



CITY OF CAPE TOWN

SPEECH BY THE CITY'S EXECUTIVE MAYOR, PATRICIA DE LILLE

Cape Town's newly refurbished City Hall ready to host more world-class events

Note to editors: The following speech was delivered by the Executive Mayor at the opening of the newly refurbished City Hall auditorium. Read more below:

Good evening, goeie naand, molweni, as-salaamu aillaykum, shalom, Namaste

It is my great honour to welcome you all to this spectacular event where we are celebrating a key part of our Cape Town heritage at the iconic City Hall.

Tonight's musical display will be a vibrant demonstration of our City's diverse talent and takes us down memory lane as we reflect on our history and those songs and moments that are part of our heritage in this beautiful city.

There are of course many more ways we can celebrate our heritage but, for the purpose of tonight, we have a diverse group of artists and through all our other events we will continue to celebrate all our cultures and heritage in their various forms. We are all in for a treat and I want to say a special thank you to the event organisers and all the performers who are taking to the stage here at our grand City Hall tonight.

This has been a very exciting project and I am thrilled to be here in this spruced up venue that will host many more gatherings in our city.

I am sure many of you would have taken a moment earlier to also marvel at the new bronze statue of our dear tata Nelson Mandela on the balcony which we unveiled in July this year as we celebrated 100 years since his birth.

The addition of the statue is an important part of telling the story of our history and the key events that shaped our city and indeed our country. It was here at the City Hall that Madiba made his first speech as a free man following his release from 27 years in prison.

The City Hall has been a key landmark in our city over many decades and many events and celebrations have taken place here making it a true beacon of our efforts to build an inclusive city.

For nearly 70 years the City Hall was the headquarters of the administration of Cape Town with all decisions relating to the city being made here. The Council Chamber, at its heart, was where matters of local importance were debated and decisions taken that were to shape Cape Town into the city as we know it today. The building was also home to the Mayoral Parlor and it was designed in two portions, namely the administrative wing and the Grand Hall wing.

SPEECH BY THE CITY'S EXECUTIVE MAYOR

For many decades, the City Hall has also been a place where, like tonight, people from all over the City gather to enjoy events and music from opera to orchestras to Cape Malay choirs and many other events.

In recognising the value of this historic site and the need to preserve it, in November last year the City started refurbishment work on the City Hall auditorium. The upgrade was completed in July apart from a few minor finishing touches that are still being finalised.

It's been a marathon nine-month revamp for City Hall, the Grand Old Dame which has been standing tall and proud for 113 years. Due to its ageing infrastructure it required detailed upgrades to ensure it maintains its functionality. This makeover is the first major refurbishment of the facility since 1947.

These renovations were extensive and provides the City Hall with a new lease on life. The refurbishment work included replacing and upgrading the auditorium seating; the floors were stabilized and restored; new mechanical ventilation and a new fire system was installed. The refurbishments will ensure that the City Hall is compliant with the national safety regulations so that all who come to enjoy the venue can do so with ease. The City has so far invested R48 million on the upgrades which started in the last financial year and work will continue in the next financial year.

I want to thank all of the teams who worked on this project. We can now all come together in this venue and celebrate the launch of a prime asset as a multi-cultural and functional venue.

The City Hall is one of our oldest and most central public spaces, with a rich history that resonates with Capetonians as well as visitors to our city and has been host to many nationally and internationally important events.

Exciting plans are also afoot to position the surrounding precinct and the City Hall as an ideal musical events venue, in addition to being the home of the Malay Choirs and the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra.

The City is also in the process of a major upgrade of the Grand Parade to increase the precinct's attraction as an events venue.

As a leading African city, we are open for business and ready to welcome the world to our shores where people can experience diverse venues and events, amazing cultures and talent unlike anything they have ever seen.

So let us continue working together to let the world know that, as an inclusive and vibrant cosmopolitan city, Cape Town is ready to welcome one and all.

Thank you and God Bless.

End