

## **Speech by the City's Executive Mayor, Patricia de Lille, at the full Council sitting on 26 February 2014**

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

Mr Speaker,

There has been much discussion about the achievements that we have made as a country in the past 20 years.

These have focused on great changes to entire systems of government and the provision of multiple social and basic services.

In a country with such a deep historical legacy to address, these have been positive developments – though we, like the rest of the country, have been disappointed with the rate of progress in recent years, especially when so many of our people need and deserve change.

But even if we don't consider the recent stalls of national government, some things do not change.

The ever-increasing demand for basic services continues.

The need for local government to deliver with ever greater efficiency and with fewer resources remains a constant reality.

In this climate of increasing demand, we do not measure our progress in decades or years; we measure it in months.

And so Mr Speaker, I would like to inform this Council of some of the things we have achieved in the past 26 days.

We have completed the upgrade of the Monwabisi Resort which will provide a site for residents from across Cape Town to enjoy the benefits of a Council-supported facility catering for low- to medium-income families especially, creating a more inclusive and caring city.

Indeed, this initiative will provide a basis for localised economic and social development, acting as a nodal point for activity and energy in the community.

And as we know, the third tier of development must consider sustainability measures as our responsibility to our environment and to the future.

That is why we marked World Wetlands Day on 2 February with an event in Khayelitsha, celebrating the fact that we will invest R1,6 million in the Khayelitsha Wetlands Park this financial year, part of our more than R12 million investment in this park.

And also in Khayelitsha this month we opened our third male clinic, providing male-focused access to primary health care, education on safe sex and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), diagnosis and treatment regimes. To date, our male clinics in Khayelitsha have led to a more than 50% reduction in STIs in Khayelitsha since 2007.

At the beginning of this month, we began construction of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre in Strandfontein.

This comes in the same month that we opened the Leonsdale ECD centre of excellence.

Local government has the constitutional responsibility to drive social development and, by investing in our children and ensuring that they have a safe place to grow and learn, we make a powerful intervention in the development phase of a child's education.

Those of us who work in our communities know that centres for children act as centres for the community as well, especially as places of social intervention and awareness.

Before Council today is a proposal to release 154 City-owned fully-serviced erven in Atlantis and Makhaza in Khayelitsha at reduced prices.

This intervention would allow prospective first-time home owners to buy these sites and build their own homes, allowing people access to the Gap Housing market and therefore helping us address this pressing public housing issue.

Indeed, this proposal to Council comes on the back of an event the City hosted yesterday, where we handed over title deeds to those leasing City-owned land for Lagunya shops.

This underpins an important ideological position of this government: that one of the best ways to encourage economic activity among people who are either first-time entrants or new to the formal economy is to encourage a culture of ownership.

Ownership allows people to leverage their assets and create value for themselves and their families.

The drive to encourage and enable ownership is a powerful intervention from the State, especially in the context of public housing.

But in order to facilitate this role, we have to have all role-players in the public sector dedicated to the task.

In this regard, the City has been trying for years to get the national government to release the land that it owns in Wingfield and Youngsfield for public housing purposes.

We have been trying to get national departments to release these parcels but to no avail.

So I have written directly to President Zuma, asking him to intervene.

Apart from a letter of acknowledgement, I have yet to receive a substantive reply from the presidency.

Let me remind this Council that we have sent numerous requests over a period of about 10 years to the two national departments concerned: the National Department of Public Works and the South African National Defence Force.

Unfortunately, not every branch of government, and certainly not most of national government, regards the needs of service delivery as urgently as Cape Town.

Indeed, it is national government that puts a cap on our credit rating as a city.

Despite this, the City has again been rated at the high end of the six metropolitan municipalities rated by Moody's in South Africa with a rating of Aa3.za.

The City's maintenance of its strong financial position is particularly noteworthy in light of the continuing economic volatility.

A favourable rating from Moody's, one of the world's leading credit agencies, provides investors and the community with confidence in the financial leadership and management of this municipality.

This confidence is further strengthened by the fact that Cape Town is the only metro to receive a clean audit from the Auditor-General.

This shows that, even when faced with a slow and unresponsive national government that has sometimes forgotten the needs of service delivery, a

committed local government with the right policies and right approach can remain a centre of excellence.

Part of our approach has been engaging with communities. I have had no less than 12 meetings with communities since the beginning of December.

And this centre of excellence is doing everything in its power to provide services to people.

Earlier this month, even amid warnings of safety concerns from the South African Police Service (SAPS), our Electricity Services Department attempted to address electricity service issues in Manenberg.

These City officials went in to Manenberg with police escorts trying to address the faults.

This level of commitment, even in the face of danger, shows that this City will do everything in its power to assist residents because that is what a centre of excellence does.

There can be no greater testament to our excellence and the legacy of building an inclusive city than the MyCiTi route we opened this month linking Imizamo Yethu, Hangberg and Hout Bay with the city centre.

Indeed, just over a week ago, children from Imizamo Yethu waited in line to use the bus to get to the Sea Point swimming pool.

These were children using a City service to get to a City facility open for all, proving the wisdom of our investment both in MyCiTi and the Sea Point pool and promenade area.

But of course, the leader of the ANC in this Council, Councillor Ehrenreich, has criticised the City in the past.

He has said that the MyCiTi service only goes to rich areas and that investment in Sea Point was discrimination against the poorer communities in Cape Town.

I wonder if the Councillor will make the same speech to the children queuing from Imizamo Yethu to get on the City bus to use the City pool in Sea Point.

But probably not Mr Speaker, as Councillor Ehrenreich is as unfamiliar with the law and the responsibilities of government as he is with the layout of Cape Town and public transport.

So let me help him on his way.

Given his absence, let me ask the Chief Whip of the ANC to give him this copy of the constitution, a map of the city and a MyCiTi bus card so that he can begin to experience these things first hand and bring a more informed opinion to this Council.

In conclusion, there are many good stories to tell in Cape Town.

Our stories are not the fairy-tales that President Zuma reads us from Parliament where he tries to take credit for the achievements of former president Mandela and former president Mbeki.

Our stories are real, immediate and powerful.

They are the stories of a city coming together to create a new narrative for the future, a narrative that belongs to all of us.

Thank you, baie dankie, enkosi.