

# State of the Province Address conveyed



**F**ree State Premier Sisi Ntombela delivered her 22 page State of the Province Address on 2 July at the 4th Raadsaal (Legislature) in Bloemfontein. The Premier's address focused on creating opportunities for young people and reducing unemployment.

Beginning her address Ntombela said as they begin to map the future of the Free State, their work will be shaped by following seven priorities identified by President Ramaphosa in his State of the Nation Address which are, Economic Transformation, Education, skills and health, a capable ethical and development state and a better Africa and world, to mention a few.

The Premier emphasised that her government wants to reduce unemployment and thus will be sending scores of young people for training and create job opportunities as part of youth development. She added that contractors doing business in the Free State have to include young people and give them a certain share percentage.

The province looks to create jobs and transform the economy through infrastructure development support, a digital economy, Agro processing, Retail and Services and Industrialization.

The provincial government's target of creating fifty thousand jobs through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) was exceeded. Thirty two young people living with disabilities formed part of the EPWP programme, however Ntombela said a lot has to be done to include people with disabilities in programmes and in government.

There is ongoing construction and the rehabilitation of nine roads in the province which will cost R325million and is expected to create 5600 jobs. Eight school are expected to be completed in this financial year.

Boitumelong Special School in Thaba Nchu will also get a hostel. To root out corruption, officials working in supply chain management will be vetted by the SA Security Agency. The Premier also added that 118 students studying at overseas universities will graduate this year.

*In photo: Free State Legislature Speaker Zanele Sifuba, Free State Premier Sisi Ntombela and*

*Free State Police Commissioner Moeketsi Sempe during the Police parade before the beginning of the*

*SOPA address.*

*By Teboho Masakala*