



# DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET VOTE 2024

FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE & RECREATION

## Hon. N. Sifuba

Sport, Arts, Culture  
and Recreation  
(Vote 10)



**TUESDAY  
20 AUGUST  
2024**

**Fourth Raadsaal, Bloemfontein**



sport, arts, culture & recreation

Department of  
Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation  
FREE STATE PROVINCE



**LEAVE NO  
ONE BEHIND**

**SPEECH OF THE MEC FOR SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, MS. NTOMBIZANELE SIFUBA, ON THE TABLING OF THE BUDGET VOTE – 12 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION, 20 AUGUST 2024, BLOEMFONTEIN.**

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Premier

Colleagues in the Executive Council

Honourable Members of the Legislature

Executive Mayors, Mayors and Councilors present

Representatives of the House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders

Representatives of Sport Federations as well as the Heritage, Arts and Culture Councils

Management and Officials of the Department

Baahi ba Freistata

Bomme le Bontate

Comrades

The Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation derives its mandate from the foundational principles enshrined in the Freedom Charter, the objectives outlined in Chapter 15 of the National Development Plan and, most recently, the commitments made in our manifesto which is the contract with the people of South Africa. These guiding documents place a strong emphasis on nation-building, social cohesion and youth development, all of which are central to our department's work. Our department touches on every sector of society through its mandate to reinforce the importance of nation-building and social cohesion.



Honourable Speaker, we recently witnessed a proud moment for our province when the World Heritage Committee that convened in New Delhi, India from July 24 to 31, 2024 decided to inscribe the Waaihoek Wesleyan School Church as a World Heritage Site.

This achievement highlights our rich cultural heritage and reminds us of the responsibility we have to preserve and promote our historical sites and ensures that Waaihoek Wesleyan School Church meets the standards worthy of its new status. After the due processes and consultative engagements have unfolded this milestone will be celebrated.

Honourable Speaker, the Free State celebrated yet another milestone on 10 August 2024 when Mia Le Roux was crowned Miss South Africa, demonstrating that anything is possible with the right attitude, focus, and hard work. We congratulate her for her success.

We also extend our gratitude to team South Africa for their efforts at the 2024 Olympics, where they brought six medals back home. Free State congratulates our own athletes and team management for making the team that represented the country at the Paris 2024 Olympics. The team is as follows:

1. Johanita Scholtz – Badminton
2. Taheera Augousti - Hockey
3. Kayla Swarts - Hockey
4. Marie Antoinette Louw - Hockey
5. Ntsopa Mokoena – Hockey,



These athletes will be recognized during our Provincial Sport Awards ceremony. Although we did not win any medals as Team Free State, we hope for the best next time around, in 2028.

The Paralympics will be held in Paris from 28 August – 08 September 2024, and we would like to wish the following athletes good luck on the upcoming event:

Louzanne Coetzee - Athletics T11 1500 metres and Marathon (Erasmus Bandenhorst Guide for T11 1500 metres and Claus Kempen Guide for Marathon); Karabo Cassius Morapedi - Boccia (BC3) (Matobako Vincent Ramochela – BC3 Ramp Operator) and Marisa Potgieter - Boccia Manager.

All these athletes form part of our incubation programme under the Free State Sport Science Institute.

We further want to congratulate the following two athletes: Ethan Louw from Heidedal, who has been selected for the under-15 Confederation of African Football team representing the Free State; Refilwe Phoofolo from Jagersfontein who has participated in the junior International Table Tennis Federation Championships.

Honourable Speaker, this budget is not just a financial plan but a reflection of our commitment to the values and resolutions, set forth by the African National Congress (ANC) to build a cohesive, inclusive and prosperous society.

Our mandate is the promotion of sport and recreation, support for arts and culture, and heritage preservation. Through inter-governmental relations and collaboration with municipalities and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, we will endeavor to expand access to facilities and investing in creative industries as well as the promotion of national identity and social cohesion.



We present this budget on this very important month in the calendar of our country. We still honour the bold action of protesting against the pass laws that was taken by over 20 000 women on the 9th August 1956. As the women of today, we also have the responsibility to pursue the struggle against the challenges that we are faced with, confronting issues such as Gender Based Violence, femicide and patriarchy. Through the Special Programmes unit of the department, we will find ways and means to address this scourge.

Motsamaisi wa dipuisano, pele ke kena ditabeng ka ho otlooha, ke rata hore ke nke monyetla ona ho lakaletsa setjhaba sa Basotho mahlohonolo ha se keteka mongwahakgolo wa bobedi ho tloha esale se thehwa. Selemong sena se hodimo, Basotho ba keteka dilemo tse makgolo a mabedi se thehilwe mme sena ke phihlello e kgolo e tlamehang ho ketekwa, eseng ke Basotho feela, empa le ke Ma-Afrika, hohle moo ba leng teng.

Ke tshwanelo le toka hore re nke monyetla ona ho fetisetsa ditakaletso tsa rona tse molemo ha mmoho le mahlohonolo ho bana ba thari e ntsho, bana ba Moshoeshoe-Moshoashoaila, Maapara Kobo a Matle, ha ba keteka phihlello ena ya nalane ya bona e bohlokwa haholo. Ruri ke monyetla le tlotla ho phela nakong ena ya ho keteka nalane ya bohlokwa ya mongwahakgolo wa bobedi setjhaba sa Basotho se ne se thehwe.

Ke boela ke rata ho nka monyetla ona ho hopotsa bohle hore ha kgwedi ena e hodimo e thwasa, re ile ra keteka mathwaso a selemo se setjha sa Basotho. Ho latela nalane le botjhaba ba Basotho, mathwaso a selemo a qala ka letsatsi la pele la Phato. Re tlameha ho kgothaletsa pepeso ya botjhaba ba rona le ho ananela nalane ya rona rele Ma-Afrika ka tsela tsena tse tshwanang le ho keteka ketsahalo tse tshwanang le tsena. Ha ho motho ya tla re etsetsa seo.



Jwalo ka ha Ngaka K.P.D Maphalla a ile a hlokomedisa le ho tshwaela: *“Dieta ke tsa hao, diqi ke tsa rona”*.

Honourable Speaker, for the 2024/2025 Financial Year, the department receives a total budget allocation of **R641 789 000 (Six hundred and forty-one million, seven hundred and eighty-nine thousand rands)**.



### **Programme 1: Administration and Financial Management**

Honourable Speaker, the Administration and Financial Management programme is allocated an amount of **R116 372 000 (One hundred and sixteen million three hundred and seventy-two thousand rands)**. Programme 1, which is the Administration and Financial Management, plays a pivotal role in ensuring good governance, a clean administration and building a capable state, notwithstanding the role that should be played by its service delivery programmes.

We take this opportunity to welcome the Department's improved audit outcome for the 2023/2024 Financial Year from previous years' qualified audits to an unqualified audit. As we enter this seventh administration, we commit ourselves to consolidating and escalating compliance measures for better audit outcomes and addressing matters that have been raised by the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA).



I have no doubt that a Clean Audit outcome can be achieved if these matters, as raised by AGSA, can be addressed. The following responsibilities and business units, therefore, need to be given urgent and serious consideration:

In terms of the **Human Resource Management**, during my engagement with management and different programmes in the department, it has become apparent to me that the department's Human Resource Management capabilities need urgent attention. There are personnel constraints that have been reported in almost every unit. AGSA has also flagged the issue of vacancies as a matter for serious consideration. Although progress has been made towards the **filling of vacancies** at managerial and operational level, we have critical positions such as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Director for Human Resources Management occupied in an acting capacity. It is only recent that the position of the Head of the Department has finally been filled. Other critical vacancies that need to be filled urgently are the following, amongst others: Internal Control at Finance; Director for Heritage, Museums and Language Services; as well as Occupational, Health and Safety Specialist at Infrastructure.

The filling of vacancies in the public sector contributes to an important outcome of job creation in our country. This outcome of job creation is also realized through the **Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)** which, in the department, is implemented through the Arts and Culture EPWP. The department has appointed 130 EPWP fieldworkers in this current Financial Year, and these workers are placed in all the districts for a period of 12 months under the Arts and Culture stream.

Although the process to review the **organizational structure** was initiated in 2022, it was never completed.



Owing to provisions by the public sector regulations, there is a need to develop the strategic plan for the 7<sup>th</sup> administration and then review the organizational structure in line with the strategic plan. This is the process that we are going to embark upon as the department.

In this Financial Year, we will continue to prioritize ***training and development*** as a way of building a capable human resource that is equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement the mandate of this government.

Building on the current improved audit outcome, we need to institutionalise a very strong culture of ethics in order for good governance, a strong compliance regime and a capable state to be realised. **Ethics Management** has become one of the central pillars towards the realisation of good governance and clean administration in the public sector. To this end the departmental Ethics Committee must continue to carry out its operational oversight functions optimally, following the progress realised in the previous years after the appointment of the Assistant Director for Fraud and Anti-Corruption in the Security Management directorate. The Key Control Matrix (KCM) reports from Provincial Treasury have painted a positive picture about the ethics compliance regime in the department. This positive reflection must be sustained.

As noted earlier, we are delighted with the improvements in the department's audit outcomes in the area of **Supply Chain Management (SCM)** component of the department. This is particularly so in relation to **Asset management** which has, in the past years, been an albatross and an Achilles Heel standing in the way of the department receiving better audit outcomes. However, although the current audit outcome reflects a better performance in as far as asset management is concerned, more still needs to be done.





Overall, the SCM function needs to be guided by a well and timely formulated Procurement Plan that needs to be adhered to by all in the department.

The current positive audit outcome of the department is influenced by a number of interventions that need to be sustained. Some of such interventions are the **technological innovations** that have been employed to automate or digitize administrative processes. Just to cite but two such digital processes: an asset management digital system was developed to monitor the assets within the SCM environment within the SCM environment. This system has most certainly assisted the department in addressing the long-standing problem of asset management which has, for years, landed the department in a qualification audit. Secondly, within the Financial Management environment, the electronic Document Management System was also developed. Through this system, documents such as salary advices are now delivered to officials electronically as part of salary control and Persal control processes. This digital process has also enhanced our audit outcomes.

Honourable Speaker, while consideration will be given to all these priorities within the Administration and Financial Management environment as well as service delivery programmer, as outlined in this Budget Vote, it should be noted that serious financial constraints are confronting the department. Of the total budget of **R654 419 000 (Six hundred and fifty-four million, four hundred and nineteen thousand rands)** allocated to the department, only **38.7%** of the budget is dedicated to programmes and infrastructure projects, while the remainder covers compensation of employees. The dependence of Programme 3 (Library and Archive Services) and Programme 4 (Sport and Recreation) on Conditional Grants also continues to present a financial risk for the department.



We are raising these constraints also mindful of the fiscal environment of the country, which do not make matters easy for the department.



## **Programme 2: Cultural Affairs**

Honourable Speaker, arts, culture and heritage is supposed to be in our hearts and minds as South Africans. When tabling this Budget Vote and now addressing Programme 2 (Cultural Affairs), which is the one responsible for matters of heritage and culture, I'd like to point out that I am honoured and pleased to acknowledge and thank those who managed to attend the Basotho New Year celebration that was held in Qwaqwa, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2024.

As the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) responsible for this function, I am delighted at the manner in which this celebration was organised. It showed honour and respect for the history of our cultural heritage as Africans.

In advancing the cultural heritage of our province and in tandem with the Basotho Bicentenary celebration that we are observing this year, the following programmes have been undertaken by the department:



- 1) Firstly, the **Use of Free State Languages Act** was enacted, giving effect to the need to promote all languages that are dominant in the Free State, with Sesotho being at the top.
- 2) Secondly, through the **Language Services Sub-directorate**, the Department continues to provide the following services: translation and editing, as well as interpreting for all FSPG departments and entities.
- 3) Thirdly, our **Sesotho Literature Museum** serves the purpose of preserving and promoting Sesotho literature, and the Sesotho literary works of literary giants such Dr. K.P.D Maphalla, Thomas Mofolo, K.E. Ntsane, Dr. Khotso Nkhato, Mamothibedi Sehlabo and so on, are preserved in this museum. We also annually celebrate these Sesotho literary giants through the annual Dr. K.P.D Maphalla Memorial Lecture.
- 4) Fourthly, the **Basotho Cultural Village** in Qwa Qwa serves as a living museum that showcases the Basotho culture and heritage. I am delighted that this very institution of the preservation of the Basotho cultural heritage is, itself, celebrating 30 years of existence this year. This is, indeed, another special milestone. It says a lot that as we are celebrating 30 years of our democracy, we are simultaneously celebrating 30 years of the Basotho Cultural Village.

Honourable Speaker, it is indeed, our individual and collective responsibility to ensure the advancement of the cultural heritage of our province.



Through the Cultural Affairs Programme of the department (Programme 2), which for the 2024/2025 Financial Year receives an allocation of **R134 956 000 (One hundred and thirty-four million, nine hundred and fifty-six thousand rands)**, the Department has indeed sought out to advance this strategic mandate despite the financial and other constraints. The focus on the key and central mandate of the department will continue to receive attention but will now be escalated with the implementation of programmes that will give a dedicated focus on culture and promote the traditions and heritage of our province.

We have announced, to this House, that the annual **Mangaung African Cultural Festival (MACUFE)** will not be taking place this year. This programme has most certainly served to advance the artistic and cultural heritage in the province in over two (2) decades of its existence. It has also been characterized by the commercial aspects which were dominated by music activations. We need to state it categorically clear that MACUFE as a flagship programme of the department has not been abandoned.

Consequently, and as we have stated earlier, our focus as the department would be on those core programmes which advances the cultural aspects that have featured in MACUFE. These programmes are implemented and will continue to be implemented at district and provincial levels as follows:

- **The District Arts and Culture Festivals:** Multi-disciplinary District Arts and Culture festivals such as ***Ulutsha, Menyabuketso, Amadodana, Serumula*** and so on, will continue to be implemented in different districts. The names of these district festivals already tell of the traditional and cultural heritage orientation that we have just stated. While the focus is on traditional genres, others will still be accommodated.



- **The Homebrew Provincial Festival:** Provincial Homebrew Festival was hosted in Maokeng/Kroonstad from 29 February to 04 March 2024. The programme showcased the most promising and semi-professional Free State. This financial year, the festival will, again, be hosted to continue to provide opportunities for our local artists to showcase their talents. The next edition of this festival will take place in November 2024.
- **Clap and Tap:** One major arts and culture programme that has, in the previous years, assisted in moral regeneration and social cohesion, is the Clap and Tap Music Programme. This is a cultural phenomenon that has captivated young people in our townships and has, thus, assisted in keeping them away from social ills such as alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, gender-based violence and so on. In partnership with the Clap and Tap structures in the province, we will implement this Clap and Tap programme.
- **The Choral Music Programme:** In partnership with the Lengaung Choral Music Association (LECMA) the choral music programme will continue to be implemented in the province and, Like Clap and Tap, this Dance and Music Genre is also important for social cohesion.

These programmes will continue to provide opportunities for local artists and benefit the creative sector in its entirety, inclusive of the entire value chain of the creative sector. These programmes have and will continue to give economic benefit to local entrepreneurs that provide various services in the creative sector eco-system.



It is also with great delight that we report to this House and the people of the Free State that the department is working in partnership with the National Heritage Council to coordinate the **repatriation of human remains of two liberation struggle fighters** from Zambia, namely Johannes Sabata Tautau and Ishmael Mahlomola Leoatle. Both comrades are from Mangaung and, with this project, the intention is to ensure that their remains are reburied in their home grounds once this repatriation process has been completed. The remains of these heroes and heroines of our liberation struggle will finally find their resting place in the land of their birth. We pay tribute to these martyrs for their contribution to our liberation.

Honourable Speaker, the above milestones will be an extension of the work that was already performed in the 2023/2024 Financial Year. The following programmes were successfully carried out during that period:

- **The Heritage Day Celebration:** The Free State Province celebrated the annual Heritage Day on 30 September 2023 at Meqheleng/Ficksburg in the Setsoto Local Municipality. We are glad to announce that the 2024 national Heritage Day celebration, together with the national indigenous games programme, will be hosted in the Free State, in Ficksburg on 24 September.
- **The Film and Television Summit:** The Film and Television Summit was hosted in Bloemfontein from the 30<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Renowned Film and Television producers, directors, editors and playwrights graced the event with their presence to give support and guidance to upcoming artists. The purpose of the summit was to consult with content creators and key role players in the film industry. A working committee was elected at the summit and the department will continue to provide support to the committee to finalise the establishment of the Free State Film Commission.



- **The Mine Dance Festival:** The 2023 Annual Cultural Mines Dance Festival took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at the Vuyo Charles Stadium in Thabong, Welkom. This festival provides a platform and opportunities for miners to interact with the community and transfer indigenous knowledge of various cultures through music and dance performances such as Ndlamo, Hupe, Mohobelo and others. 28 groups from different mines around the country took part in the competition.
- **The Basotho New Year Celebration:** As stated at the beginning of this speech, the Basotho New Year celebration serves as one of the important platforms to advance our cultural heritage. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2024, scores of people from the Free State and Lesotho came together to celebrate the 2024 Basotho New Year, which is celebrated annually at the Basotho Cultural Village in Qwa Qwa.

During the current Financial Year, we will continue to support independent initiatives such as the Central Music Awards, Free State Gospel Music Awards and others. These initiatives assist the department in further rolling out its mandate to where the department alone will not be able to do so. Partnerships should be the guiding torchlight in a quest to expand our reach as the department.





### **Programme 3: Library and Archive Services:**

Honourable Speaker, the Library and Archives Services receives an allocation of **R259 053 000 (Two hundred and fifty-nine million, fifty-three thousand)** in the 2024/2025 Financial Year. The Department renders library services through **186 libraries** spread out throughout the province.

The following milestones have been realised in the area of Library Services in the last Financial Year:

- **The Opening of Jan Lebesse and Boitumelo Sebothelo Libraries:** The community of Van Stadensrus was presented with a state of the art, modern and spacious library on 13 July 2023. The same honour was accorded to the community of Soutpan, which also benefited from a construction of the Boitumelo Sebothelo library that was opened on 10 April 2024. The construction of libraries is part of government efforts to provide access to reading and other educational resources for communities and, thus, promoting the culture of reading and writing.





- **The RE JA BUKA Reading Festival:** The RE JA BUKA Reading Festival was hosted for learners from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and it included three official South African languages: Sesotho, English and IsiXhosa. The festival also included deaf learners. Services for the visually impaired have been implemented in **27 public libraries** in the Free State and first-time users of the Visually Impaired Library Services also participated in the programme. This service is provided in partnership with the South African Library for the Blind, and is an ongoing programme. This year's edition will be hosted from the 9<sup>th</sup> until the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2024.
- **Support for Black, Youth and Women Authors:** As part of the support for emerging authors, a total of **38 382** books were procured. **R1, 1 million (One million, one hundred thousand rands)** was spent on books from local authors and book sellers and **R2 million (Two million rands)** was spent on women book suppliers. We will continue to implement this important programme and also prioritise the disability sector.

With the technological developments that have taken place in our society, it has been possible to provide access to libraries digitally through what is called **library e-services**. While we encourage the public to visit our libraries to access reading and other resources, we have implemented the digital programmes that enable access to such resources without hindrance. Broadband is continuously being rolled out in our libraries, thus enabling even access to free wi-fi for library users. An amount of **R9 million (Nine million rands)** has been spent in rolling out broadband in our libraries in 2023/24.



The digitization project plays a central role in the preservation of the archival material for the current communities and future discretion of our histories. The **Archive Services** is in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of the Free State, which will assist with the digital preservation of archival material to provide access to archival records for researchers across the globe.



#### **Programme 4: Sport and Recreation:**

Honourable Speaker, the Sport and Recreation programme is allocated a budget of **R131 408 000 (One hundred and thirty-one million, four hundred and eight thousand rands)** in the 2024/2025 Financial Year.

The Department's Major **Sporting Events Hosting programme** was recently given an added boost. The recent hosting of major sport events in the province has contributed towards rekindling and rejuvenating not only the interest in sporting events such as soccer and rugby but also sport tourism. The province has recently hosted the ***FIFA World Cup qualification match between South Africa and Zimbabwe*** which was held on 11 June 2024 as well as the ***International Rugby Test match between the Springboks and Portugal*** which was held on 20 July 2024.



Having noted the passion for sport and soccer in particular in our province, yet another decision was taken by the organisers of the Toyota Cup to host their inaugural match between **Kaizer Chiefs and Young Africans of Tanzania**, here in our province, in Mangaung on 28 July 2024.

These matches brought a heightened level of activity with certain economic spin-offs in the province during that period. We will continue to work hard to ensure that the province continues to be an attraction for such events as part of our Major Sporting Events Hosting programme.

Honourable Speaker, I extend our invitation to this House and the people of the Free State to join me in congratulating the **Free State Netball Team, the Crinums**, on winning the **Telkom National League 2024** at Ellis Park Arena on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June this year.

These efforts are a continuation of the following milestones, already recorded in the 2023/2024 Financial Year by the Department:

- **The Nelson Mandela Provincial Challenge:** The Department hosted the Nelson Mandela Provincial Tournament in a quest to continue with the preservation of the legacy of Nelson Mandela as the liberation struggle icon. The tournament was staged on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023 in Zastron. The Provincial Tournament was preceded by district eliminations that were staged in all the districts on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2023. In continuation of this legacy, this year's event was held from the 09<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of August in Zastron.



- **The Big Walk and National Recreation Day:** The annual Big Walk and National Recreation Day programme was implemented in Bloemfontein on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023, as part of the quest to promote healthy lifestyles in communities. This programme is part of a nationwide campaign to educate society around the importance of recreation and engaging in physical activities as well as to promote healthy lifestyles. We will continue to honour the national call of the annual Big Walk and Recreation Day this Financial Year, on 4 October 2024.
- **The Free State Sport Awards:** The 2023 Free State Sport Awards were hosted to recognize and honour individuals and teams who had excelled both on and off the sport field. The awards carry various categories that recognize individuals, males, females, disabled people, continental participants, federations, schools, indigenous games, media and community sport builders. This year's edition will be hosted on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2024.
- **The Nelson Mandela Boxing Tournament:** On the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2023, the Department, in partnership with Dream Team Promotions, hosted two international boxing bouts as part of the celebration of the legacy of the late Former President Nelson Mandela. The main bout featured our very own South African Female champion, Matshidiso “Scorpion Queen” Mokatsane from Kroonstad, who fought against Cecilia Pitiseni from Zimbabwe. The main supporting bout also featured Jackson “Lord of the Ring” Kaptein from Bloemfontein, who fought against Giresse Wingui from Guinea. Again, this programme will continue before the end of November 2024.



**The Women Boxing Development programme** will be implemented in partnership with the South African National Amateur Boxing Association (SONABO).

- **The Provincial Rural Sport Development Programme Finals:** In partnership with the Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality, Maluti A Phofung Local Municipality, the Free State House of Traditional Leaders, as well as the Netball, Football and Athletics Federations, the Department hosted the annual Provincial Rural Sport Development Programme Provincial finals in Phuthaditjhaba, Qwaqwa, on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The Rural Sport Development programme (RSDP) is aimed at developing sport and providing a platform for the youth in rural areas to showcase their talents in various sporting codes such as netball and football. The programme is focused on areas that are under Traditional Leadership. This programme was launched nationally, in 2016.
- **The Premier's Cup Tournament:** In partnership with the South African Football Association (SAFA), the Department hosted the inaugural Provincial Soccer Tournament semi-finals and finals in Mangaung, on Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2024. The tournament, which was launched on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, forms part of the efforts by the Department to continue to promote sport, and soccer in particular, in the province. 16 teams participated in the tournament and each team received a participation fee of R100 000. The show stopper of the day was the final match between Bloemfontein Celtics and Spartans FC. Bloemfontein Celtics took home the R200 000 prize as the overall winning team.



This tournament is staged in a quest to ensure that the province has a soccer team at a Professional Soccer League (PSL) level, following the sale and loss of PSL status by, inter alia, Bloemfontein Celtic and Free State Stars.

Moving forward, we will provide direct **financial support to soccer development teams** as a way of trying to realise the objective of ensuring that a single stream is created in the ABC Motsepe league, instead of the current two streams. We will also ensure that our Free State Sport Science Institute provides sport science support to these teams. Ultimately, the Free State needs to have a professional soccer team at PSL level.

In the remaining period of the current Financial Year, the above programmes that include the Big Walk and National Recreation Day, Women Boxing Development and others will, therefore, continue to be implemented.

As we forge ahead with these and other Sport and Recreation programmes, we need to upscale those mass participation sport programmes such as the **O.R. Tambo Games**. These are programmes that are implemented right from local up to the provincial level. They provide the much-needed exposure for young talent that needs to be identified, incubated and developed for intermediate and elite performance levels in line with the sport continuum approach that we need to entrench. We need to have Free State athletes representing the province at national competitions and the country at international competitions. The O.R. Tambo Games is one of the programmes during which the Talent Scouts get to do Talent Identification for the Mainstream Level of participation. This programme is rolled out in partnership with municipalities.



The province will also host the **Indigenous Games Festival** from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024, alongside the celebration of the national Heritage Day programme that the national Department Sport, Arts and Culture will be spearheading.

I have already stated that partnerships will be the order of the day in advancing our mandate. Through partnerships with different **Non-Profit Organisations**, we will ensure that sport and recreation is rolled out across the length and breadth of our province in a meaningful way. The civil society structures that are based in the districts, such as District Sport and Recreation Councils, will be supported financially in order to take care of grass-root level sport and recreation activities. At the provincial level, the Free State Sport Confederation and the Free State Academy of Sport will receive financial support with a clear mandate stipulated in the **Service Level Agreement**, to assist the Federations.

Part of our responsibility, jointly with the Department of Education, is to ensure that sport thrives within the schooling environment. In this regard, it is important to have an implementable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two departments. The National Sport and Recreation Plan identifies **School Sport** as the bedrock of sport in the nation and, as such, requires our full support to ensure that as many of our learners as possible participate in sport. In the 2023/24 financial year, the following milestones were reached:



- **75** schools were provided with **Sport Equipment and Attire** in order to encourage participation in sport.
- **300** educators and sport volunteers were trained in various coaching, umpiring, refereeing and administrative qualifications.
- **812** learners were supported to participate in various **National School Sport Championships**. The province achieved Bronze at the National Athletics Championships.

In 2025, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> until the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, the province will be hosting the **National High Schools and Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) Athletics Championships**, which will include athletes from across the country who will descend into our province to compete in various athletics disciplines.

In the new MTEF, the **Regular Participation Programme** will be the primary focus. This programme will seek to revive School Sport leagues in rural and township schools, to ensure that no learners are left behind in this quest for active living.

Honourable Speaker, we continue to strive to ensure that the Free State province has a heightened level of sport participation but also quality sport performance. Through the **High Performance and Sport Science** services, **878** athletes received support during the 2023/2024 Financial Year. Services that were rendered to these athletes included **599** sport specific testing, **9 777** strength and conditioning sessions, **146** injury rehabilitation sessions, **280** nutritional consultations and **2** education and training workshops. These services contribute towards the goal of provincial athletes' optimal performance.





Given the fact that sport coaches relentlessly pursue **innovative training and coaching interventions** to find that extra one percent that is needed to turn their athletes' performance into a world class performance, in the 2024/2025 Financial Year, the services that will be rendered to athletes and coaches will include the following: the elite athlete and coaching support programme, the sport science support programme (which includes national, provincial and professional athlete support), the sport science for fitness programme (which includes schools and community sport clubs) and the play for fitness programme (which includes primary schools). Complimentary to the fore-mentioned programmes, coaches will have the opportunity of learning through the E-learning (Coach Connected), which will be launched in Quarter 4 for **300** coaches. Quarterly online articles for coaches, athletes and parents will also provide much needed sport science information to the public.

### **Infrastructure projects**

Honourable Speaker, **infrastructure revitalisation and maintenance** will be one of the focal areas of this administration. I have noted that some of our facilities require urgent attention, in view of the unfortunate conditions that they are in. Places such as Waaihoek Church precinct, which we have earlier indicated as now being inscribed as a World Heritage Site, must be brought to a standard that is befitting and attractive to tourists.

The Mmabana Arts and Culture Centre in Thaba Nchu as well as the National Afrikaans Literature Museum and others, are some of those institutions that will be subjected to infrastructure maintenance interventions.



We will, however, first and foremost, embark on a full structural assessment of institutions such as Mmabana for us to determine the full extent of the work that is required and actually conduct that work once and for all.

We are also delighted that a breakthrough has been made with regard to work towards the finalisation of the construction of Wepener library, which has been stalled for quite some time. The community of Smithfield will also benefit from the construction of an Indoor Sport Centre, which is currently under construction.

### **Conclusion:**

Honourable Speaker, as we move forward, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to using sport, arts, culture, and recreation as tools for building a better South Africa for all. I urge this House to support this Budget and, in doing so, support the future of our nation.

Together with our partners and stakeholders, we will join hands in this very important responsibility of advancing the mandate of the department. It is, indeed, only through partnerships and collaborations that we can overcome the challenges that are confronting us. Let us emulate our first democratic President who believed in social cohesion to build a strong nation and sport was one tool that he deemed fit for the transformation of society. President, Tata Nelson Mandela, in his vision stated the following about the role of sport, “*sport has the power to change the world, it has the power to inspire*”.



I pay respect to my colleagues in the Executive Council under the leadership of the honourable Premier, Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae, for the spirit of collegiality.

I further extend my appreciation to the Head of the Department, management, the entire workforce of the department, as well as my inner office, for the commitment that they show in serving our people. I am confident that working together we will achieve our mandate.

Thanks to my family and friends for standing by me and understanding my official responsibility and commitment to the people of the Free State.

I thank you.

Malibongwe!!

