways of doing things: we need action and the courage to get the job done so that we can keep on moving forward.

Speaker,

Before I turn to the tough decisions that need to be made in the months ahead, I do want to reflect briefly on the National Government's budget priorities.

I am deeply concerned that provincial budgets will be significantly cut, despite public promises - some made to me personally - that funds spent on Covid-19 would come back to us, and despite the National Treasury continuing to pump money into failing State-owned Enterprises like South African Airways.

The Western Cape Government's budgets over the medium term are likely to be cut by the same amount or more than is now going to be funnelled into the black hole which is SAA.

Let me be crystal clear: over R10 billion is going to be taken out of the mouths of the poor to pay for our failed state airline.

We don't need SAA, when there are so many airlines who fly cheaper and better, but we do need life-changing and life-saving services like Education and Healthcare. And these services are provided by provinces.

We don't need chicken or beef being delivered in the skies to those who already have an income, but we do need good nutritious food delivered to our children so that we can eradicate extreme hunger.

These warped priorities should leave every person in this chamber, and indeed our province, angry.

Every parent.

Every student.

Every person who got healthcare over the last 8 months that saved their life.

This is part of a worrying pattern, which needs to be addressed urgently.

Provinces are not nice-to-haves that can be done away with when times are tough. They are the frontline, and we now know better than ever before that you don't cut your frontline.

So, Mr President, Minister Mboweni: we need you to reconsider this course of action very carefully.

We know that we must all tighten our belts and do things differently during this difficult time: but, please, cut the fat first before you cut from where it matters most to residents.

And reward those provinces that have a track record of delivery and who have shown that they have the courage to get the job done, without stealing people's money.

Speaker, Honourable Members,

We are confronted with the reality that we have significantly less money to deliver on our mandate and to assist with our province's recovery. We need to make hard choices now.

And the reason they are so hard is because they require trade-offs.

They are, in effect, forks in the road, and every path that we pick will have consequences for how we govern and for the future.

Our residents therefore deserve to know what these are.

We have identified four major choices that we must make if we are to move forward.

The first relates to prioritisation; the second to efficiency; the third to spending and the fourth to the delivery model that we will use.

On prioritisation, our government considered whether we must try to do more with less, with the potential of not doing any of it well enough.

Or whether we should be brave: do less, but do it effectively, achieving real outcomes that will change our people's lives for the better.

Our decision is that it is better to focus our efforts on fewer, key priorities that will make the biggest impact on the lives of our people. And to do it well.

On efficiency, our government considered whether we must stick with the current mechanisms that we have used to date, drafting annual plans which we religiously stick to whether they are delivering maximum benefit or not.

Or whether we should be brave, take the risk and allow our staff to innovate and make changes along the way so that we can deliver a better, smarter government.

Our decision is that innovation is the only way to make a difference in this resource constrained environment, and that we must find new ways of delivering more efficient, cost-effective services.

Speaker, we already have an example of this innovation in practice. As I mentioned in my SOPA, we have established a War Room which brings together our province and local governments in a collaborative space to solve complex problems that are holding back our economy and society.

The methodology employed by the War Room is called Problem-Driven, Iterative and Adaptive Change which works to build the capability of key officials and departments across the Cape as they listen to citizens and business, understand problems deeply, and respond rapidly and creatively to drive a stronger economic recovery. The War Room has already achieved notable successes and we will continue to use this cutting-edge approach to help us deliver on our new priorities.

Our third choice is on spending, and whether we allow our administration to become bloated by our own wage bill, like so many other administrations across the country, or whether we should be brave and fight against this.

Because we believe that only a major investment in infrastructure, and excellent service delivery, will spark the economy and create jobs to the degree that we need to properly recover from this crisis, our decision is to make as much money available for this as possible.

That is why we have put a freeze on the filling of non-critical posts. We have also written to the President, and the minister of Public Service and Administration, to ask for a seat at the wage bargaining table. Since the decisions made there are ones for which we will need to pay, we want to have our say.

And lastly, on our delivery model, our government must decide on whether we tackle these challenges through using our own government services.

Or whether we should be brave and make the bold decision to partner with others when they can do it better.

Our decision is to join hands with civil society and the private sector, and by empowering them in this way, we will also grow our economy, boost employment and roll-back poverty.

In summary, the Western Cape Government has chosen to be brave.

We choose to have the courage to get the job done, no matter how difficult it may be.

Speaker,

Our Government has also through these deliberations identified three 'North Stars', which guide all our work as we seek to improve the lives of our people.

Firstly, that our job is to create an enabling environment for the economy to grow and to create employment because without a job, there can be no dignity and well-being in our communities.

A job is a golden ticket out of the cycle of poverty and inequality in South Africa, and it is the foundation for any recovery. That's why creating jobs remains our number one priority.

Secondly, that no person can live a life of true value and have real dignity if they live in fear of violence and crime.

The reality is that the Western Cape is not a safe place for many of our people, and this needs to change.

And so, our second priority remains to build a safer, more compassionate province.

Thirdly, and fundamentally, that every person has the inalienable human right to dignity and wellbeing.

From the moment we are born to the moment we die. And every moment in between.

Every life must matter, and we must make it so.

When you have a job, when you feel safe, and when you are treated with dignity, you create well-being and hope.

They are all inter-linked, without one you cannot achieve the other.

Together, they are the recipe for real change.

These are our ingredients for hope.

And this is what we must now pursue single-mindedly and courageously.

Speaker,

I have set out in some detail our Covid-19 response because the pandemic fundamentally changed the way that this government worked.

As we approach these three key priorities for real change and hope, we need to always remember what we are capable of when we work with determination.

Last month, I joined a panel discussion with the brilliant Professor Salim Abdool Karim – the chair of the national Ministerial Advisory Committee.

During the discussion he said something which struck me, and which I have thought of ever since.

He said that if someone had told him that we would have built a world-class, state-of-the-art, 800-bed field hospital at the CTICC in just 6 weeks, he would have thought the person was mad. It would simply be impossible.

But we did it here in the Western Cape, and without a cent from the National Government in the process.

This, honourable members, is what is referred to as a 'moon-shot' – where you make an ambitious, brave decision and you work tirelessly towards achieving it until it happens.

Like sending the first man to the moon, when you invest and focus on a common goal, anything is possible.

We need many more moon-shots in the Western Cape, in each of these priority areas, if we are to create jobs, build safer communities, and ensure the dignity and wellbeing of each and every person who lives here.

Speaker, Honourable Members,

This moon-shot thinking is what our government intends to embrace in the months and years ahead. We intend to demonstrate the courage needed to get the job done.

And so, under our priority to create jobs, we will be bolder than we have ever been before.

We have launched an emergency economic relief and recovery programme.

This will address the major blow wielded by Covid-19 on our economy, which will result in over 150 000 jobs losses in the Western Cape this year alone.

This plan, under the guidance of our economics cluster, aims to create nearly 20 000 new jobs through rapid interventions.

I want to again make clear that, in the Western Cape, we believe that it is the private sector and not the state that drives economic growth and job creation.

In order to allow for this private sector led growth, we need to continue our war on red tape in this province, by proposing new legislative and regulatory amendments – especially to the Heritage legal framework – so that we can stop being a barrier to growth.

I have now instructed every single Department and team to look carefully at everything they do and ask whether they have systems or rules that we can change to make it easier for businesses to establish and grow.

I have also asked them to go back to past complaints we have received from businesses and to think carefully whether we can make changes that will help entrepreneurs.

And Speaker, I am today calling on any business - or person who wants to start one: to let us know if there is anything the Western Cape Government should be doing differently to help your business grow.

This focus on private sector led growth and job creation is also why we will do everything we can, together with our entities, to finalise the more than 26 private sector investments still in the pipeline, which will create over 3000 jobs and pump more than R30 billion into the economy. This includes investments in the property and construction sectors, logistics, health tech and investments at the Saldanha Bay Industrial Development Zone and at the Atlantis Special Economic Zone for Green Technology.

It is also why we will work to grow exports by 5% through export development programmes which will support market access research, certification needs and by providing export training in priority commodity areas.

Wesgro will promote exports through its export and trade promotion programme, and we will also work closely with the National Government to ensure that issues at the Cape Town Port are addressed.

We will scale up existing public sector programmes that will provide work opportunities to unemployed people and we will ensure new skills are developed in this increasingly digital world.

And we will fast-track existing infrastructure builds which are already at implementation stage.

We will need the National Government to back us by doing the same too, as funding partnerships will be essential.

But, Speaker, this will not be enough if the private sector does not have the confidence or resources to invest too.

We will therefore also boost economic and consumer confidence, by promoting our province both domestically and internationally as an attractive place to do business and to visit.

And we will continue to lobby the National Government to allow all international visitors with a negative PCR Covid-19 test to visit our province, so that tourism can safely boom again.

We have also supported our small businesses and informal sector, who have been hit the hardest, by launching an initial R27 million relief fund, and we will continue with small business support programmes over the medium term too.

A foundation needed for any economy to thrive is a consistent energy supply.

If we are to achieve our ambitious moon-shots, load-shedding needs to become a thing of the past in our province.

To work towards this objective, we will support municipalities in leveraging the recent directives from the National Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy that they can now develop their own power generation projects and also secure power from Independent Power Producers.

This is an exciting development for our province, and we are well positioned to gain from it because of the ongoing focus of this government on the new, green economy over the last term.

Honourable members, it is my promise to you that we will be the first province to beat load-shedding.

Speaker,

As I have explained earlier, we have made the bold decision to invest heavily in infrastructure in the Western Cape in order to achieve our jobs priority.

To do so, however, we need the right vehicles to deliver projects.

That is why we will launch the technical process to form a dedicated infrastructure agency that can transact and hold assets, as well as borrow money, as a 3D entity under the PFMA. We hope to conclude this process within the next year.

This will allow our government to better partner with the private sector in such initiatives, in line with these new priorities.

Another important stumbling block which will need to be overcome is the lack of funding available to invest in these major infrastructure projects.

And so, we have therefore also taken a decision to explore - for the first time in the history of this province - the possibility of borrowing money from financial institutions to specifically invest in infrastructure that will enhance economic growth and job creation.

This decision will not be taken lightly, and all due diligence will be followed. However, given our excellent track record in government, and consistent clean audit results, we have demonstrated that we can do so successfully.

Speaker,

None of these moon-shots will bear fruit while our economy continues to be dragged down by our failing transport system and poor mobility.

I will repeat again that it is outrageous that while our train system is in disarray and in need of major overhaul, billions will be pumped into failing entities like SAA.

Mr President, we don't need state funded planes, but we do need working trains in the Western Cape. And ones that arrive safely and on time.

I am personally very pleased to hear of the President's commitment to getting the central line working again – which is essential to all our priorities: jobs, dignity and the safety of our residents who live in the Cape Flats. I also want to thank him for proposing the privatisation of our rail service on certain routes.

We now need to play our part and assist in the repair of our public transport system by establishing a single Transport Authority for the Greater Cape Town region in the Western Cape.

We will therefore proceed with engagements with our partners in other spheres of government so that we can get this done.

This is international best practice, seen in every major city in the world. We should expect the same here too.

Lastly, as I have set out earlier, our Red-Dot transport service was an important innovation and showed what is possible when we work effectively with the taxi industry.

I am pleased that Mr Nazeem Abdurahman, chairperson of SANTACO is here with us today because this industry remains a critical, valued partner in our transport system and must form a key part of our plans for mobility.

We believe through innovation, the use of new technology and by partnering with the National Government we can expand this to other residents too.

"A Blue-Dot transport service" for our people.

At its core, the Blue Dot taxi service will be a voluntary, rewards-based programme that leverages technology and incentives to shift behaviour and transform minibus taxi services.

We will once again partner with the taxi industry on this project with the aim of creating safe, reliable, dignified and affordable public transport which will also create economic opportunities and jobs.

The service will be rolled out in phases with the first phase providing a financial incentive or reward for improved quality of service and safety, which will be monitored using technology and a five-star rating system.

Monthly incentive payments would be determined based on the performance of participating operators and drivers against set performance standards.

The better a participant performs, the more they are able to earn.

We intend to roll out the first phase in this financial year, using the Department of Transport and Public Works own resources. We will launch in partnership with SANTACO and work with up to 1000 operators and drivers on priority routes in this phase.

Minister Madikizela will make further announcements on this partnership soon.

Speaker, Honourable Members,

I have spent some time on our job's plan because of the very serious challenges facing South Africa's economy.

But as our communities know too well, a job, while important, is not enough.

Because you cannot feel you matter when you live in fear of violent crime.

I want to pause for a moment and use this opportunity to acknowledge the many lives lost to violent crime in this province, and to reflect on the pain that their families and loved ones will surely feel forever more.

I also want to recognise the brave efforts of so many law enforcement officials in our province.

There are simply not enough police resources for the Western Cape, and while I know General Matakata is addressing this, we must realise how difficult this makes the work of these officials.

I salute you for what you continue to do for us.

Honourable members,

There is a war raging in our communities, especially against our women and children, and it is a war that we must win if we are to build a better future for our people.

This will require both urgent interventions immediately and a medium-term response.

Over the medium term, we must have the courage to continue with our government's first successful moon-shot, the Western Cape Safety plan – despite our financial pressures. There is simply too much at stake.

I can therefore confirm that even though we face budget cuts, we will not roll-back on our boots-on-the-ground commitment.

The 500 LEAP officers already launched will continue to be deployed to hotspot crime areas based on evidence and data, and we will stick with our plans to deploy an additional 500 officers thereafter.

We will also not walk-back on our commitment that we will halve the provincial murder rate in the Western Cape in a decade.

We must have the courage to get the job done on safety.

Evidence-based, data-led interventions is one key component of our safety plan. The other equally important pillar is violence prevention in our communities.

Violence prevention requires being there for our residents from the moment they are born, throughout their lives, so that they can always have dignity and so that they always treat others with care and compassion.

To do this we need to foster nurturing relationships between children and caregivers and ensure education and life skills.

We need to reduce access to weapons, create safe spaces through urban design and empower women socially and economically.

We need to change dangerous social and cultural norms and provide effective victim support services so that no one has the indignity of second-hand victimisation.

And we need to confront the fact that the Western Cape has a deadly relationship with alcohol that must be urgently addressed.

I would like to spend some time on this last point, because it is very close to my heart, and which I think we have seen play out during this pandemic.

Our department of health's data showed that when alcohol was banned during the Hard Lockdown and subsequent restrictions, trauma cases in our hospitals came down notably.

As soon as the sale of alcohol was allowed again, the number of trauma cases increased almost by the same percentage.

The causality is as clear as day.

We cannot ban alcohol indefinitely: in addition to it being a removal of rights, there would be negative consequences on job creation especially in our poorer, rural areas.

But we do need to fundamentally change this deadly relationship if we are to prevent violence in our communities, and this can be done with smart interventions.

The Western Cape Government, which has the competency to do so, will therefore propose major amendments to the Western Cape Liquor Act, and we would like this to be fast-tracked as an urgent priority.

As part of these amendments, I can announce that we have now put “per-unit-of-alcohol” pricing firmly on the table for consideration.

This will make it more expensive to buy alcoholic beverages with higher alcohol percentages; an approach which evidence suggests can be effective in preventing binge drinking.

We will also consider stricter times for the sale of alcohol, even after the expiry of the National State of the Disaster regulations.

This tougher approach must be matched with incentives for liquor outlets who do follow the rules.

It also requires that we make it less burdensome for unlicensed vendors to become compliant, so that we can eradicate the illegal sale of alcohol in our communities.

We must have the courage to get the job done on alcohol.

Lastly, as part of our medium-term response, I can reveal today that we will recruit an additional 1000 young people to be deployed as safety ambassadors in public spaces.

This will also help create opportunities for our youth in our most vulnerable communities.

Speaker,

Our safety cluster has also devised a number of additional interventions to make an immediate impact in our communities.

We will train and place 120 peace-officers at 6 vulnerable municipalities across the province.

We have established a rural safety desk in our government to address the growing concerns of our rural communities and are in the final stages of recruitment.

And we will upscale our Gender Based Violence services, through 6 new shelters, and we have started work on a dedicated GBV strategy for the Western Cape.

We have the funding and the service providers ready to go just as soon as Public Works Minister Patricia de Lille signs the MOU for the properties.

It is also why we are strengthening our after-hours response teams by advertising 30 additional GBV social worker posts. This will ensure that we have the right support available to GBV victims late at night and on the weekends, when help is needed the most.

Speaker,

Having a job and feeling safe helps realise the dignity and wellbeing that every person in this province is entitled to. But together they are not enough.

We must acknowledge that dignity and well-being have to be consistently realised throughout someone's life.

From the moment we are born, to the moment we die. Every life matters.

Dignity is about a solid foundation in our early years.

It means that you have a healthy pregnancy with the right psycho-social support.

It means that you have a safe childbirth, with good health services for you and your child.

And it means that your baby has the opportunity to develop and grow in their early years.

Dignity is also about supporting children.

It is about school-readiness, and early childhood development.

It is about having the education services to enable our children to achieve in school.

And it is about being a thriving adolescent with guidance and hope for the future.

Finally, dignity needs to be protected throughout your life.

It is about opportunities for work and the income needed to live.

It is about being respected when you are old and cared for when you are sick.

It is about living a fulfilling life where you feel like you matter.

Speaker,

Due to the unprecedented consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the humanitarian disaster which ensued, many people in South Africa are now in jeopardy of not having access to these critical services needed throughout their life.

Our people have been hungry.

Our children have had their schooling interrupted.

Our older residents at old age facilities have been at greater risk of severe infection and death.

Parents have had nowhere to send their young children when they returned to work.

Sick residents have been too scared to access key services at our health facilities because of Covid-19.

And the rate of life-saving immunisations and TB testing has dropped.

That is why, from the beginning, our government realised that we had a responsibility to do whatever we can to protect these key services, and why we are working resolutely to ensure that they recover.

We need the courage to get this job done, because it will save lives and futures too.

This is why our Department of Education has, in the most challenging environment, provided resources, orientation and support to public schools across the province so that our children can return safely to class and pursue their dreams.

We are determined to make sure that every child in this province, no matter where they live, has the access to the quality education that they need to succeed.

And it is for this reason that we will continue to protect our key education services, even in this tight fiscal environment.

As more and more people move to our province in search of opportunities, however, we will need to find new, innovative ways to deliver education so that the quality is not jeopardized by our declining budgets.

Fortunately, the Western Cape Education Department are already leaders in education innovation, with the 13 collaboration schools providing a new model that can make a big difference in a fiscally constrained environment.

A Collaboration School is an institutional mechanism that partners poor-performing schools and schools serving marginalised communities with a non-profit school 'operating partner' committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning in that school.

In these schools, we see that the quality of education has improved.

Parents are more involved and invested in the quality of the education being provided.

And, in some instances, we have even seen extended school days so that more quality learning can be provided.

One such school that I want to celebrate is Jakes Gerwel Technical School in Bonnievale - dubbed the "Miracle School".

This school was constructed in just six months on donated land, with community members personally clearing the site, and skilled professionals donating their time.

Businesses donated earth moving equipment and farmers donated the diesel to operate them. And what's more, 60% of the funding came from fundraising and donors.

Our government, in turn, has contributed 40% of the funds, as well as the teaching posts.

The result is a highly successful, no-fee school to serve this community and its future economy.

I am pleased to note that Jakes Gerwel was one of 5 Western Cape schools to be selected to participate in the prestigious World Education Week.

As we move forward, we need more schools like Jakes Gerwel Technical in the Western Cape, and this is a programme our government is committed to expanding.

Speaker,

We also need to ensure that our children do not drop out of school - especially in their final year. This is a real risk due to the school closures, and the tough economic environment that many families find themselves in.

To achieve this objective, we have also launched a #CommitToFinish campaign that encourages our Grade 12 learners to finish their final year. And provides them access to the resources they need.

I want to say to our Matric learners right now, please do whatever you can to finish this year.

I know it has been very difficult, but I promise you that this decision will change your life and that of everyone around you. You will thank yourself when you are older.

Honourable members,

This critical support was not just confined to our public schools alone.

Because we know that ECDs are essential for realising the dignity of every person during their life, and of women in particular, our Department of Social Development also provided the resources and protocols needed for ECDs in this sector to open safely as soon as it was permitted by the National Government.

Even with this initial support, however, too many ECDs remain closed. This deprives the child of a safe space to develop, and in turn, many women are forgoing opportunities for income to look after their children.

So far 2616 ECDS have re-opened, 1423 are ready to re-open and 1255 need more help to become Covid-19 compliant so that they can open safely.

We will therefore be increasing our assistance by providing more PPE and hygiene materials to those that still need it.

We need to ensure that as many ECDs can re-open safely as soon as possible.

Speaker,

We have also worked with old age homes, homeless shelters and other homes and facilities to ensure that they had the right equipment, resources and protocols in place so that people were kept safe during the pandemic.

A key priority for us moving forward is to also now ensure that our residents can access comprehensive health services at all our facilities.

Even more importantly, we need to ensure that residents immunise their children, and get help if they feel sick with other diseases.

Our community healthcare workers, who have shown unrivalled bravery during this pandemic, are now also helping with access to non-Covid-19 services, testing for other diseases such as TB and ensuring that our children get immunised.

In June, I had the opportunity to go out with a team of community healthcare workers as they delivered medicines in Langa. I was struck by their commitment-going out rain or shine- to get medicines to the sick and the elderly.

The recipients of the medicines also told me about the difference this service made in their lives.

I thank these workers, from the bottom of my heart, for their heroic effort.

Honourable members,

The challenges we confront in realising this priority are immense.

The effects of our painful history of racial segregation and exclusion is still witnessed across our province.

In every community. In every region.

That is why, like with safety and jobs, we need moon-shots for dignity too.

We need to bold.

To be brave.

To do things differently.

That is why I am announcing today that Early Childhood Development is now in the eyes of the Western Cape Government a critical service that we must find ways to deliver against as soon as possible.

My vision is that every child will have access to Early Childhood Development, if it is needed.

Every child must be given the best chance at life, no matter the circumstances into which they are born.

And every mother must have the opportunity to go to work in the knowledge that her child is safe, no matter her income.

Achieving new ambitious goals for this sector will require developing new public-private partnerships that will enable the sector to thrive and for more of our residents to make use of them.

We will therefore be convening a special consultative forum with key stakeholders, who are already doing such amazing work in this space, to plot a common way forward in achieving this objective.

We need, together, to set bold, ambitious targets that will push us towards making the biggest possible difference in the lives of our people, and I look forward to engaging with the sector on new ideas for making this happen.

I must say, however, that I am very concerned that the National Government is currently more worried about which department is responsible for ECDs, rather than increasing access to and quality in these centres. We will keep our eyes firmly on what matters most: the best outcome for our youngest residents.

This, together with our Department of Health's First 1000 Days Project, which provides key services to both mothers and babies, we can put our youngest people on a safe road to a successful, more prosperous life.

Speaker,

Because we believe that no-one can have dignity if they are hungry, a large part of our focus on dignity and wellbeing is working to eradicate extreme hunger. The Departments of Social Development and Education, municipalities, NGOs and faith-based organisations will all work closely together to continue to deliver food relief where it is most needed.

The Department of Social Development will be allocating additional funding to food relief by community kitchens while the Department of Economic Development and Tourism has developed a voucher system so that community kitchens can purchase what they need from local businesses and spaza shops.

We will also develop a comprehensive surveillance system, including a stunting baseline survey that will assist us with the evidence we need to intervene with nutrition programmes in the future.

And we will continue with our food-garden programme, by launching thousands more gardens in communities across the Western Cape.

Because shelter is also part of dignity, we will scale-up shelter space and related services for the homeless in areas where it is needed most.

And we will focus on the reintegration of homeless adults, so that they can have access to the families and support systems that they need to have dignity.

Inclusionary housing has been a guiding principle for this government as evidenced in developments such as the Conradie Better Living Model and the Artscape Precinct project.

We will be taking this commitment to inclusionary housing even further by finalising and approving our inclusionary housing policy by the end of the financial year that will guide all municipalities across the province.

This policy will incentivise mixed use, affordable development close to areas of economic opportunity to assist in undoing the painful spatial legacy of the past.

And we will identify, through a review of government property, new, well-located pockets of land across our province, as we did with the Somerset Precinct, where affordable housing can be built as soon as the illegal occupiers vacate the premises.

Speaker,

Our Covid-19 health response has shown us what is possible when we work with determination to fight disease.

While we will not take our foot off the pedal in our Covid-19 health response, we will also need to turn our full attention to the Tuberculosis epidemic in our province.

TB kills many more people in South Africa than Covid-19, and it also requires a courageous 'moon-shot' in this province.

We are, with the lessons from the last year, therefore implementing a 90 - 90 - 90 strategy for TB.

We want to find 90% of all TB cases and place these residents on appropriate treatment.

We want to find at least 90% of the TB cases in vulnerable populations such as with residents living with HIV.

And we want to successfully treat at least 90% of all those diagnosed with Drug Sensitive TB.

Like, with Covid-19, we will use new technology and methodologies to do so.

We will make sure that we deliver medication to people where they live.

We will increase our screening and testing in communities, and we will employ new technology to ensure easy self-screening is possible.

We will use new data management systems to properly track our performance.

And we will adopt hotspot-focussed, behaviour-change led approaches to prevent the spread of TB amongst those most at risk.

Honourable members,

I also intend to use the Provincial Council on AIDS, which I chair, to champion the battle against TB.

And I will support the Barcelona Declaration's intention of working towards the establishment of a new global parliamentary caucus to press for a more effective, urgent response to the TB epidemic.

I believe that this is also a cause for this legislature to champion too, and I look forward to engaging you on this priority.

Speaker, honourable members,

These three priorities are the 'North Stars' of this government; together they are the ingredients for real change.

They are our reason to hope.

And if we pursue them courageously and single-mindedly, they will set us on a course to roll-back unemployment, poverty, hunger and inequality in this province.

This must motivate us all - each and every one of us in this chamber today - to have the courage to get this job done.

I do, however, need to be as direct and honest with you as I can: these priorities will require trade-offs.

It will mean that some programmes and projects - that also did make a difference - won't be continued. This will be trying for us all.

Strong leadership will therefore be needed as we now move forward.

To our members of the opposition, I look forward to the debate tomorrow and to hearing your suggestions.

This government is pursuing brave, new ideas, and a different way of working, in order to make a big impact in a very difficult environment. This will not be easy, and there is a possibility that not all these plans will land.

Being courageous does not mean that mistakes are never made. Rather, being courageous, for me, is the ability to learn from experience, and to try and try again, to make that positive difference. It's a commitment I make to our residents every single morning of my life.

I promise to be the first to tell you when something is not working, and I will come with a new suggestion of how to make it work again.

I also want to urge you to continue to hold me and my cabinet to account and to ask the tough questions. We must be kept on our toes so that we always do the very best for the people of this province.

So, what are the next steps in landing these priorities in our government?

We have just completed the first Provincial Government Medium Term Expenditure Committee engagements, which are critical discussions with the 13 departments and 9 public entities which share our funding.

Our Provincial Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities, David Maynier, will next month table the Western Cape's Medium Term Budget Policy Statement in this Parliament, which will include adjustments to the budget, especially in light of the necessary Covid-19 expenditure we have incurred and the projected cuts we are expecting to see.

The State of the Province Address that I will deliver to you and the people next year, and the main budget which follows soon thereafter, will then be a key opportunity to lift the sails and to move our government in this new, brave direction.

I have already changed the reporting structure of the extended cabinet to include these new priorities, so I can make sure we land them in our government. This extended cabinet also links up to all district municipalities and the City of Cape Town and will ensure we work together in getting this important job done.

We now eagerly await the Minister of Finance, Tito Mboweni's, delayed MTBPS, which was meant to take place yesterday. This will provide us the much-needed clarity on just how severe the expected budget cuts are going to be.

Speaker,

Over the last 8 months, I have had the great honour to meet so many heroes across our province.

From healthcare workers to community activists operating soup kitchens in our hotspots.

From teachers who care so dearly for the future of our children, to small business owners who have gone the extra mile to open safely for us.

I have also had the privilege to work with some outstanding individuals in this government who have made me proud to be South African.

I remain in awe of the sheer determination I have witnessed by our officials, as they navigated these difficult past months.

There are so many people worth mentioning, but I do wish to extend a special word of gratitude to our Head of Health, Dr Keith Cloete, who assumed this important post just as the pandemic started.

Under the leadership of Minister Nomafrench Mbombo, he helped deliver a world-class health response that we can all be proud of.

Thank you, Dr Cloete.

We are also heartbroken that we have lost some of our own employees during this pandemic, many of whom were on the frontlines fighting for us.

To their families, loved ones and colleagues, we send our deepest condolences. Their example will motivate and inspire us to do whatever we can to build a better future for all our people.

People of the Western Cape,

The best way to honour all those who have done so much for us during this time is to keep on fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. We all need to be leaders now.

Because you, wherever you live in this province, are the most important warrior in this fight.

As I have set out in my weekly Covid-19 public briefings, we are starting to see 'bush-fires' emerge linked to clusters of spread.

These 'bush-fires' flare up when people don't follow the important golden rules that will keep you and others around you safe.

We are fighting these bush-fires, using our data, contact-tracing and screening teams, and by employing all the lessons we have learnt this year.

We also still have the Brackengate Hospital of Hope field hospital and the Sonstraal Hospital open and ready to respond to any increased need for healthcare.

But we cannot fight Covid-19 alone. We need your help to keep us moving forward.

Your behaviour - by wearing a mask, keeping a distance, avoiding poorly ventilated, crowded spaces and regularly cleaning your hands - will help keep us all safe and moving forward.

Let's show the world what we are capable of, right here at the southernmost tip of Africa. Let's keep on showing that our response is world class.

For our part, you have my word today, before all your elected representatives, that we will keep on fighting for you.

That we will do whatever we can to save lives, each and every day, because every life matters to us.

And that we will work tirelessly, as we have done throughout this pandemic, to now deliver on these priorities for real change and hope that I have set out today.

As we now face our fork in the road, let's not be afraid of the hard choices that we need to make.

Let's do it for our communities.

For our children.

And for our future.

Let's have the courage to get the job done.

Thank you.