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MEDIA STATEMENT

KZN PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEC MEYER DELIVERS AWARD WINNING INNOVATION AS BACKED BY DISRUPTIVE 2026/27 BUDGET

KZN Public Works and Infrastructure MEC, Martin Meyer has delivered the most disruptive budget the department is yet to produce during the 2026/27 tabling.

What makes the budget delivered by the MEC standout among those of the past is that it strips away the many layers of passive bureaucracy and focuses only on the needs identified as a priority for the people of KwaZulu-Natal.

Prior to the budget, MEC Meyer, traveled across the province engaging with rural and urban communities, stakeholder, business circles and contractors in order to deliver what is the most impactful budget and blueprint of commitment by KZN Public Works and Infrastructure.

The MEC's budget and areas of announcement were as follows.

On Jobs:

The MEC announced that KZN Public Works and Infrastructure has allocated R1,263,780.00 to hire five artisans to complete tasks that would have been outsourced during the 2026/27 financial year. Furthermore, the department is currently in the process of finalising the appointment of an additional eight artisans in the current financial year, at a combined annual salary cost of R2,707,130.00. These new disruptions will mean that this department no longer continues to pay exorbitant amounts such as R25.8 million paid over the last five years to outsource artisans.

The department is also in the process of finalising filling 110 vacancies to help it function more efficiently in serving the people of KZN.

At all projects, the department met almost all targets, which demonstrates the importance of involving locals in these initiatives. Last year's jobs outcome indicated that KZN's construction sector registered a 10% employment rate increase in the third quarter of 2025. This translates to 54,000 additional jobs.

As a background, the latest 2026 quarterly figures released by Stats SA paint an encouraging picture which shows that KZN gained 6 000 more jobs quarter-on-quarter. Year-on-year KZN recorded a 5.4% increase in jobs created in the construction sector. KZN emerged among provinces with stronger infrastructure and logistics activity appear more resilient.

On women empowerment:

KZN Public Works and Infrastructure continues to prioritise the participation of women in the male dominated construction sector through exceeding EPWP targets and She Builds, an advisory structure that provides assistance to women contractors facing challenges driven by discrimination against women.

Since education is important MEC Meyer announced that KZN Public Works and Infrastructure offered a total of 10 bursaries to qualifying individuals in the built environment, and the department plans to expand further on this citizenry investment.

Also, within the department the need to empower women was clearly understood. Therefore, in the 2025/26 financial year

- 1 289 of department's own employees undertook training.
- 718 training and skills development interventions were offered to department's own staff.
- 62 new appointments were made within the department.
- And 46 promotions were made, including that of a qualified engineer, Miss Nokwanda Gcaba, to the position of Chief Director of Infrastructure, Maintenance and Technical Support at the young age of just 35. The youngest chief director in the history of KZN Public Works and Infrastructure.
- The MEC was proud to announce that 50% senior officials are women.

On creating opportunities:

KZN Public Works and Infrastructure continues to partner with key stakeholders in the private sector for the benefit of local communities. In this regard the ability to save lives, learn and provide emergency intervention through instant communication has been identified which saw KZN Public Works and Infrastructure leveraging its properties and land parcels for the installation of communication infrastructure brought by communications giants in the province.

KZN Public Works and Infrastructure immediately established a strong working relationship with the biggest communication giants in the country and offered them 8 parcels of land for the installation of communication towers, which will benefit schools, police stations, and clinics, ultimately saving lives in the deep rural part of our province.

This is a boost for the ability of learning in the province through infrastructure delivered by KZN Public Works and Infrastructure. Furthermore, projects expected to be completed this financial year include Nkweletsheni Primary School, and Menzi and Dllilanga High Schools.

During the 2026/27 financial year the department will set aside R12,358,037.00 for the electrification of schools, R5,434,000.00 for the borehole programme and a further R6,993,097.00 for school maintenance.

On digitalization:

For the 2026/27 financial year the department is investing a further R50 million per annum to maximize our digitalization pledge. This means certain tasks in every directorate will be automated and digitalised in one form or another.

The goal is to digitise the department with the intention to go fully paperless in 3 years.

KZN Public Works and Infrastructure has currently invested over R6,9 million in Microsoft Licences. However, the intention is to create multifunctional and bespoke features, which demand a change in the manner the department procures this license.

The department's eVerification system, which is live, is doing an amazing job in helping KZN Public Works and Infrastructure identify where all its 10 067 properties are, what they are used for, allocation and usage changes, addresses, occupancy, among others. It is with such a system that we are able to understand how effective we are in how we use our assets while serving the people of this province.

The MEC took a moment to recognize the outstanding work that has gone into achieving the eVerification system which has made KZN Public Works and Infrastructure the only department to have such an innovative system that won the department the Most Innovative Department In Government award during the Premier's Excellence Awards recently.

On rates:

KZN Public Works and Infrastructure services an annual rates bill that is just under R2 billion rand (R1.9 billion) for its properties located across 54 municipalities in KZN, yet our budget allocation is around R800 million per annum. This is an amount which was allowed to run out of control for several decades in the past.

Therefore, the department looked at possible interventions and solutions. These included:

- Selling of some properties. The first batch we offloaded was 81 properties and land parcels. Furthermore, the Department has a disposal target of 10 hectares, which includes 2 structures and 1 vacant land parcel. Furthermore, the Department has allocated 11 land parcels to a variety of municipalities, 10 land parcels to non-profit organisations and the private sector for socioeconomic purposes, and five unutilised buildings for disposal.

In addition, KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is collaborating with KZN Treasury to establish an agreement that allocates a percentage of the sale of unwanted assets to cover KZN Public Works and Infrastructure's rates bill.

- KZN Public Works and Infrastructure has designed tailored repayment plans for each municipality.
- KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is looking at having the direct value of an asset sold to municipalities go toward writing off that exact amount owed in rates.
- KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is in talks with SALGA to assist and play a neutral and mediating role in our goal to bring municipalities to the discussion table.
- KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is pushing to have schools exempt from paying rates because no government should be taking money away from schools, which are places of learning, but instead money should go towards fixing and maintaining our schools, in light of the R320 million annual schools' rates bill.

Other significant developments during the 2026/27 financial year budget include the reduction of stalled projects by 82% over the past 2 years, the reduction irregular expenditure from R700 million to zero. KZN Public Works and Infrastructure, as led by MEC Meyer, will continue to be a more innovative department that is leading.

In the next coming days, more work will go into empowering local communities, increasing investor appetite and getting more cranes in the sky.

This is part of the kept promise by MEC Meyer to build KZN better so that the lives of the people to home KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is accountable are improved significantly.

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