



**Publication:** Citizen, The (Daily) - Main  
**Title:** Education, health get biggest slices of Limpopo`s budget  
**Publish date:** 09 Mar 2023  
**Page:** 9

**Reach:** 24455  
**AVE:R** 49278.81  
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## Education, health get biggest slices of Limpopo's budget

**Alex Japho Matlala**

Since Limpopo obtained the lowest percentage in last year's matric results in the country, the province's Treasury wants to change this and has given the biggest slice of the province's annual budget to education.

Yesterday, finance MEC Charles Sekoati tabled a pro-poor budget of R79.1 billion at the Limpopo Legislature in Leb-owakgomo, outside Polokwane.

In his budget vote speech, he said R7.3 billion will be allocated specifically for infrastructure development across the province's nine departments.

Education, according to Sekoati will receive R38.1 billion, R23.7 billion for health, R78.7 million for transport, roads and community safety, R20 million for economic develop-

ment, environment and tourism, R1.2 billion for cooperative governance human settlement and traditional affairs, R183 million for agriculture, R54.3 million for sports, art and culture, R19.6 million for social development.

Public works, roads and infrastructure got a staggering R3.3 billion.

During the 2023-24 financial year, Sekoati allocated R416.3 million for development of new infrastructure.

The budget, he said, would be used for the construction of schools, clinics libraries, upgrading of roads from gravel to tar, centres for place of safety, nature reserves and housing developments.

He said the estimated allocated budget for rehabilitation and refurbishment of government infrastructure will receive

R379.3 million, while upgrading and addition of existing facilities would be allocated R1.06 billion.

Sekoati said money to the tune of R1.8 billion would then be allocated towards maintenance while R19.6 million would be allocated for social development.

"Our provincial allocation is derived from our receipt of equitable shares, conditional grants and the provincial own revenue," said Sekoati.

He said in this regard, the provincial equitable share accounts for about 83.4% of the provincial sources of funding.

"The 2023-24 provincial equitable share of the province has grown from R65.3 billion to R67.9 billion and R71.5 billion in 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years, respectively," said Sekoati.

He said the province's con-

ditional grants allocation now amount to R34.1 billion over the 2023 medium-term expenditure framework period, with R11.3 billion allocated in 2023-24, R11.1 billion in 2024-25 and R11.6 billion in 2025-26.

He added the provincial expenditure allocation has now increased from the R78.1 billion in the adjustment budget of 2022-23 to R79.1 billion in 2023-24 financial year, and then grow to R80.4 in 2024-25 financial year and increase to R83.4 billion in 2025-26 financial year.

In light of this, Sekoati said he had allocated education the highest share with 48.2% of the Limpopo's annual budget.

The department was allocated R38.1 billion budget of the 2023-24 financial year, R39.3 billion for 2024-25 and R40.6 billion for 2025-26.

The department of health re-

ceived the second largest slice of the provincial budget. The department got R23.7 billion for 2023-24 financial year, R24.1 billion for 2024-25 and R25.2 billion for 2025-26.

Sekoati said it was becoming a tradition that education and health were receiving a huge chunk of the province's annual budget since 1994.

Neither the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) or the Democratic Alliance (DA) were impressed by the budget speech vote.

The EFF said the budget lacked clear plans as to how the tabled funds would be spent.

The DA said the budget was far from addressing the triple challenges of inequality, poverty and the increasing unemployment rate, which continue to unleash a reign of terror in Limpopo communities.