

Speech by the City's Executive Mayor, Patricia de Lille, at the full Council meeting on 24 April 2014

Mr Speaker

Good morning, goeie dag, molweni, as-salaam-alaikum, shalom.

As the national election approaches, I think that we have entered the silly season.

Ghosts from the past walk the streets campaigning for the people who killed their political careers; party leaders stalk the land pretending that they never asked to live in luxury and so bear no blame; while all the while the same old lies and untruths are peddled by the same old salesmen.

As frustrating as it is sometimes, this, in all its unvarnished reality, is what democracies look like; and thank goodness for it.

But in all this madness, we cannot forget what it is we are voting for.

We cast our ballots for those who we think can best run the country.

Unless of course you are an ANC member and would prefer to spoil your ballot rather than vote for your own party.

But in all seriousness, it is about who you think can run the country.

And when one votes, one should vote on a record.

I know that as Executive Mayor of Cape Town, when this government has to face the electorate again, we will be able to demonstrate a record of delivery – a record that is building a better city through redress and reconciliation.

Mr Speaker, the facts of the past month alone would be sufficient to re-elect every one of the DA councillors sitting here today.

In a country where unemployment is rife, Cape Town has shown another quarter of employment growth: according to the City of Cape Town's latest Economic Performance Indicators for Cape Town (EPIC) report, employment in Cape Town increased for a second consecutive quarter, reducing the expanded unemployment rate further.

That means that while the rest of the country loses jobs, Cape Town gains them.

And we are gaining them because, despite whatever criticism we receive from the uninformed, we remain committed to creating the economic enabling environment in which we attract investment and create jobs by encouraging growth.

In terms of investing in the kind of infrastructure that creates jobs, the City is pleased to announce the signing of eight third-party service provider agreements, which is a major step in the City of Cape Town's Universal Broadband Network strategy.

The fibre optic network has reached the point where it is robust and extensive enough to be leveraged off by the private sector.

And one of the factors of our enabling environment is building a world-class public transportation system that takes people to opportunities and allows them to move in and between centres of the market.

In the past few weeks, the City's investment in the MyCiTi bus service has changed the lives of the people of Atlantis.

The MyCiTi bus service started operating in Atlantis on Saturday 12 April 2014, with six new routes and 65 stops.

The feeder buses cover five different routes over a distance of 91 km within Atlantis, connecting residents to schools, clinics, the central business district (CBD) and industrial areas; while the trunk route provides safe, affordable, reliable and decent public transport to work and other opportunities outside Atlantis.

Now, instead of having to wake up at 03:00 in the morning to get to work by 08:00, the people of Atlantis can enjoy the trunk routes that finally make them a part of this city in more than just name and spirit.

In this regard, the new Mitchells Plain public transport interchange (PTI) is the first of more than 100 PTIs across the city to be dressed in Transport for Cape Town's new way finding-signage.

The colour-coded signage is in line with international best practice in assisting commuters in Mitchells Plain to finding their way speedily, and coincides with the construction of the new MyCiTi bus station.

The people of Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha will soon join the people of Atlantis and thousands of other commuters who experience the world-class difference of the MyCiTi service every day.

This Council should also bear in mind that our R2,5 billion investment in the buses and operators of the MyCiTi network also constitutes the largest

empowerment venture in real terms that this administration has undertaken – creating real economic opportunities through redress.

As significant as this achievement is, it still does not match the satisfaction of giving a person the keys to their new home for the first time, allowing them to become home owners and begin to access the benefits of opportunities.

On Tuesday, beneficiaries of the Ocean View housing project moved into their new homes.

A World Design Capital Project, the Ocean View Housing Project is well underway.

The project uses local materials sourced from the area.

Thirty local people were trained to be stonemasons and worked on the project (including five women) and 497 Expanded Public Works Programme workers were employed.

By 2015, 543 houses would have been built here at a cost of R46 million.

These beautiful new structures are an example of all that is possible when government, communities and the private sector come together in partnership to create something through creativity and innovation that will have a lasting impact.

I hope to use the stone houses project as an example for city projects in the future.

And as part of our broader public housing programme that seeks to drive redress, the City of Cape Town is currently preparing for the tender process in respect of the Hostel Transformation Project in Gugulethu Sections 2 and 3, which seeks to transform the lives of many hostel-dwellers.

These relics of apartheid have remained the same for too long. I would like to see them change in line with a future that embraces a more inclusive vision of community, one where the memory of our past remains but not the stains that blot our landscapes and our imaginations.

In terms of direct redress projects, the City of Cape Town's R5 million electrification of 1 409 dwellings in Sweet Homes in Philippi is close to completion, showing the City's commitment to redress and creating opportunities.

And in terms of redress, I am pleased to announce a recent action taken by the City in favour of the needs of the poor.

Mr Speaker, when the Unicity was formed, it brought together what were known as the legacy systems of the previous municipal administrations, including the debt of the balances of housing selling scheme loans.

These loans were given to indigent people as part of the public housing efforts of previous municipal administrations.

Since we modernised our debt system in 2003 with the adoption of SAP, a number of these debtor books have rolled over as part of the debt to the city within these legacy cities.

I am pleased to announce that debt in the housing selling scheme loans amounting to just over R160 million has been written off by the City.

In these difficult economic times, this measure of compassion, this demonstration of what it really means to be a caring city, will go a long way towards making the lives of many families a little bit better.

That is our commitment to building the city of the future – taking action to create the kind of Cape Town we want to see.

It is the kind of action taken by people who want to build a city together.

Unfortunately, the only thing the ANC is interested in is building walls between us.

Throughout this election campaign, we have heard the opposition in this city campaign on race-based politics that remind me of the bad old days before 1994.

We all know the leader of the opposition in this Council's tune by now; he's been dancing to the same tune for a while now although it seems the music is only in his head.

And we hear the ANC try and reassure people that their racial employment equity policies won't affect people here in the Western Cape and that their provincial leader will ask the government nicely to change the law.

Why would the cabinet listen to him? He couldn't cut it in the cabinet which is why they are sending him to sit in the opposition benches in the provincial parliament where he can't hurt himself or anyone else.

But he shouldn't feel bad. He's just part of a proud tradition of Luthuli House demoting Western Cape ANC leaders. He should wear it as a badge of pride.

Maybe he, Skwatsha and Rasool can all start a public relations agency together, taking payment only in brown envelopes, of course.

The truth is the ANC ran out of ideas faster than it ran out of cement to build Nkandla.

They believe strongly in enriching only themselves and their cronies.

That is not the DA difference.

The DA difference takes action in order to maintain transparent government and the rule of law, as we did in the Aurecon matter.

I can confirm to this Council that the High Court found that there was no maladministration on the City's part and absolutely no dishonesty or corruption in this administration.

Indeed, the High Court vindicated the City's principled position by setting aside the tender awarded to Aurecon and dismissing Aurecon's counterclaim.

This is a victory for a well-run city and victory for our supply chain management regime.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to a dear friend and colleague.

Everyone in this chamber knew Mr Fritz Marx, manager of protocol and external relations in my office.

Fritz was the man with the tickets and the kind of person who could organise anything.

A few weeks ago, without prior illness, Fritz passed away.

It was an incredibly sad day for me personally and for the City to lose such a devoted and committed civil servant.

I pay tribute to him and ask for a moment's silence.

Thank you, baie dankie, enkosi.