



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS & INFRASTRUCTURE**
**PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SPEAKER'S
NOTES BY MEC RACHOENE DURING THE MEDIA BRIEFING HELD IN
POLOKWANE, ON THE 30TH OF JULY 2024.**

The chairperson of the session

All members of the media who have joined us in this media briefing

Our audience following this session through our live streaming and other platforms.

First, I appreciate you for having made time to join this session. This will also go a long way in helping us to disseminate messages and updates to our people.

We convened this media briefing to keep members of the public who are mainly the recipients of the services of the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure. Today marks the 40th day since I took to the office as an Executive Authority of this institution. After the announcement of my appointment by the **Honourable Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba**, I immediately hit the ground running, responding to a service delivery outcry in our communities. These are communities that are in serious need of roads and other key government infrastructure. The reality that we are facing is that people need their roads to be upgraded from gravel to tar.

This then compels the department's roads infrastructure directorate and Roads Agency Limpopo to redouble their efforts in making our roads drivable. This department owes service delivery to our people. These are the people who went to exercise their democratic rights and voted for the ruling party in their numbers. They ensured that the ANC got an overwhelming majority. Key infrastructure service delivery departments such as ours are in the spotlight to ensure improved service delivery, and we dare not fail. It is in this spirit that we do things differently because, indeed, "**Dilodichenchitje**".

As the MEC responsible for Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure, I convened this media briefing to keep you abreast with new developments as we strive to improve service delivery to the people of Limpopo. The department has started a vigorous process of ensuring that it reclaims its mandate to be a leader in providing and managing provincial government land, buildings, and roads infrastructure.

The mandate of LDPWR&I is to be the Custodian and the implementing agent of choice on the provision and management of provincial roads, buildings and land in the Limpopo Province. This mandate has been endorsed by the Limpopo Provincial Executive Council (EXCO) as per Limpopo Infrastructure Delivery Management System (LIDMS), adopted in 2012.

The department is mandated to manage all governments' fixed assets, rendering expert-built environment services to Sector Departments, acquisition of land, providing and managing standards for construction and maintenance of immovable assets, as well as disposal of such assets.

The department is embarking on programme to intensify and conduct minor maintenance and operation of infrastructure using in-house expertise. Work has already commenced at Parliamentary Village – where the Capricorn District within LDPWR&I renovated the houses. The plans is to conduct the following using in-house:

- General painting of houses.
- General electrical works – including replacement of light bulbs, circuit breakers, distribution boards, socket outlets, etc.
- Plumbing related maintenance and repairs – such as leaking taps, toilets, etc.
- Carpentry related work – including replacement of locks, tables, etc.

The department is in the process of resuscitating the workshops at all the districts, together with the stores at districts offices. The department advertised over 300 posts in July 2024, which seeks to capacitate different programmes in the department, with focuses on the

infrastructure provision, procurement and maintenance. These resources will supplement the professional pool that currently exists in the department.

This, coupled with the resuscitation of our cost centres, EPWP programme and our quest to strengthen our partnerships with TVET Colleges, will play a central role in implementing these initiatives, thereby improving socio-economic conditions within our communities. The immediate focus for the 2024/25 FY is to conduct maintenance at prestige facilities such as Premier's Guesthouse, Parliamentary Village, and Legislature at Lebowakgomo.

The department will only outsource maintenance of critical infrastructure – such as generators, motors, refrigerators, CCTV systems, UPS, etc. that requires expertise to conclude.

This strategy is linked to the Provincial Maintenance Strategy that is currently at advanced stages of approval.

As most of you might have noticed, the **Honourable Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba** led the launch of the Dikgerekgere Programme, an initiative to ensure that the province's roads are drivable. The department and its entity, RAL, are facing a severe backlog in terms of gravel roads network. The total road network of our roads in the province is about 21 thousand kilometres; of this number, thirteen thousand one-hundred and ninety-seven (13 197) kilometres is gravel.

This has prompted the department to launch the Dikgerekgere Programme to ensure that we activate all our yellow machines and staff members at the 36 cost centres to be on the road—the time for our yellow machines to stand idle at the cost centre.

The reality is that gravel roads require as much maintenance as possible, and those D-roads must be taken care of to allow our people to access places of work, businesses, and government service centres. The dikgerekgere programme will also allow the

department to renew its cost centres by buying more yellow fleets and permanently appointing road workers and operators at those cost centres.

Our Premier Dr Ramathuba has already taken an initiative and engaged the National Department of Transport and our Provincial Treasury, to ask for additional funding to enable us to buy more yellow fleet.

This will be cost-effective, as we will no longer be outsourcing the essential maintenance of our roads infrastructure. The Dikgerekgere programme also provides temporary work opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). Several activities related to roads maintenance require manpower, and EPWP provides space for young men and women of working age to work within the programme and learn skills while we are still seeking funding to permanently appoint them. Still talking about empowering our people, the department has advertised about three hundred posts, to be filled by December this year. These are just not posts, but an intervention which will result into improved service delivery to the people of Limpopo.

The Dikgerekgere service delivery Programme has thus touched three of our five districts: Waterberg, Mopani and Vhembe. Our employees in the three districts have managed to blade, re-gravelled, reshaped and cleared bushes of about seven hundred kilometres of gravel roads.

We are firmly convinced that the continuous programme will go a long way in making gravel roads drivable, while we are seeking a long-lasting solution of upgrading our roads from gravel to tar.

As I earlier alluded to, the Provincial Government, requires over 300 billion rand to ensure that the 13 thousand kilometres of gravel are paved. We know very well that blading and re-gravelling roads are not replacing tar, but we are urging our people to be patient. At the same time, we seek additional funding from Infrastructure South Africa and the National Treasury.

As the department's Executive Authority on Roads Agency Limpopo, I have noted with grave concern the manner in which the entity is run by both the Executive Management and its Board of Directors. Three months into the 2024/2025 financial year, the department transferred One Billion Rand to Roads Agency Limpopo, 40 percent of the two point five billion rands (R2.565) allocated for the financial year.

It has also been brought to my attention that the entity has an over-commitment of projects amounting to **three-hundred and fifty-five million rands** (R355 million) and according to RAL Officials, this over-commitment may be understated by **two-hundred and sixteen million** (R216 million). This is very worrisome given the fact that RAL receives its allocation from the provincial fiscus. One can only conclude that the appointments were made despite the challenges related to budgetary constraints. This, in turn, exposes the department, creating an impression that it can implement road projects in communities. The Honourable Premier, Dr. Phophi Ramathuba, during her address at launch of the Dikgerekgere Programme in Mopani District mentioned that no Department or Entity will be allowed to over-commit its budget and drag the Provincial Government into section 100.

As we continue to reposition the DPWR\$I in reclaiming its mandate, the department has taken a conscious decision to return the re-graveling and other major road maintenance functions to the departmental roads infrastructure chief directorate. This is mainly done to ensure that we ease pressure on the agency, because as the situation stands there is a lot of work that needs to be carried out by this agency such as upgrading roads into tar.

Therefore, the department has taken a decision to ask the Treasury Department to conduct an analysis on the spending pattern of Roads Agency Limpopo. The department will also activate its Entity Oversight Unit to monitor projects that are currently underway, strengthening the oversight work of the Executive Authority, who is the RAL shareholder. Ladies and Gentlemen please allow me to take this opportunity and indicate that I have been served with resignation letters by the three Board Members of Roads Agency Limpopo, up to this stage, leaving the current board not to form a quorum of the total number of eight board members. It is also important for me to indicate that there was still a vacant position of a board member to represent the Transport Department.

The Roads Agency was established by the Limpopo Provincial Roads Agency Property Limited and Provincial Roads Act no. 7 of 1998 (the Act).

Since it is established by an Act of Parliament, RAL is subject to legislation, including the Companies Act 2008 and the PFMA.

The procedure for the appointment and removal of a Board of Directors is stipulated in chapter 2 of the Act. Although the RAL Act does not provide for the dissolution of the Board, the MEC as shareholder of the Agency, has in term of the PMFA ownership control over the Agency, which give the MEC the ability to exercise powers to govern the financial and operating policies of the Agency, including the appointment or removal of all or the majority of members of the Agency's Board of Directors or equivalent governing body.

Further, in terms of section 71 of the Companies Act, a director may be removed by an ordinary resolution adopted by a shareholder meeting. The department is in the meantime engaging the Treasury Department to ensure that an interim board of directors is appointed. The department will later make an announcement on the names of the interim board members.

In Conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity and express my special appreciation to the Premier of Limpopo Mme Dr Honourable Phophi Ramathuba for the support she is giving to the department. Her high energy levels that she is having, as well as her dedication keeps us on our toes and this will directly translate to improved service delivery. I thank you.