

Premier delivers State of the Province Address

Free State Premier Sisi Ntombela gave her first State of the Province address on 19 February, since taking over as Premier in March 2018. In her address Ntombela prioritised education, service delivery and job creation.

Ntombela said education is important in improving the quality of the lives of the people. She added that eleven new schools will be opened this year in the province. The higher education subsidy will be increased and the government will continue issuing bursaries.

The province has adopted the triple 90 strategy which aims to encourage people to know their HIV status. The aim is that 90% of those who know their HIV status will be on Anti-Retroviral (ARV) medication. According to Ntombela 351 129 adults in the province live with HIV/AIDS.

A trauma centre in Villiers will be built to take care of N3 road accident casualties. The Emergency Medical Services will also be

improved and more staff will be appointed. Last year sixty ambulances were purchased to supplement the existing 80. The ambulances have been distributed to all five districts of the province as follows: 14 for Mangaung, 7 Xhariep, 13 Fezile Dabi, 10 Lejweleputswa and 16 for Thabo Mofutsanyana. The new ambulances are helping to speed up service delivery.

The Mopeli Stadium in Qwaqwa will be renovated this year to be a world class stadium which will be used by Free

State Stars in a bid to grow the local economy. Ntombela also pledged to play a part in ensuring that Bloemfontein Celtic remains in Bloem.

Ntombela emphasised that 600 community residential units and 1999 social housing units will be delivered as part of ensuring that Free State citizens have their own houses. Incomplete houses are expected to be completed this year while 1500 sites have been earmarked for Mangaung.

Ntombela in her address wants to see more jobs created and called on those responsible for implementing government projects to hire locally based people in their projects as part of job creation. 52,000 job opportunities are expected to be created this year through the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP).

*In photo: Free State Premier Sisi Ntombela delivering the State of the Province Address.
By Teboho Masakala*

