

DPWI once again helps connect more communities in the Eastern Cape as part of the Welisizwe Programme

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The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has completed another much-needed bridge to connect communities in the Eastern Cape. Minister Patricia De Lille, MP says the latest bridge was recently installed as part of the Welisizwe Programme, meaning to help the nation cross over. The Programme sees the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) work with the Department of Defence and government departments in the relevant province to install bridges in rural areas where communities have for years not had safe access to amenities such as schools and jobs.

The bridge was completed in recent weeks as a critical infrastructure project in the Bilatye community in the Chris Hani District municipality in the Eastern Cape. During the installation of the Bilatye Bridge, 40 Expanded Public Works Programme participants from the surrounding communities were employed. In addition, three local companies also benefitted from the project by providing construction material. The Bilatye Bridge will improve access for the Nyongwana, Esigxeni, Thobile Dyantyi, Bilatye, Kwenxura, Hola and Mbinzana communities in the Chris Hani District Municipality.

Minister De Lille says the new bridge will also especially benefit pupils from the Mfanta High School which was closed because parents were afraid of children having to cross the river during the rainy seasons. "As a result of the bridge now being installed, I have been informed that there are now discussion with the community to reopen the Mfanta High School. Since the inception of the programme, the number of bridges completed amounts to 24 in the Eastern Cape and 1 was installed in Gauteng. Earlier this year, I visited and handed over another bridge that was completed in the Eastern Cape, the Nkobongo Bridge in the Ngcobo municipality," explains the Minister.

She says while the COVID-19 pandemic has caused minor delays to other projects, the implementation has now commenced and another four (4) bridges are currently being installed: the one Fini Bridge in the Chris Hani District Municipality in the Eastern Cape and three (3) Ekhamanzi bridges in the Umshwathi Local Municipality and in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality in KwaZulu Natal.