



culture, sport & recreation

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEC for Culture Sport and Recreation

Ms Leah Mabuza

2026/27

Policy & Budget Speech

VOTE 11



Thursday, 18 June 2026



09:00



Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature



"Mpumalanga, a Province that works for all"



1. 2026/27 POLICY AND BUDGET SPEECH VOTE 11

- Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Honourable Makhosazane Masilela
- Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Honourable Sam Masango
- Premier of Mpumalanga Province, Honourable Mandla Ndlovu Honourable Members of the Executive Council
- Honourable Members of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature
- Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Kgoshi LM Mokoena
- Executive Mayors
- MMCs for Community Services from District and Local Municipalities
- The Provincial Secretary of the ruling party and its leagues, led by Mr Muzi Chirwa
- Alliance partners
- Head of Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, Mr Mxolisi Mahlangu and Heads of Department in our midst
- Leadership of Sport Federations
- Leadership of Faith Based Organizations
- Representatives of Committees and Sport Confederations working with the Department
- Representatives from the University of Mpumalanga and Tshwane University of Technology
- Members of the media
- Invited guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

2. Somlomo Ngehlonipho ekulu, NjengoMnyango weZamasiko, neZemidlalo, zokuZithabisa, kumndeni, indluKulu, isiTjhaba saMaNdebe, iNdlu Yamakhosi yaseMpumalanga, nobuKhosi mazombe oburholwa uKgosi uMokwena NjengoMnyango sidlulisa umlayezo wokutjhiriya ngokucima kwelanga iNgwenyama uMakhosonke II as we take a solemnly bow.
3. Honorable Speaker, this year has been characterized by major anniversaries with significant milestones to celebrate. The month of June is the Golden Jubilee commemoration of the 1976 Soweto Uprising. This year's National Commemoration of Youth Day, was celebrated in Soweto as the birthplace of the Youth uprising.
4. A day earlier on the 15th, as a province we had our own provincial celebration in Dr. Pixley ka Isaka Seme, in Gert Sibande District under the theme "*RESET at 50 - The future Calls*", a defining moment in South Africa's liberation struggle where young people courageously confronted the apartheid regime in protest against the colonial apartheid Bantu Education. The uprising became a turning point in the struggle for freedom and demonstrated the power of youth activism in shaping the future of our country.
5. On this occasion we also pay tribute to our very own award winning photographer who captured the moment that told the story to the whole world, the son of Bushbuckridge, the late Mr Sam Nzima. His name remains written amongst the heroes of that generation, with his bravery, the graphic images of 1976 spoke to the world
6. Honourable Speaker, the current financial year also marks the 70th Anniversary of the historic Women's March of 1956, during which more than twenty thousand women marched to the Union Buildings in protest against apartheid pass laws and gender oppression.
7. Honourable Speaker, this year also, marks the 40th Anniversary Commemoration of President Samora Moisés Machel. This historic event will be hosted in partnership with the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, Freedom Park, the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, the Samora Machel Foundation and the Machel Family.
8. Honourable Speaker, as we rise to table the 2026/2027 Policy and Budget Vote 11 priorities, we wish to draw the attention of this august house to the historical significance of the June calendar month in particular 26th of June 1955 and June 16, 1976 and their impact to government Appropriation Bills post 1994.
9. The Freedom Charter as adopted by the Congress of the People on June 26, 1955 and the demands which triggered the June 16 students uprisings are both codified as the cornerstone of the 32 years of our democratic state and 30 years since the adoption of the final Constitution, compelling post Apartheid Appropriation Bills to distribute resources equitably and ensure redress across the fiscal framework.
10. However, the Budget Vote appropriation we are tabling today, like many others, faces a question of whether the allocation is sufficient to overcome the legacy of Colonial Apartheid resource distribution of over 300 years.

Honourable Speaker, notwithstanding the binding budgetary constraints and difficult trade offs along the 32 years of our fiscal discourse, the post Apartheid democratic dispensation has done well and we accept, with humility, that more still needs to be done.

11. The late President Nelson Mandela, reflecting in his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* open quote "***After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb***" close quote.
12. Honorable Speaker, with your indulgence let me remind this august house that our National Soccer team, Bafana Bafana will be facing Czech Republic tonight in a must-win game at Atlanta Stadium in the United States of America (USA) in one of our most important matches yet in the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

13. It is in times like these, when standing together as a country is more important than our differences. We need to unite behind Bafana Bafana and show the rest of the world what resilience and persistence can do in a competition. Let us support our boys and trust them to proceed to the knock out stages. **“Rekaofela”**
14. Indeed Honourable Speaker, today is better than yesterday, tomorrow can still be much better than today and this is the kind of inspiration to our people that the 2026/27 Vote 11 priorities seek to achieve.
15. Honourable Speaker, allow me to table the milestones of the previous financial year and the 2026/2027 priorities.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

16. Honourable Speaker, allow me to beat my own drum by mentioning that as a Department, we have turned the corner with regards to Employment Equity and gender representation especially at senior management level. We have managed to achieve 50/50 gender representation at senior management.
17. The establishment of Internal Audit Unit dedicated to the Department will provide assurance that governance, Risk Management and Internal controls are functioning effectively.
18. After many years of struggling to fill the position of the Chief Financial Officer, I am proud to announce that the Department has appointed a permanent Chief Financial Officer to improve capacity and transform finance into a credible strategic function.
19. Honourable Speaker, during the 2025/26 financial year, the Department strengthened governance and accountability, through enhanced ethics awareness, improved risk management practices, strengthened compliance monitoring, and the advancement of business continuity initiatives.
20. For the 2026/27 financial year, the Department will continue strengthening Ethical Governance, promote a culture of integrity and accountability through ethics awareness programmes, fraud prevention initiatives, strengthened governance oversight and implement business continuity measures to ensure uninterrupted service delivery.

PROGRAMME 2: CULTURAL AFFAIRS

21. The Department continues to implement its mandate in line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the National Development Plan 2030, the Medium-Term Development Plan 2024–2029 and the provincial vision of building a patriotic, socially cohesive and inclusive society.
22. Cultural Affairs remains one of the strategic pillars through which Government advances social cohesion, nation building, cultural preservation, indigenous language development and the growth of the creative economy in the Province.
23. Honourable Speaker, despite prevailing fiscal pressures and economic constraints, the Department made notable progress during the 2025/26 financial year in advancing arts, culture, heritage and language development programmes across the Province.

24. The Department continued to implement social cohesion and nation-building programmes aimed at fostering unity, inclusivity and active citizenship amongst the people of Mpumalanga.
25. In the 2025/26 Financial Year, the Province successfully hosted and supported signature cultural and heritage events including the 10th Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience; Metro FM Music Awards and Innibos National Arts Festival.
26. Over and above these achievements, for 2026/27 financial year the Department entered into a ground breaking strategic partnership with SABC on the celebration of culture, heritage & indigenous languages with three(3) events: Munghana Lonene (Xitsonga Music Awards) iKwekwezi FM (Zikhakhazise Ngesikhenu) and Ligwalagwala FM (44th anniversary).
27. These programmes are aimed at creating important platforms for artists, performers, crafters and cultural practitioners while simultaneously stimulating tourism, township economies and local economic participation.
28. Honourable Speaker, through our continued cooperative governance framework with the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), the Department will implement the Mpumalanga Provincial Community Arts Development Programme during 2026/27, with a total investment of approximately **R3.25 million**. This programme seeks to strengthen and sustain community arts centres across the province through job creation initiatives, skills development, operational support, and the strengthening of the Inclusive Mpumalanga Partnership of Artists in Community.
29. The programme will support nine(9) community arts centres in all three districts .This newly customized indicator intends to create employment opportunities in the Cultural and Creative Industries capacitate arts leaders and managers. This collaboration demonstrates our shared commitment to building a vibrant, inclusive and economically sustainable creative sector in Mpumalanga.
30. As part of our commitment to expanding access to arts, culture, heritage and language services, the Department has strengthened partnerships with leading national heritage institutions. Building on engagements initiated during the Gogo Esther Mahlangu celebrations, we are working closely with Iziko Museums of South Africa to bring travelling exhibitions and educational programmes to communities across Mpumalanga, ensuring that world-class heritage experiences are accessible beyond major urban centres.
31. We have also commenced discussions with Robben Island Museum to explore collaborative outreach programmes and travelling exhibitions that will bring the stories of South Africa's national liberation struggle. In the area of language development, the Department has initiated engagements with South African Centre for Digital Language Resources to advance language preservation, digitisation and development initiatives.
32. Furthermore, through our partnership with Ditsong Museums of South Africa, officials continue to benefit from specialised capacity-building and in-house training programmes aimed at strengthening museum management, collections care, research and heritage conservation within the province
33. The Department further strengthened the cultural and creative industries through support provided to cultural organizations, arts structures, cooperatives and community organizations across the Province.
34. Our social cohesion agenda was further strengthened through the successful hosting of key national commemorative programmes and heritage activities during the current cycle.

35. The Province successfully commemorated Freedom Day in April 2026, marking thirty-two (32) years of democracy and freedom in South Africa. Freedom Day remains one of the most significant milestones in our national calendar as it commemorates the historic democratic elections of 27 April 1994, which ushered in a constitutional democracy founded on human dignity, equality, freedom, non-racialism and social justice.
36. In the beginning of 2026/27, the province in partnership with the National Department of Sports, Arts and Culture hosted the 33rd Chris Hani Commemoration in honour of one of South Africa's most respected liberation leaders and revolutionaries. Chris Hani dedicated his life to the struggle for justice, equality and freedom and remains an enduring symbol of patriotism, courage and servant leadership.
37. The commemoration preserved his legacy while inspiring young people to embrace ethical leadership, active citizenship and commitment to building a democratic and inclusive South Africa.
38. Honourable Speaker, the Department will continue to develop, promote and preserve living culture and heritage programmes through the support of traditional cultural events.
39. In addition, in honour of the two fallen Kings of amaNdebele King Silamba affectionately known as Komjekejeke and King Nyabela affectionately known as Erholweni cultural events. It also gives access to young maidens to participate in Umkhosi Womhlanga/Wemhlanga to be held in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) and the Kingdom of Eswatini.
40. In the 2025/26 financial year, the Department created different platforms to create a market for our creative artists in the three major malls in the province;llanga mall ,Secunda mall and Highveld mall.
41. The 90 artworks were showcased at G20 in the Kruger park as well as the National G20. We got positive feedback from our stakeholders that we fit in the green economy because we had recycling products.
42. In the 2026/27 financial year, five(5) crafters from different regions curated in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry to assist with overseas export market. These crafters exhibited their products during the 2026 Comrades Marathon in Durban. Another sizable number of crafters will also be exhibiting at the Innibos National Arts Festival that is coming in the first week of July 2026.
43. Through the Expanded Public Works Programme, the Department plans to create **forty-six(46)** work opportunities linked primarily to arts and culture programmes.
44. Honourable Speaker, the Department continues to preserve and promote our rich heritage through museums, commemorative programmes and heritage tourism initiatives.
45. Museums across the Province continue to attract visitors, learners and researchers contributing meaningfully towards heritage education, social cohesion and tourism promotion.
46. Honourable Speaker, the Department will continue to roll out, maintenance and renovation programmes to provincial and local museums to broaden accessibility. The museums include Pilgrims Rest and Lydenburg Museums in Barberton and Mashishing Ehlanzeni Region, Nomoya Masilela museum in Bethal Gert Sibande and the museum in Kghodwana Cultural Village in Nkangala Region.

47. As part of preserving and promoting the liberation heritage of our province, the Department is supporting an initiative in the historic location of Saul Mkhize Ville formerly known as Driefontein, in Mkhondo Local Municipality linked to a historic artefact in a form of a formal suit which once belonged to former President Nelson Mandela. The formal suit will be displayed for public viewing. Beyond the preservation of the artefact and the story behind it, this initiative is intended to leave a meaningful and lasting legacy for local community.
48. The Honourable Premier has committed support towards community development projects associated with this initiative, including the establishment of sport and recreation infrastructure starting with the combo courts.
49. Honourable Speaker, in the 2025/26 Financial year, the Department hosted the South African Gold Panning Championships in Pilgrims Rest. Gold Panning remains an important heritage tourism and social cohesion platform that continues to position Mpumalanga both nationally and internationally.
50. For 2026/27, the Department in collaboration with the South African Gold Panning Association will host the National South African Gold Panning Championships in Pilgrims Rest and participate in the International Gold Panning Championship in New Zealand.
51. Honourable Speaker, the promotion of indigenous languages remains a constitutional imperative and a critical component of cultural transformation and social inclusion.
52. In the 2025/26 financial year, in line with the Mpumalanga Language Act No. 3 of 2014, we are happy to announce that we were able to initiate the first phase on the establishment of Language Unit which will primarily focus on the development and promotion of dominant indigenous languages in the province.
53. The Department also conducted a drama writing competition. The Department incurred the costs of printing of the **six(6)** books and the writers own 100% of the copyright to those books.
54. In 2026/27 the department will continue with the phase in approach of implementing the Language Act No.3 of 2014, that will be concluded in the 2027/28 Financial year.
55. Honourable Speaker, the groundbreaking development is the signing of the MOU between Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation and Department of Education that will go a long way in strengthening intergovernmental relations.
56. In the 2025/26 Financial year, the Department through the Mpumalanga Geographical Names Committee continued to transform the geographic landscape of the province. To this end, **six(6)** standardized geographic features namely: Manqhuzi, Ekulindeni and Enhlaba in the Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality. Ngodlomezi was renamed from Syde. The renaming of Mathunjwa from Kwagga Fontein C in Nkangala District and the formal registration of Mgometsja in the City of Mbombela. In the 2026/27 financial year, a target of **six(6)** geographical names features has been set for review.
57. Honourable Speaker, we have also noted the directive of this august house to rename the **three(3)** key features in the province that includes Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Kruger International Airport and Johann Van Riebeck stadium. Consultative work with key stakeholders has commenced and envisaged to be concluded in the 2026/27 financial year.

58. The Department inline with the priorities of the 7th Administration remains committed to ensuring that arts, culture and heritage are re-imagined to contribute meaningfully towards inclusive growth, social development and the restoration of dignity within our communities. Together, we shall continue building a culturally vibrant, socially cohesive and economically active Mpumalanga Province.

PROGRAMME 3: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES SERVICES

59. Honourable Speaker, the department continues to transform our libraries to serve as a one stop- information hub where patrons can access information, develop business plans thereby participating in the economy of the Province.

60. The Department receives conditional grant from the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. The budget allocation over the years increased from **R165 million to R185 million**. The increase is testimony of the increased demand of library services.

61. As an investment in human development, education, and community empowerment to promote literacy and lifelong learning, Two(02) new libraries in Louiville; Nkomazi Local Municipality and Newtown; Steve Tshwete Local Municipality were completed. The Department has planned to officially open Newtown Public Library in the second quarter and Louieville in the third quarter of the current financial year.

62. Two more Libraries are under construction in Warburton; Msukaligwa Local Municipality and Mmamethlake; Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality are planned for completion in 2026/27 financial year.

63. The allocation in the main provide access to ICT services and library material such as physical books and electronic books to the 122 existing public libraries. In addition new library facilities are built annually and handed over to the municipalities.

64. The National Development Plan 2030 promulgated that there should be a library in each and every ward and therefore the demand is still huge.

65. E-books have become an essential component of modern libraries by expanding access to information, supporting education and research, improving convenience, and enabling libraries to serve users in both physical and virtual environments.

66. A total of 7 745 electronic books were procured and made accessible to users in the 2025/26 Financial Year. This number will continue to grow in the outer years.

67. The electronic books procured are inclusive of all genre/subject areas like fiction, non-fiction and books written in indigenous languages.

68. A marketing drive has been undertaken through social media platforms for users to access the E-books and there has been a positive response Users are registered as and when they request access.

69. The Library Management System is intended to enable libraries to do cataloguing, classification, book circulation, inter-library loans, registration, management of administrators and patrons as well as retrieving reports.

70. Libraries have started with the online circulation of books.
The system currently host **22 103** patrons.

71. The department made provision of **six(6)** mobile library buses in the 2024/25 financial year and are currently servicing far fetched rural and farm settlements where there is no library infrastructure. The impact thereof include but not limited to increased access to books and information, support for rural local schools, digital inclusion and life long learning opportunities.
72. These mobile library buses give access to free internet and Wi-Fi, physical and electronic books.
73. Working together with the South African Library for the blind, the Department has established Mini-libs in selected public libraries in the Province. Through this project, more than **625** active members can now read independently utilizing the assistive devices available in libraries.
74. **Thirty nine(39)** libraries offered services to the Blind and Partially sighted in the 2025/26 FY. This service will be added to **six(6)** libraries in the 2026/27 FY taking the number to **45** libraries.
75. In collaboration with Sunbet, the Department is in the process of establishing a Library for all forms of disabilities located in the Gert Sibande District office. This initiative will be one of a kind in the Province that will provide equitable, accessible and inclusive information services, resources, technologies which will empower all persons regardless of disability to participate fully in education and community life.
76. As part of our Archival programme, the 11th Oral History Conference was held in the Nkangala District under the theme ***“Echoes of the Past: Memory, Identity and Heritage”***
77. The 12th Oral History Conference will be held at Thaba Chweu Local Municipality under the theme ‘Narratives of Justice: Oral Histories of Humanity, the Rule of Law and Voices of Democracy’. The conference will host 200 delegates per day, providing a platform for engagement between scholars, community members, youth and heritage practitioners.
78. The Department acknowledges the need to provincialize the library function and has since commenced with the processes that include, data collection, stakeholder engagement, policy decision and approval. Honourable Speaker notwithstanding the traction we have made, there are still many more hills to climb.

PROGRAMME 4: SPORT AND RECREATION

79. Honourable Speaker, the department is mandated to promote social cohesion through increased interaction across space and class. In order to advance in this mandate, the Department continues to coordinate signature sport events in the Province at enhancing sport tourism, job creation while contributing to inclusive economic growth and development of the Province.
80. In 2025/2026, the Department has continued to work with a number of formidable structures to host signature sport events including:

- The Global Tennis Tournament under the banner of International Tennis Federation working closely with Mpumalanga Tennis Association, Tennis South Africa, Mbombela Tennis and Tennis Base. This is a globally sanctioned professional tennis event that took place from the 27 of April to the 10th of May 2026 within the City of Mbombela with 31 countries and 242 tennis players participating.
- The hosting of an international Football match between South Africa (Bafana Bafana) and Rwanda in October 2025 at City of Mbombela – Mbombela stadium, MTN finals and other high profile rugby matches. In 2026/27 the Department intends to continue bidding for high profile games to continue positioning Mpumalanga as the Premier’s sport tourism destination.
- **Nashua Loskop Marathon** series which is one of South Africa’s premier ultra-marathon event.
- Mpumalanga Annual Sport Awards to recognize and acknowledge athletes who performed exceptionally well in sports.
- The international Boxing Tournament sanctioned by Boxing South Africa.

81. Through these events, many barriers are removed and access to participation in sport is broadened.

82. In 2026/27 the Department collaborating with the Department of Education will host the Inaugural Mpumalanga Premier’s Cup which has been identified and sanctioned as one of the flagship programs to promote both the development of soccer, netball and sport tourism in the Province.

83. The Premier’s Cup will offer a platform for the four Mpumalanga professional teams (TS Galaxy FC, Kruger United FC, Casric Stars FC and The Bees FC) to compete for the Premier’s Cup prize, fine-tune their preparations for the upcoming season whilst displaying their talent and new acquisitions to their fans in Mpumalanga.

84. The Premier’s Cup will also feature both in-school and community clubs football and netball leagues, which will cover all four districts in the Province.

85. This is part of the Department’s plan to develop football from grassroots to professional levels in partnership with the Mpumalanga Football Association, Mpumalanga Netball Association, Mpumalanga Sport Confederation and Mpumalanga School Sport Organization.

86. Honourable Speaker, in trying to broaden accessibility, inclusivity and long-term athlete development, the Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Education. This collaboration has been key in ensuring the smooth implementation of the School Sport Programme and regular participation of learners in different sporting codes at school level.

87. Honourable Speaker in this Schools Sport Programme, we see a lot of athletes being developed and supported through this intergovernmental relations framework. Furthermore, we are exploring potential strategic partnerships with the private sector.

88. In 2025/26 again we saw three of our under 15 football girls (Nkosingiphile Mthombeni, Kamogelo Moroga and Sinothile Mhlanga) selected to form part of the COSAFA African Schools Football squad. They represented South Africa in CAF qualifier games held in Stellenbosch, Western Cape in December 2025. These girls are certainly en route to the SA Under 17, Under 19 and eventually Banyana Banyana teams.
89. In Athletics, Matsidiso Makgato from Gert Sibande was also discovered in the National Athletics Championship in Bloemfontein last year. Matsidiso broke the records in Long Jump winning gold and in Under 17 100 meters winning a silver medal.
90. She represented South Africa in the Confederation of African Athletics (CAA) Under 18-20 Championships in Abeokuta Nigeria winning silver in long-jump Under 20, Bronze in 100m Under 20 and silver medal in relays.
91. Honourable Speaker, this bears testament that through the school sport programme the Department continues to demonstrate its commitment in fostering holistic athlete development approaches and systems that will enable more focus on identification, development, and progression of the youth participating in sport.
92. Honourable Speaker in 2026/27, the Department will support twenty four (24) school sport programmes which will see over eight thousand (8000) learners participating in different sporting codes. A total five hundred and thirty (530) learners will be targeted and selected to represent the Province in the Autumn, Winter and Summer National Sport Championship games.
93. A total number of 60 clubs from different sporting codes will be supported to participate at district, provincial and National competitions to enable and empower athletes to excel in sport.
94. Boxing has been a male dominated sport, however the Department is proud to announce the hosting of the Women's Boxing Bout which will happen annually.
95. In encouraging active participation, the department will continue to participate in the annual SA Walk, which will happen in all the nine provinces. In promoting our culture and heritage games, the department will also host the Provincial Indigenous Games which are a culmination of the local and district games.
96. Honourable Speaker in 2026/2027, the Department will continue to support community based structures that advance sport and tourism in the Province including Imizamo Yabagibeli grassroots community horse race in Mkhondo, Mpumalanga Golf Association, Mpumalanga Cycling Tour and Shalom Marathon Club.
97. In the 2026/27 financial year the department plans to support 200 schools, twenty (25) hubs and sixty (60) clubs with equipment and / or attire, and twenty two (22) local leagues will be supported.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

98. Honourable Speaker, the key strategic priority for the department remains expanding investment on infrastructure development and aligning with long term global platforms and opportunities for the youth of the Province.

Sport Infrastructure

99. The Department remains committed to a mega multi year project of building the state of the art, High Altitude Training Center (HATC) as a one stop sport development infrastructure which is a catalyst for sport development and excellence in the Province. In the current financial year, the Department will ensure that phase one that deals with off site support infrastructure such as bulk services is realized.
100. In the 2026/27 financial year despite the technical challenges, the Department will ensure traction by completing the 7ML Reservoir and Waste Water Treatment Plant and initiate the upgrading of the 4ML Waste Water Treatment Civil, Mechanical and Electrical works. An allocation of **fifty seven million, seven hundred and eighty nine thousand (R57 789)** has been set aside towards this work in 2026/27 financial year. This phase of the project will be completed in the 2026/27 financial year.
101. The National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture makes annual provision for the Municipal Infrastructure Grant. The Department will continue to give support for more municipalities to access the Municipal Infrastructure Grant aimed at improving sports facilities in our municipalities.
102. It is through this grant that the Department, working with Bushbuckridge and Nkomazi Local Municipalities would jointly motivate for more funding to ensure that both Thulamahashe and KaMhlushwa stadiums are FIFA standard Football fields.
103. The department would continue to engage these municipalities to apply and comply with the requirements of the grant. This will enable the supporters of Kruger United in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality and The Bees in Nkomazi Local Municipality to show support for their teams in their homegrounds.

Cultural Infrastructure

Honourable Speaker, investment in infrastructure is ultimately an investment in people, opportunity and economic growth. This project reflects our commitment to building infrastructure that not only serves today's needs, but also creates lasting social and economic value for future generations.

104. The department is planning to implement phase two(2) of the 5000 seater Indoor Multi Purpose Arena in the 2026/27 financial year. This will involve the initial construction of the top structure at Mbombela Stadium precinct. This is a multi year project which will be completed over a three year period.
105. This state-of-the-art facility will represent a transformative investment in integrated sport, arts, culture, entertainment and event infrastructure. Once realized, the Arena will become a landmark facility capable of transforming the Province's cultural, sporting and events economy.

Libraries Infrastructure

106. The Department is mandated to provide library infrastructure in the Province which will address the lack of and/or inadequacy of library facilities in a systematic and planned manner. This has to be inline with the strategic objective of creating a culture of learning to empower people to make informed decisions.

107. In the 2025/26 financial year, one(01) new library in Louville (Nkomazi Local Municipality) was completed. The other two(2) libraries which are; Warburton in Msukaligwa Local Municipality was recorded at 50% completion and Mammetlake in Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality was recorded at 79% completion. These facilities are planned for completion in the 2026/27 financial year.
108. The Department ensures that libraries remain safe, efficient, accessible and capable of meeting the educational, informational and technological needs of its users by planning for routine maintenance on annual basis.
109. Six(6) Public Libraries were maintained namely; StanWest, Elukwatini, Masoyi, Shatale, Phumula and Thubelihle Public Libraries in the 2025/2026 financial year.
110. Three(3) existing public libraries are planned for maintenance in the 2026/27 financial year namely; Perdekop Library (Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality), KaNyamazane Library (City of Mbombela) and Marapyane Library (Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality).
111. The total budget for infrastructure projects and maintenance in the 2026/27 Financial Year is **One Hundred and Thirteen Million, Seven Hundred and Eighty Nine Thousand (113 789)**.
- **Cultural Affairs infrastructure projects : R45 Million**
 - **Library and Archives infrastructure projects: R13. 9million**
 - **Sport and Recreation infrastructure projects: R57 789 million**
112. The budget pressures are a reality. Each financial year we receive hundreds of requests from teams across various sporting codes in the length and breadth of the Province. We are saying together with our patriotic corporate community we can still do more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

113. Honourable Speaker, please allow me to acknowledge heroes and heroines in the sector of sport and culture and with your indulgence may I request them to take a bow as I acknowledge them:
114. The youthful team of Kruger United FC affectionately known as “The Village Boys”, who were recently crowned the 2025/26 National First Division League Champions with straight qualification to represent the people of Mpumalanga in the Betway Premiership League and who will proudly join TS Galaxy FC.
115. Casric Stars Football Club for their relentless fight in the 2025/26 Nedbank Cup where they reached the semi finals.
116. The Department would also like to acknowledge the TS Galaxy FC for their sterling performance in the Premier Soccer League and for reaching the finals of the 2026 Nedbank Cup.

117. Mpumalanga President of the Sport Confederation and Vice President of SAFA who has been co opted to the COSAFA Executive, Mr Linda Zwane who is currently in Mexico on SAFA duties.
118. Honourable Speaker, we would also like to congratulate one of our own all the way from Malelane in Nkomazi Local Municipality, George Kusche for winning the 2026 Comrades Marathon which took place on Saturday, 14 June. He was unable to attend this session due to short notice.
119. The Airlink Pumas for succesfully defending their title status by winning the 2026 SA Rugby Cup Champions. They are the first team in the country to win the SA Cup back to back. The representatives of Pumas were here earlier on this morning but they had to leave because of prior commitments.
120. Miss Mpumalanga 2026 , Masibulele Mndebele and the newly crowned Mr Mpumalanga, Nkosikhona Roro, coincidentally they both come from the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality.
121. We further wish to congratulate one of our young crafters, Maggie Skhosana who is a product of the Cooperatives that was trained and supported by the Department. She is currently in Mexico as one of the exhibitors who have been nominated by Minister MacKenzie in support of Bafana Bafana to the 2026 FIFA World Cup. **“Rekaofela”**
122. The outstanding achievement of artists and athletes is a testament to the talent, resilience and determination that resides within the Province of the rising sun. We congratulate and wish them success as they embark on this exciting journey.

APPRECIATION

123. As I conclude Honourable Speaker, let me express my gratitude to the ruling party, the African National Congress led by the Chairperson Mr. Mandla Ndlovu for entrusting me with the responsibility to lead the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation in the Province.
124. Let me also thank the Portfolio Committee on Culture, Sport and Recreation led by Honourable Grobler for their dedicated guidance and oversight role.
125. Let me thank the Traditional Leaders for their role in culture and heritage preservation and community development under the leadership of Kgosi Mokoena.
126. I would also like to thank all community-based structures, committees and federations within the sector of sport, arts and culture for assisting the department to fulfil its mandate.

127. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Head of Department and the entire staff component of the Department for their continued support as we are a dedicated team that works tirelessly to service the people of Mpumalanga.
128. Let me also thank my social support structure, my spiritual father Bishop Ezrom Zulu and my TUT lecturers who are supporting me in my academic development.
129. My family, my husband, for their unconditional support.
130. Most importantly, let me thank God the Almighty.

BUDGET

131. Honourable Speaker, allow me to table the Budget appropriation for Vote 11 for the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation allocated according to the four(4) Programmes for consideration by the house:

PROGRAMME	AMOUNT R'000
Programme 1: Administration	R152 million 917 thousand
Programme 2: Cultural Affairs	R158 million 767 thousand
Programme 3: Library Services and Archives	R225 million 433 thousand
Programme 4: Sport and Recreation	R186 million 256 thousand
TOTAL BUDGET FOR 2026/27	R721 million 373 thousand

Honourable Speaker, despite the immense service delivery progress we have made since 1994, I wish to reiterate once more that there are still many more hills to climb in order to completely dismantle the colonial Apartheid socio-economic harm and effects of more than 300 years.

Thank You!
 Baie Dankie!
 Siyabonga!
 Siyathokoza!
 Rea leboga!
 Hi khensile!

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