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Theatre sees light of day

LIMPOPO: PUBLIC WORKS READY TO BUILD R376M FACILITY – 8 YEARS LATER

➔ **Young artists in province have reason to smile.**

Alex Japho Matlala

Construction work on a R376 million provincial theatre in Polokwane has begun – eight years after construction was announced.

The construction of the theatre was first announced in 2016 by Limpopo premier Stan Mathabatha during his State of the Province's Address (Sopa).

At the time, Nandi Ndalane was the MEC for sports, arts and culture.

However, plans to begin construction have, until now, remained a pipe dream.

This drew criticism, with many young people in the arts fraternity in the province accusing the government of leaving them in the lurch.

Many complained that the delay had robbed them of a valuable time to nurture their talent in music, dance, acting and showcasing their traditional artefact skills to the outside world.

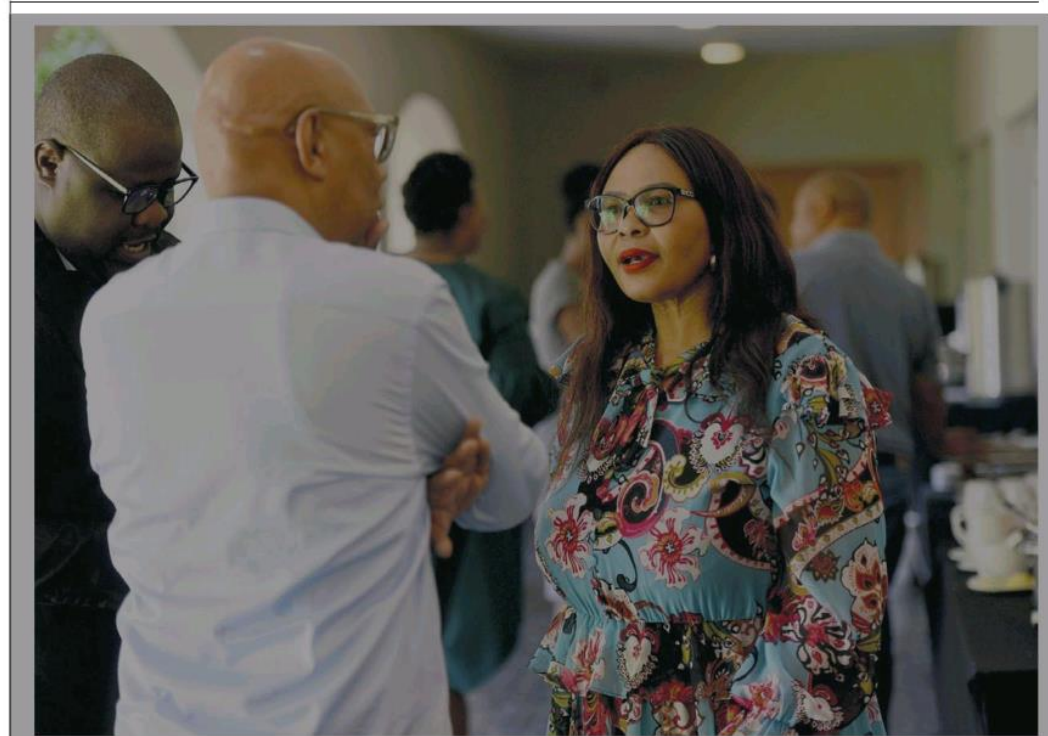
But during his Sopa in 2022, Mathabatha announced the province's readiness to start with construction of the theatre.

Yesterday, the Limpopo department of public works, roads and infrastructure confirmed that construction will start today.

This pleased many young people in Limpopo, with musicians such as King Monada breathing a sigh of relief.

According to the department, the theatre will be built on land donated by the Polokwane municipality.

It will occupy 10 hectares of



TOUGH CALL

Gauteng health MEC Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko delivered her keynote address in Kempton Park yesterday, dealing with her department's challenge of case backlogs. Picture: Nigel Sibanda

land and the building area is said to be 17 000m².

The landscaping, parking and driveway area will be 7 000m². The main building will be a four-storey structure.

The area is next to Bakone Malapa Open Air Museum, along the R37 road towards Lebogak-gomo, just outside Polokwane.

Limpopo public works spokesperson Tendani Munyai said the contract for the project is worth R376 million.

"In the 2023-24 financial year,

the department intends to spend R65 million. A sum of R38 million will be spent on professional service providers and R27 million on the construction work. Construction work will continue into the 2024-25 financial year and the following year," she said.

Munyai added that the project's duration is 24 months and about 100 jobs will be created during the project.

Limpopo sports, arts and culture spokesperson Pelane Phag-

adi said that the facility will consist of a theatre with 600 seats.

A secondary building will have a seating capacity of 200.

"Supporting facilities such as a restaurant and bar, a coffee shop, a bookshop, poetry spaces, covered parking, internal road networks, access road and road widening along the provincial road to accommodate new traffic are some of the additions to be constructed on site," he said.

Phagadi said should all go according to plan, the facility will be ready for use by 31 March, 2026.

– news@citizen.co.za

The main building is a four-storey structure