



**Publication:** Daily News - Main

**Title:** Public Works and Infrastructure receives big boost to rectify budgetary concerns

**Publish date:** 27 Nov 2024

**Page:** 1

**Reach:** 8283

**AVE:** R 33567.07

**Author:** Lungani Zungu

FINANCE

# Public Works and Infrastructure receives big boost to rectify budgetary concerns

LUNGANI ZUNGU

lungani.zungu@ini.co.za

IN a significant financial reshuffling, KwaZulu-Natal's MEC for Finance, Francois Rodgers, detailed the province's adjusted budget during his address at the KZN provincial legislature yesterday.

The allocation prioritised key sectors, with Public Works and Infrastructure, under DA's Martin Meyer, securing the largest budget of R345.8 million to address pressing budgetary concerns.

During his address, Rodgers said there was an urgent need to rectify payment discrepancies in property rates.

"The Public Works receives R345.8 million towards budget pressures in paying property rates. This allocation takes into account that the baseline for these payments requires correcting, as well as the fact that there was an escalation in municipal property rates as a result of the implementation of the new General Valuation Rolls by some municipalities," he said.

The Education Department, led by ANC's Sipho Hlomuka, also benefitted from this budget, receiving R95m for its crisis-riddled school feeding scheme programme.

"Education receives R95 million towards the shortfall in the national school nutrition programme," Rodgers said.

"This addresses the shortfall and reinforces our commitment to ensuring every child receives a nutritious meal," he added.

Further allocations included R85m for the Office of the Premier, led by the IFP's Thamsanqa Ntuli, while the KZN Youth Empowerment Fund launched by Ntuli in July was allocated R75 million to support initiatives to empower the province's youth.

Rodgers announced that an additional R24m was available through the KZN Growth Fund Agency, bringing total funding to nearly R100m this year for youth initiatives.

The KZN Legislature presided over by Speaker Nontombeko Boyce (ANC), received R70.6m.

This funding catered to various expenses, including MPLs' (Member of the Provincial Legislature) exit packages in preparation for the 2029 general elections, which will ensure that outgoing members are adequately compensated.

"R28.5 million is for MPLs' exit packages following the 2024 General Elections. This is a direct charge on the Provincial Revenue Fund and must therefore be funded. R4.1 million relates to MPLs' salary increases which were implemented at 2.5 per cent. This is a direct charge on the Provincial Revenue Fund and must therefore be funded," said Rodgers.



KWAZULU-Natal MEC for Finance, Francois Rodgers. | Supplied

The Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) MEC, Reverend Thulasizwe Buthelezi's department was allocated R69.3m, which included a rollover of R35.1m of backpay related to Izinduna, the traditional leaders of various communities in the province.

Rodgers said the Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) led by MEC Reverend Musa Zondi requested a rollover from

2023 of R13.2 million, and this related to various transfers that were committed last year.

"These relate to the transfer in respect of the purchase of land at the Mkuze Game Reserve for the benefit of the neighbouring community (R3 million), the transfer to the iLembe Enterprise Development relating to the ongoing KwaShushu Hot Springs project (R3.5 million), the Greenest Municipality Competition (R3.6 million), as well as the Waste Economy Support Programme (R3.1 million)," said Rodgers.

A notable allocation of R10m was dedicated to the Zulu Royal House Trust for legal fees associated with His Majesty Misuzulu KaZwelithini.

Other significant budget lines presented by Rodgers included R20.6m for Housing, a critical measure amid the ongoing housing backlog in KZN, and support for the sport through R355 000 earmarked for the KZN Sport Awards, ensuring that the province continues to celebrate its achievements in athletics and culture.

This comprehensive adjusted budget reflected the provincial government's strategic efforts to address critical service pressures, enabling better resource allocation to meet the needs of its residents across various sectors.

WhatsApp your views on this story at 071 485 7995.