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Inside the Middelburg District Hospital. **Photo:** Sourced/Mpumalanga DPWRT

# Hospital awaits opening

**Bongekile Khumalo**

**MBOMBELA** - The Mpumalanga premier, Mandla Ndlovu, confirmed in his State of the Province Address (Sopa) that President Cyril Ramaphosa will open the state-of-the-art Middelburg District Hospital, but did not confirm the exact date.

The project was announced in 2017 and Enza Construction started working on it in 2018, but it has not yet been completed.

The hospital's initial cost was estimated at R1b. It was targeted to be completed in November 2024, following by a visit by Ramaphosa nine months earlier. Instead, the Department of Health received a bulk budget of R86.3m from its baseline towards the completion of the hospital.

The health facility consists of 220 ward beds, modern theatres, and comprehensive trauma and labour units, and will be a dedicated training centre.



The Mpumalanga premier, Mandla Ndlovu. **Photo:** Bridget Mpande

In his recent visit, the MEC for public works, roads and transport, Thulasizwe Thomo, confirmed the project is nearing practical completion and he is now focused on ensuring the handover to the Department of Health is carried out without delays.

Another project with a delayed

completion date is the Mkhondo Boarding School. Ndlovu said in the Sopa that the school would be operational in the second term.

The Department of Education received an injection of R60m in November last year, following the R140m in 2023 towards the Mkhondo Boarding School. Its construction began in 2019 and it was estimated to be completed within 18 months with a R200m budget.

Some of the challenges that have hampered the completion include the Covid-19 national lockdown, the unavailability of budget during the 2021/22 financial year, non-payment of subcontractors by the main contractor, delays in the approval of a road servitude, and the acquiring a water usage licence from KZN. This is according to the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature's portfolio committee on public works, roads and transport.