



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE

Roads & Transport

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE GLORIA BARRY, MEC FOR
ROADS AND TRANSPORT AT THE LAUNCH OF THE EASTERN CAPE
TRANSPORT MONTH PROGRAMME AND R72 REHABILITATION**

02 October 2008, Ncerha Village, East London

Programme Director

Speaker of Amthole District Municipality

Councillors

Traditional Leaders

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a great honour for me to officially launch the Eastern Cape 2008 October Transport Month Programme in this village, which clearly demonstrates government's unwavering commitment to its pro-poor agenda.

Government's focus in this year's Transport Month is to demonstrate South Africa's Transport Infrastructure Readiness for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

We have identified certain strategic routes that would enable our people and visitors to access the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, which is our Host City in this Province, and some of our key tourist attractions, which include:

Motherwell to Addo Road – construction scheduled for October 2008, but Phase 1 is in progress;

Hankey to Patensie & Rocklands Road (Witteklip to Uitenhage) – construction to commence in January 2009; and

Main Road 397 through Baviaanskloof Reserve – upgrading is underway at a cost of R5million.

Today we are launching the rehabilitation process of the R72 and the Eastern Cape Department of Roads and Transport is spending R142 million on Phase 1 of this project (East London Airport to Lilyvale) and many people from local communities have started benefiting through employment opportunities that have been created so far.

This project is one of the main strategic priorities in our infrastructure investment strategy, which seeks to make our coastal route available as a natural resource.

Government is committed to give more attention to this road, which runs through the Ncanarha interchange on the N2 to the Nahoon interchange on the N2 in East London.

This is a vital arterial road that supports both industry (East London and Coega IDZs) and tourism, with a potential to make significant contribution to the Provincial Growth and Development Plan.

It is similar in length to the N2 through Grahamstown, but is favoured by truckers due to the fact that it has fewer gradients. Traffic volumes on the R72 have increased significantly over the past four years.

This is by far the highest trafficked Provincial Rural Road in the province.

Current challenge:

- ✘ Only 95Km of 260 Km of total R72 is in an acceptable standard and condition
- ✘ Capital required to bring R72 up to standard is R1,5billion
- ✘ Capital required to bring N2 up to standard is R1,5 billion

The 2 bridges at Bushman's River as well as the bridge over Kasouga River on R72 are being widened and will be completed by January 2009. An amount of R5 million has been budgeted for the current financial year.

Ncanarha – Fonteinskloof: This stretch of road's rehabilitation is expected to begin before the end of the financial year and will be completed in May 2010 at a cost of R180 million.

Our Departmental Construction Unit is currently rehabilitating the section between Loverstwist (Peddie intersection) and the Keiskamma River, where there is a failure of the underlying road foundation and is causing severe potholes.

A 10km section of R345 between Peddie and Loverstwist (intersection with R72) is being reconstructed to ensure a safe link between R72 and N2. Maintenance along this section of road will at the same time intensify as well as on the R67 between Port Alfred and Grahamstown.

Routine Maintenance along sections of R72 which do not form part of the above rehabilitation programme will be intensified. This entails:

- ✘ Surface & pothole repairs
- ✘ Bush clearing within the road reserve
- ✘ Gravel shoulder repairs
- ✘ Repainting of road markings
- ✘ Installation of road studs
- ✘ Replacement & erection of road signs
- ✘ Repairs to fences

As part of our turnaround strategy, the Department of Roads and Transport has mandated SANRAL to conduct a feasibility study on the possibility of tolling certain strategic routes and the priority is R72 and N2.

This study includes economic, funding, traffic and operational viability, as well as the social impact.

The Eastern Cape Roads Act does make provision for the MEC for Roads and Transport to take the tolling option.

We will soon make a submission to Cabinet for consideration of this innovative method of roads and infrastructure investment.

In fact, Eastern Cape is the only Province with no tollgates and it is high time that we consider having one or two.

I would like to assure the communities living along this road that they will be kept abreast of these developments.

Shova Kalula

Today we are also handing over 500 bicycles to rural learners of Amathole District as part of our Shova Kalula Bicycle Project. A total of 50 bicycles will be distributed to Ncerha Village Schools.

These bicycles have been donated to the Province by the National Department of Transport.

This project assists learners who travel long distances to reach schools. More bicycles will be distributed to Alfred Nzo, Ukhahlamba and OR Tambo Districts and each will receive 500 bicycles.

Another batch of 1 900 bicycles is expected from the National Department of Transport by November 2008 for further distribution.

In the last financial year, R2.5million was spent by the Eastern Cape Department of Roads and Transport on the acquisition of 5 333 bicycles, school bags and helmets.

This year, the department has passed its target of distributing 2110 bicycles to needy schools and 3000 additional bicycles will be procured by November 2008.

A total of 6 containers have acquired and are fully equipped with spares (worth R50 000 per container) and equipment that are used as bicycle maintenance shops. We are currently in a process of identifying managers to run these maintenance shops.

We believe that this initiative will make a huge difference to those learners who have to walk long distances to access schools. This milestone marks the realization of government commitment to open the doors of learning to all.

In conclusion, this is a clear demonstration of government's commitment to continue to improve the quality of life of all our people, especially the rural communities.

I thank you.