



Publication: TheCitizenKZN - Main
Title: Limpopo needs R300bn to tar all roads
Publish date: 14 Aug 2024
Page: 9

Reach: 44390
AVE: R 34558.00
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Limpopo needs R300bn to tar all roads

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Limpopo's provincial government needs R300 billion to tar all 13 000km of gravel roads in the province – but at the rate it's being funded, it will take 750 years.

Public works, roads and infrastructure MEC Tonny Rachoene said while the province seeks additional funding from national government for the task, it is going all-out to maintain and improve existing gravel routes.

The Dikgerekgere Wednesday programme, launched last month, aims to maintain and rehabilitate gravel roads by re-grading and resurfacing them, as well as clearing away bush from the verges.

Since the programme's launch, 800km of untarred

roads have been repaired in this way.

The programme will see the purchase of more roadworking equipment and the appointment of more permanent workers, said Rachoene.

It was intended to make more efficient use of equipment and staff so there would be as little downtime as possible, he added.

According to the department, the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) has 160 projects planned for this year.

Provincial public works communication director Tendani Munyai said: "These include roads that are upgraded from gravel to tar and those under maintenance.

"A distance of 45 kilometres of gravel roads are planned to be upgraded to tar this year.

"All the projects that are

planned for this financial year are a priority for RAL.

"The budget allocated for upgrading gravel roads to tar is R400 million for the current financial year," Munyai said.

Rachoene said: "My department has recently advertised 300 posts to be filled by December. These are just not posts, but an intervention which will result in improved service delivery to the people of Limpopo."

ANC secretary-general Fikile Mbalula has said that the Dikgerekgere Wednesday programme had the blessing of the ANC and national government.

But EFF Limpopo provincial chair Lawrence Mapoulo said this was an ANC programme to garner support for its leaders before the municipal polls in 2026 and regional elective conferences this year and in 2025.