



Publication: Sunday World - Main
Title: Premier blames Covid for Limpopo`s failures
Publish date: 25 Sep 2022
Page: 5

Reach: 62000
AVE:R 98065.01
Author: Mpho Dube

Premier blames Covid for Limpopo's failures

By **Mpho Dube**

The Limpopo government's dirty laundry has been aired in public after its departments failed to spend more than R1,6-billion from their allocated budgets for the 2021/2022 financial year.

The underspending was exposed by a report released by auditor-general Tsakani Maluleke. And instead of taking responsibility, premier Stanley Mathabatha blamed Covid-19 for his cabinet's poor performance, which led to departments not using their allocated budgets.

The Limpopo departments failed to spend the following amounts from their allocated budgets: education: R523.3-million (1.5%); health: R570.5-million (2.4%); social development: R72.4-million (3.1%); premier's office: R16-million (4%), legislature: R45.1-million (10.5%), agriculture: R98.7-million (6%), treasury: R14-million (3.8%), public works, roads and infrastructure: R226.1-million (5.1%), economic development, environment and tourism – R8.4-million (0.5%), transport and community safety: R40.7-million (1.7%), cooperative governance, human settlements and traditional affairs: R474.1 million (20.1%) and sport, arts and culture: R53.9-million (10.5%).

Following *Sunday World's* inquiry, provincial spokesperson Willy Mosoma said: "In the main, for the previous two financial years before Covid-19, the province was recording improvement on spending patterns on a year-to-year basis. This significant improvement was interrupted by Covid-19, which impacted negatively on our spending patterns.

"In addition, the high court judgment on case number 18449/21 impacted negatively on spending nationally. It is



Stanley Mathabatha blames Covid-19 for poor performance. / Gallo Images

therefore against the above-mentioned background that the executive council has approved the provincial Infrastructure Implementation Plan, that is currently being successfully implemented. Lastly, we are proud that our administration continues to record quality audit outcomes as released by the AG."

DA member of the provincial legislature Katlego Phala took a swipe at Mathabatha's administration.

"Whether through conditional grants or money directly from their budgets it is unacceptable for Limpopo departments to be underspending funds available to them. The department of health has crippling staff shortages, shortage of equipment, decaying and unmaintained infrastructure and services like oncology that have patients waiting far too long for treatment. They can't underspend," she lambasted Mathabatha's administration.

The revelations about the underspending come at a time when Limpopo health MEC Phophi Ramathuba's video, wherein she berated a Zimbabwean citizen for placing a strain on the province's health-care system last month, was viewed by millions.