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# Poor roads 'lead to donkey carts bonanza'

'Our task is to  
provide transport'

By **Penwell Dlamini**

The North West department of community safety and road management says it delivered donkey carts to rural communities because they lack proper roads and because people in these areas are already using this mode of transport.

In the same breath, the department denied that it had spent millions on the carts.

MEC Sello Lehari handed over 20 animal-drawn carts to residents of Dibono and Manawana villages outside Mahikeng last week.

The department defended its decision after being widely criticised on social media, with some users alleging that the carts cost millions.

Departmental spokesperson Alpheus Koonyaditse said the move was in line with existing transport legislation.

"If you look at the National Land Transport Act, it is captured there that in rural areas people are provided with animal-drawn carts.

"This area is one of those rural areas. However, the responsibility to build roads fall under our sister department [of public works and roads]. Therefore, we cannot respond on their behalf. Our task is to provide transport.

"The act guides us that in rural areas [where] people are using donkey carts, we just assist them with those carts," Koonyaditse said.

As part of the contract with the department, the service provider who secured the tender will maintain these carts for the next three years at no cost to owners.

In total the carts costs R780,000 inclusive of the three-year maintenance plan, Koonyaditse said. The two-seater carts cost R32,500 each and the four-seaters R45,500.

But DA MPL Freddy Sonakile said the move was disrespecting people living in rural areas who were also entitled to proper roads and motorised transport.

"We are almost 30 years into democracy and you still give people donkey carts... Giving people living in rural areas a donkey cart says you are happy with the status quo. You are saying these people should continue in a primitive world.

"It is an indictment on the government of North West... They should have done a feasibility study and it would have shown them that after three years instead of procuring these carts, they could have purchased a bus or fixed the road," Sonakile said.

In 2018, then MEC Mpho Motlhabane donated 10 donkey carts to beneficiaries at Madibe Makgabane village, also outside Mahikeng.

Spokesperson for the department of public works and roads Matshube Mfoloe said the condition of roads could not be given as a reason for providing donkey carts.



**MEC for community safety and transport management Sello Lehari tests one of the donated donkey carts. /SUPPLIED**

Mfoloe denied that donkey carts were being rolled out in rural areas because of the conditions of roads.

"We have upgraded from

gravel to surface a number of road in rural areas where there is less than 100 cars travelling in an hour."

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