

BUDGET VOTES

2024



**TUESDAY,
20 AUGUST
2024**

Hon. M.J Letsoha-Mathae
Office of the Premier
(Vote 1)



Fourth Raadsaal, Bloemfontein



the premier

Office of the Premier
FREE STATE PROVINCE



**LEAVE NO
ONE BEHIND**



Honourable Speaker of the Legislature

Honourable Deputy Speaker

Honourable Members of the Legislature and the Executive Council

Executive Mayors, Mayors and Speakers of Municipalities

Boetapele ba Ntlo ya Marena le Ma-Khoisan

The Director-General and Heads of Department

Chairpersons of our Public Entities and Chief Executive Officers

Leaders of the African National Congress and the Alliance

Leaders of Faith Based Organisations

Leaders of Civil Society Organisations

Leaders of the Business Community

Comrades, Compatriots and Friends

Honourable Speaker

This is “**The Year of United Action to Defend our Freedom and Advance a Better Life for All.**” It is the moment of hope to weave our collective efforts to reorder our landscape for the good of our people.

It is a time of reawakening to recommit to a deep sense of public service.

Mindful of our common destiny, this is an opportunity to restore trust, optimism and hope in our ability to respond to our people’s aspirations.

Never before has the need to be daring in what we do been so urgent. And time is not on our side. We need to act, and act now.

Thirty years ago, we embarked on a path to build a province strongly anchored on the principles of democracy, equality and shared growth.



At the time, our immense task was to undo decades of apartheid legacy.

Repression, poverty, and racism were lived experiences of our people. Apartheid thrived on their pain, despair, tears, blood and suffering.

We remember the role **Ruth First** played in advancing the struggle of our people for national liberation and social emancipation. **Forty-two** (42) years ago, on the 17th of August 1982, she was brutally murdered through a letter bomb by the evil and monstrous apartheid regime.

Thirty years later, we are moving ahead with a great sense of confidence. When all hope seems lost, we built courage and regained faith.

Things are now different. The courage of our people is being rewarded, and their aspirations continue to shape our development trajectory.

We are now a democracy built on the principles of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society, as we continue to rewrite our past.

The wholeness of these principles is what makes us who we are today.

Unlike before, people have access to water, electricity, quality education and healthcare. We believe that National Health Insurance Act will intervene in access to health care, despite some resistance by narrow interests.



The business sector must take advantage of opportunities provided by Public Procurement Act specifically on set-asides for preferential procurement.

Our national grid remains under immense pressure. As a result, we will be receiving a kind donation in the form of generators from the Minister of Electricity, Dr. Kgosientsho Ramokgopa. These generators will assist the people of Maluti-a-Phofung a great deal.

Honourable Speaker

The past few years have been challenging for us as the **Free State province**. We are wounded. Our economy has been strained by global events, low growth, increasing unemployment, damaging poverty, and widening inequalities.

With increasing budget cuts, the road ahead will be long and hard.

But this is not time to complain. Collectively, we face these problems and must solve them together. People have voted for change and renewal.

In this **7th Administration**, our actions will be decisive and hard decisions will be made. We will bring about long-lasting solutions to our challenges.

We will unleash our potential to create jobs, reduce poverty and lessen inequalities. Our social wage interventions will ease the high cost of living.



We will roll-out infrastructure investment and support businesses to grow the economy. All of this will be made possible with the implementation of our initiatives to build a developmental, capable and ethical state.

Honourable Speaker

As the centre of seamless governance, the **Office of the Premier** will strategically shape and oversee the success of **“The Year of United Action to Defend our Freedom and Advance a Better Life for All.”**

Work to set the policy direction for the provincial government has begun.

And through integrated planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, we will ensure that government policy priorities are implemented.

This role locates the success of the performance of government in the **Office of the Premier**. So, the centre must hold for things not to fall apart.

Failure is therefore not an option for us. Our people’s expectations for a better life are high. It is our obligation to fulfil their hopes and dreams. From now onwards, our actions will speak louder than our words.

We will set the agenda for change shaped by our national priorities. Our work in this financial year will be shaped by the following priorities:



- **Priority 1.** Drive inclusive growth and job creation.
- **Priority 2.** Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living.
- **Priority 3.** Build a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

These priorities embody our vision of **Leading the Free State Province towards Service Excellence**. They will form the basis of our unifying programme of action as the **Free State Provincial Government**.

Programme 1: Administration

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Speaker

Effective, transparent, integrated and accountable government is the hallmark of democracy, and a requisite for growth and development.

This is the purpose of **Programme 1**: to provide executive support, ensure effective government practices, and embed sound resource management.

All this is important. Changing priorities and increasing expectations require regular improvement of our processes, approaches and practices.

Success demands visionary, focused, driven and strategic leadership.



Besides serving as the secretary to the **Executive Council**, the **Director-General** is entrusted with the day-to-day administrative responsibility to direct and coordinate the activities of the provincial government.

This function entails ensuring integrated planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of government projects and programmes.

To maximise implementation opportunities, we need responsibility from all.

Honourable Speaker

Through the **Executive Council** makgotla, **Clusters**, **Forum of Heads of Department**, **Forum of South African Directors-General**, **President's Coordinating Council**, **Premier's Coordinating Forum**, we continue to embed integrated strategic planning, alignment and collective action.

For this to really happen, we will need a renewed sense of integrated planning, coordination and implementation between the three spheres.

Our message is clear: we will ensure interdependent strategy formulation, and connect our capabilities to direct service delivery implementation.



Clusters will interweave various capabilities, collective action and resource pooling to drive integrated planning and implementation.

A **Programmes of Action** that sets clear targets, identify timelines and allocate responsibilities will be developed for clusters to implement.

For better performance of this role, clusters will be reconfigured. We will equally develop external linkages with those critical for our success.

We will walk together, work together and implement together.

Work performed by the **Premier and Executive Support** components will be focused and informed by the implementation of identified priorities.

Honourable Speaker

The national fiscus is under extreme pressure. We have to do more with less. The needs are increasing, but resources are decreasing. Times are tough.

Financial wastage and misconduct are costly. This, we cannot afford.

Every cent unaccounted for robs us of a better life for all. And this goes into the soul of the integrity of a developmental, capable and ethical state.

Accountability, transparency and value for money will direct our financial approach. Re-allocation of funds to more pressing needs will



be prioritised.

Despite marked improvements, we are not pleased with the qualified audit outcomes we obtained. We once again recommit to attain an improved audit outcome.

To do this, we will still work with the **Auditor-General** for support and guidance. This will include implementation of the **Audit Action Plan**.

Honourable Speaker

To show how serious we are about financial improvements, we reduced irregular expenditure by **50%** and did not have wasteful and fruitless expenditure. Compliance with **30-day** payment of suppliers has improved.

All this is thanks to the joint efforts of our **Financial, Internal Audit** and **Risk Management** components. We will continue to do more.

Oversight of internal control, risk management and financial governance will continue to be the responsibility of our shared **Audit Committee**.

Working with the **Public Service Commission**, we will ensure compliance with financial declarations and implement life style audits.

We expect nothing but high standards and greater accountability from all.



This will eliminate conflicts of interest that enables corruption to flourish.

Cases of officials doing business with government will be referred to law enforcement agencies. Our partnership with law enforcement agencies to combat corruption and maladministration will be enhanced.

Honourable Speaker

Focus of our **Security Management** will include physical security assessments and information security. At the same time, we will invest in advanced technological solutions to improve government security.

We will continue to conduct fraud prevention and anti-corruption assessments. Vetting of supply chain and financial management officials, and senior managers will be undertaken. The process of monitoring the implementation of this program in other government departments will ensue.

To fulfil these responsibilities, **one hundred and eight million, two hundred and forty-four thousand rands (R108 244 million)** has been made available for **Programme 1** in this 2024/25 financial year.

Programme 2: Institutional Development

Honourable Speaker

No developmental state will ever succeed without legitimacy, capacity, integrity, right institutions and commitment to democratic values.



Performance of these functions is the role of **Programme 2**. It provides strategic corporate support services to the **Provincial Government**.

This year, we will aim high, dream big and work smart to realise the ideals of a developmental state. Government roles and priorities will be aligned.

This will necessitate a review of organisational structures to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency. **Organisational Development** section will ensure that we have a modern and effective government.

Alongside this reconfiguration will be the filling of vacant critical positions.

This will reduce workload, boost morale and strengthen performance.

We stand committed to improve performance management, and there will be consequence management for poor performance in government.

People expect nothing, but selfless, honest and dedicated public servants. So, there will be no tolerance for poor performance.

Our **Human Resource Management and Advice** unit will drive a renewed energy towards ethical conduct in government. Surely, the quality of services depends on the calibre of our officials from whom we want the best.

This will be the basis for trust, efficiency and accountability in our work.



This role will include labour relations, and health and wellness. Civil servants are our ultimate assets in the achievement of our desires.

We will re-introduce the **Premier's Batho Pele Service Excellence Awards** to pay tribute to all hard-working public servants.

Honourable Speaker

Skills development is a major contributor to growth, and high levels of education can only mean high levels of development prospects.

Our skills development revolution to drive growth and development are championed by the **Free State Training and Development Institute** and the **Provincial Skills Development Coordination** components.

The **Institute** is an accredited public sector training academy acclaimed for its work. This year, we will continue to forge partnerships with the **National School of Government** and institutions of higher learning.

We will also continue to open the doors of learning by investing in the future of our youth through the provision of bursaries.

We will also increase our **Internships, Learnerships, Apprenticeships, Work Integrated Learning** and **Artisan Development** intakes.

I am pleased, Honourable Speaker, to announce that our efforts to combat the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment



have borne fruit. The Free State Training and Development Institute, in collaboration with various Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) have created work opportunities.

The breakdown of the allocations is as follows:

- Manufacturing, Engineering and related Service Sector (MERSETA) - **3629**
- Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) - **690**
- Local Government Sector Education and Training (LGSETA) - **212**
- Service Sector Education and Training Authority (Services Seta)- **199**
- Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training (W&RSETA)- **197**
- Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) - **63**
- Finance and Accounting Services Sector Training Authority (FASSET) - **50**
- Office of the Premier (Engineering Internship) - **17**

So far, **five thousand and fifty-seven (5057)** unemployed youth have benefited from our skills development programmes. An intake of **six thousand** youth has already commenced in this **2024/25** financial year.

Honourable Speaker

In this age of the **4th Industrial Revolution**, work is underway by our **Communications Technology** unit to overhaul our ICT infrastructure.

We will drive a wave of connectivity, innovation and digital transformation.



As we speak, we are rolling-out **Virtual Private Network, Cloud Services** and **Telephony System** to optimise service delivery provision.

We will develop a connectivity plan, and allocate resources to connect schools, clinics, and government offices. Our work with **Broadband Infraco** to implement **SA Connect** programme will continue.

The **Legal Services** unit will continue to provide legal services to the **Premier, Members of the Executive Council**, departments and officials.

A wide spectrum of our legal services ranges from managing litigation, drafting of contracts, legal compliance to legal advice and information.

We will reduce legal claims against government, and decisively deal with opportunistic claims between officials and businesses. In the interest of transformation, we will review briefing patterns of legal counsel.

We will strengthen our communication efforts. Of course, people have the right to know the plans, policies and activities of their government.

We need to provide timely and reliable information to the public.

Platforms such as radio, television and publications will be utilized. As previously committed, we will convene a Community Media Summit to



get a proper understanding of challenges faced by media houses in the province.

As guided by the recently held ANC PEC Lekgotla, we will make optimal use of community-based media to communicate our achievements and challenges.

We will, on a quarterly basis, utilise local media houses to communicate key government achievements as well as report back to the public where we may not have met certain targets.

Work of **Media Strategy and Liaison**, and **Corporate Communication** sections will be to drive communication innovation, use technology to open opportunities, create factual content and curb misinformation.

For all of this work to happen, a total of **two hundred and eighty-eight million, three hundred and three thousand rands (R288 303 million)** have been allocated to **Programme 2** in this financial year.

Programme 3: Policy and Planning

Honourable Speaker

Ultimately, growth and development is reliant on the formulation and implementation of our policies priorities. These are informed by a common vision and commitment that describe pathways to expected outcomes.



It is an acknowledgment of the interlinkages of roles, operational layers and institutional connections between different spheres of government.

This is the function of **Programme 3**. Part of its role includes planning, research, integration and coordination to foster shared understanding, common strategy development, and implementation complementarity.

Long-term planning and its inherent benefits continue to be our priority.

Beyond creating a shared development agenda, this task to be overseen by the **Strategic Planning, Policy and Research** component is about reordering our landscape to bring about far-reaching development.

Honourable Speaker

After extensive consultations, we will soon conclude the review of the **Free State Growth and Development Strategy** that invokes transformation, collective responsibility and coherence towards a better life for all.

In fostering mutually reinforcing actions, we will align **One Plans, Integrated Development Plans** with the **National Development Plan, Free State Growth and Development Strategy** and **Medium-Term Strategic Plan**.



Shaping some of the above-mentioned plans will be the revised **Provincial Spatial Development Framework** that outlines the space economic prospects of our province.

But this we are not doing alone. It is a collective effort. We are working with the departments of **Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform**, and **COGTA** to finalise this **Framework** in this financial year.

Completion of the **Vaal River Regional Spatial Development Framework** will give impetus to the envisaged **Vaal River City Region**.

We are also pleased with the ongoing consultations that are underway to develop the **Free State Small Towns Regeneration Strategy**.

Our work with **SALGA** to unlock development potential of small towns through the **Karoo Regional Development Initiative** continues.

There is no doubt that the success of our development imperatives is predicated on the implementation of the major infrastructure projects.

Honourable Speaker

We will conclude an **Inter-Provincial Implementation Protocol** with **Gauteng** that outlines our cooperation on the **Vaal River City Region**.

We are pleased with the progress made with **Infrastructure South Africa** to develop a bankable project pipeline for the **Free State**.



Twenty-seven major infrastructure projects have been registered with **Infrastructure South Africa** for project preparation and implementation.

Sixteen million rands has been allocated for project preparation funding for the **Psychiatric Hospital** and **District Hospital** in **Mangaung**.

Project preparation funding for **Maluti-a-Phofung Renewable Energy** and **Mangaung Airport Development Node** have also been secured.

Investors' confidence in the economic potential and strategic capability of the **Free State** is evident in the ongoing work to implement the commitments made during the **Free State Energy Security Indaba**.

Construction of **Mabele Fuels** plant in **Bothaville**, **Petro SA's** fuel depot expansion in **Bloemfontein**, **Petroleum Agency South Africa** issuing of exploration licenses to **Free State** businesses, and **Sunalex** construction of a solar complex in **Matjhabeng** are but some of these pledges made.

Honourable Speaker

As we forge convergence across the three spheres, we will facilitate regular engagements through the **Premier's Co-ordinating Forum**.

We will monitor all commitments made by various departments on matters emanating from our dialogue with the House of Traditional and



Khoisan leaders. I am aware that some of the commitments are already being gradually implemented.

Intergovernmental Relation unit will continue to facilitate this work, including our participation in municipal **Inter-Governmental Relations Forums** to ensure integrated planning, coordination and implementation.

With the promulgation of the **DDM** regulations, implementation of this **Model** is now a must. The Premier is the provincial champion of **DDM** and will oversee its implementation, including the development of **One Plans**.

We will complete the **Fezile Dabi Social Compact Imbizo** to strengthen collective responsibility between government and social partners.

Increasing global interdependence has given us impetus to actively engage with other like-minded provinces in various countries.

We will revisit our memorandums of understanding, and undertake mutually beneficial visits, as we strengthen our relations across the globe.

Implementation of the **African Union Agenda 2063** will be pursued, including possible benefits of the **African Continental Free Trade Area**



Honourable Speaker

Through our **Special Programmes** units, we will initiate measures to support women, people with disabilities, older persons and the youth.

We have declared war on **Gender-Based Violence and Femicide**. No amount of words can really explain how appalling this pandemic is in our society.

This is a matter of human rights, just as much as it is of equality. It is time that we change culture, attitudes and systems that keep women in chains.

We will intensify the fight against **Gender-Based Violence and Femicide** through education, law enforcement, empowerment and counselling.

During this Women's Month, I will be convening a Women's Parliament on Economic Emancipation of Women in Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, to be followed by similar engagements in other districts.

We continue to implement the **Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide**. The **LGBTQI+** community will also receive our full support.

We want the best for our youth because the future belongs to them. We admire their endless creativity and curiosity to change the world.



Our focus this year will be on combating drug and substance abuse, economic empowerment, and education and skills development for our youth.

We will formulate proposals for **Building a Disability Inclusive Government** and monitor adherence to the **2%** target of employment of people with disabilities. This will include mainstreaming of people with disabilities in the mainstream economy of our province.

A total amount of **seventy-six million, eight hundred and thirteen thousand rands (R76 813 million)** has been allocated to **Programme 3** to execute its functions in this financial year.

Programme 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

Honourable Speaker

We can only achieve what we can measure. This is the importance of monitoring and evaluation that drives change, progress and learning.

This is the role of **Programme 4** created to provide systematic monitoring and evaluation services of the impact of our service delivery interventions.

The **Programme** sets the parameters for performance and identify the interlinkages between government priorities and the desired outcomes.



This work is rooted in our policies, plans and strategies. More than anything, it is a commitment to provide an honest account of our activities.

The **Sector Monitoring and Evaluation** component has been instrumental in reporting progress on the implementation of the **Medium Terms Strategic Framework** priorities. Progress made to date has been encouraging.

Defined and focused implementation of these priorities is given meaning in the **SOPA** and departmental **Budget Vote** injunctions progress reports.

As a result, we now know where, how and why we have made strides.

Cumulative implementation of these priorities is reflected in the **6th Administration** report that details our achievements and challenges.

This will shape what we do, why and how in the **7th Administration**. We will refine our approaches, improve interaction and enhance efficiencies.

An account of the extent to which departments are achieving their targets as outlined in their **Annual Performance Plans** will also continue to feature prominently as part of our monitoring and evaluation work.

Honourable Speaker



We will still provide analysis support of performance information to the **Provincial Legislature** to better fulfil its oversight responsibility.

Compliance with the **Local Government Management Improvement Model** will be monitored to improve service delivery in municipalities.

I will engage municipalities to determine their service delivery needs, and help them institutionalise this key monitoring and evaluation function.

A developmental state needs to live the **Batho Pele** principles. People's experience of service delivery should be nothing short of amazing.

We will strengthen **Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring** to change the way services are rendered. Assessments reports will serve as instruments for frontline service delivery improvement, learning and accountability.

Citizens' views as to what is monitored, how and what measures are needed to improve services will still define frontline services monitoring.

We will also continue to embark on improvement visits to determine what measures have been implemented based on recommendations made.

Honourable Speaker

With a sustained focus on the people, **Provincial Intervention** will facilitate participatory democracy through community outreach programmes.



These are meant to appreciate the value we place in our people and contribution they can make in shaping their democratic experiences.

Our **Thusong Service Centres** are hubs of integrated service delivery.

This year, over **twenty thousand** people in our rural towns of **Zastron, Rouxville, Smithfield, and Qwaqwa** have benefitted from our services.

This work with our partners that include **SASSA, Home Affairs, NYDA, Department of Labour, Land Reform** and many others, will continue.

We will establish new **Thusong Service Centres** at **Makoane** in **Qwaqwa**. **Thusong Service Centres** in **Botshabelo, Thaba Nchu, Tokologo** and **Masilonyana** will be revived. Recent developments in Petrusburg related to GBVF have left me in shock. As a consequence, we need to bring together all role players in combating the scourge of GBVF, in particular our vulnerable groups, such as children. In the near future, Thusong Service Centre outreach programme, will be taken to Inoseng Primary School in Petrusburg.

We will continue to listen and respond to our people's complaints and complements through our **Presidential Hotline** as well.

In **March 2023**, the **Free State** was ranked the **7th** in the **Presidential Hotline** in the country with **97,46%** resolution rate. From this year, things changed. Our performance hugely improved, reaching **99,70%** resolution rate in **March**, and moving the province to **Position 1** in the country.



We will use our nearly **two hundred and forty-nine CDWs** across the province to bridge the service delivery gap in communities.

We will enhance the management of **CDWs** and mainstream their roles, and forge partnerships with municipalities, to accommodate **CDWs** and agree on reporting ways that will ensure that they serve communities.

We have therefore made available **two hundred and fifty-nine million, two hundred and sixty-nine thousand rands (R159 269 million)** to **Programme 4** to fulfil its responsibilities.

Conclusion

Honourable Speaker

As work of the **7th Administration** begins, we can never overemphasise the urgency of the moment. Our challenges demand urgent action. And working together, we have the power to rise above these challenges.

Our commitment will be reflected in all the things we do. We will harness our collective wisdom to inspire change. This is what gives me hope.

This will indeed be **“The Year of United Action to Defend our Freedom and Advance a Better Life for All.”** Change is coming.



I look forward to the support of this team of passionate **MECs** and **Members of the House**. My gratitude also goes to the **Director-General**, senior managers and all staff members of the **Office of the Premier**.

I therefore table the **Office of the Premier's** budget for the **2024/25** financial year as summarised in **Annexure A** for members' consideration.

I thank you

Annexure

The total budget allocation for the **Office of the Premier**

Programme	2024/25 R000.
Programme 1: Administration	R108 244
Programme 2: Institutional Development	R288 303
Programme 3: Policy and Governance	R76 813
Programme 4: Monitoring and Evaluation	R159 269
Total	R632 629
