



public works
& infrastructure

Department:
Public Works and Infrastructure
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Issued by the Ministry of Public Works & Infrastructure

Enquiries: James de Villiers 082 766 0276

Issue Date: 06 February 2026

FULL SPEECH

MINISTER MACPHERSON SAYS THE DOME HANDOVER REFLECTS CAPACITY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE

(Note to editors: The following address was delivered by the Minister of Public Works & Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, at the handover of the Nieuweester Dome to the National Assembly Speaker, Thoko Didiza, on Friday morning, 6 February, 2026.)

- Public Works & Infrastructure Minister Macpherson formally handed over the Nieuweester Dome to the National Assembly Speaker as a fit-for-purpose venue to ensure the continuity of parliamentary sittings while the National Assembly building is rebuilt, following the 2022 fire at the Parliamentary Precinct.
- The Minister said the rapid refurbishment of the Dome demonstrates the internal delivery capability, professionalism and commitment within the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure, with officials completing high-quality work under tight timeframes, including over the festive season.
- Macpherson further emphasised that the Dome should be responsibly utilised as a conferencing and events venue during parliamentary recess, underscoring the importance of using public assets for the public good, while protecting their integrity and reducing pressure on the public purse.

Thank you for joining us this morning for the formal handover of the Nieuweester Dome - a facility that will serve Parliament, and by extension the people of South Africa, during a particularly important period for our democracy.

This handover is not simply about a structure.

It is about continuity.

It is about ensuring that, even in the face of unexpected disruption, the work of the National Assembly continues in a manner that is safe, dignified, and fit for purpose.

As we all remember, the fire of January 2022 caused severe damage to the Parliamentary Precinct and disrupted the normal functioning of Parliament.

Since then, Parliament has had to secure alternative venues in order to continue its sittings, oversight responsibilities, and the work that keeps our constitutional democracy alive.

While those interim arrangements ensured continuity, they also came with significant practical challenges - including logistics, availability, cost, and operational complexity.

Over time, it became clear that a more sustainable solution was required: one that supports the work of Parliament reliably, while the National Assembly building is being rebuilt.

It is for this reason that my Department worked closely with Parliament to deliver this facility at Nieuemeester.

Let me be clear: this Dome was delivered because Parliament requested it, and because the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure exists to support the functioning of the state.

When Parliament needs infrastructure that enables it to serve the public effectively, it is our responsibility to respond - professionally, efficiently, and with a clear focus on value for money.

The agreement between the Department and Parliament has been guided by that principle from the beginning: deliver a workable venue that meets operational needs, can handle Cape Town's weather conditions, and complies with the standards required for parliamentary sittings - with costs shared in a fair and responsible manner.

Today, the result of that cooperation is visible for all to see.

The Nieuemeester Dome has a unique history.

South Africans will recognise it as a structure that has previously been used for national occasions of deep significance.

It has now been repurposed for a different, but equally important national task: providing a stable, secure venue for parliamentary sittings while the permanent home of the National Assembly is restored.

In practical terms, the work completed here has focused on ensuring that the Dome is suitable for the day-to-day realities of Parliament.

Firstly, there was a clear need to ensure the structure could withstand Cape Town's conditions - particularly wind and weather.

The refurbishment addressed this by strengthening resilience and improving the overall durability of the structure so that it can function reliably through the seasons.

Secondly, Parliament requires an environment where debate can take place clearly, where proceedings can be heard without disruption, and where members and staff can work effectively.

Sound quality matters - not only for those inside the venue, but for the integrity of parliamentary proceedings and the public record.

For that reason, improved soundproofing and acoustic performance formed a key part of the work.

Thirdly, and importantly, the Dome had to be compliant with the operational standards required for parliamentary sittings.

That includes the functionality that supports parliamentary business, as well as the safety and infrastructure requirements that any public venue of this nature must meet.

This is not a "temporary tent" in the casual sense.

It must operate as a proper parliamentary facility - and it has been refurbished accordingly.

This refurbishment was completed in a matter of weeks.

And I want to emphasise what that means.

It means our Department has internal capacity that is often underestimated, and at times unfairly dismissed.

It means that when we are clear about the task, when we have proper oversight, and when we demand delivery, the Department can produce high-quality work at speed - without sacrificing standards.

It also means there are public servants in this Department who are committed to delivery, who worked through the festive season, and who understand that the work they do is not abstract

- it affects whether key institutions function, whether services are delivered, and whether the public can trust the state to do its job.

So today, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the team from the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure who made this happen.

To our project management team: thank you for driving delivery with discipline and urgency.

To the technical teams: thank you for ensuring that the work was done properly, safely, and to standard.

To the support staff who kept the wheels turning through a demanding period: thank you for your professionalism.

And to Parliament's team - including the Speaker's office and the officials who worked closely with us - thank you for the cooperation and the clear engagement that is required when two institutions must deliver together.

This is how government should work: with clarity, with shared responsibility, and with the public interest at the centre of every decision.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is another point that matters, and it speaks to how we think about public assets.

We cannot afford, as a country, to treat major public infrastructure as a single-purpose expense that lies dormant when not in use.

South Africa's balance sheet is under pressure.

Every rand must work harder.

Every asset must be sweated responsibly.

For that reason, as we hand over this Dome for parliamentary use, we are also making it clear that it should not stand empty when Parliament is in recess.

When Parliament is not sitting, this facility has the potential to be used as an events and conferencing venue - in a controlled manner, aligned with security and operational requirements, and through a proper process that protects the integrity of the site while generating additional income.

This is a practical step towards sustainability.

It is also a principle: public assets must serve the public good as consistently as possible.

In the coming period, the Department will therefore support the process of engaging events and conference organisers on proposals for how the facility can be utilised during parliamentary recess.

This is not about commercialising Parliament.

It is about ensuring that a state-owned asset is used responsibly, generates value where appropriate, and reduces the burden on the public purse.

As Minister, I want a Department that is known for delivery, for professionalism, and for the discipline to use public resources wisely.

Today's handover reflects exactly that.

Speaker Didiza, in a few moments, I will formally hand over this facility to you and to the National Assembly.

It is our sincere hope that it will serve Parliament well - as a practical venue for sittings and parliamentary business, and as a symbol of the state's ability to adapt, respond, and keep institutions functioning during difficult periods.

To the members of the media: thank you for being here.

Your role in keeping the public informed about how Parliament and government function is important - and we welcome scrutiny, because scrutiny drives better performance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

South Africa's democracy is strengthened when Parliament can do its work properly - in a space that is safe, fit for purpose, and operationally sound.

That is what we are handing over today.

Thank you.

Enquiries:

James De Villiers

Spokesperson to the Minister

082 766 0276