

## **The cost of transport and the impact on the people at home**

**By Sello Seithloho MP**

**DA Member on the Portfolio Committee on Transport**

Honourable Chairperson,

On the 3rd of November 2020, this house met to debate as a matter of national public importance, the economic impact on the lives of the most vulnerable and poor commuters due to ongoing damage to public rail infrastructure. The DA's position during that debate was perfectly clear and applies to this debate here today: The ANC is to blame for the collapse in the country's transport system and is contributing directly to the high cost of living for all South Africans. It was you, Minister Mbalula, who decided to leave our rail system unprotected, and it was you Mister President who allowed the Minister to be this irresponsible.

Perhaps let us put this into context.

Many residents of KwaNdebele in Mpumalanga who use the R573 Moloto Road are domestic workers and by implication women, some of whom are elderly. A monthly PUTCO bus ticket from KwaNdebele to Pretoria is estimated at around R1 200 which equals between 20/21 trips.

As far as the minimum wage is concerned, these mothers, grandmothers and aunts, earn around R3 300 per month. After travel costs, they are left with R2 100. We've not even calculated the amount they spend on feeder taxis to actually get to work. Essentially, the people of KwaNdebele, like millions others across the country, work hand to mouth. The little they earn, go to transport and food. What is left may very well not be enough to even cover the basic food basket if you consider that these are families of sometime four to five people.

How are they meant to afford other essentials such as school fees, school uniforms, clothing, etc?

The reality is that these fellow South Africans are forced to resort to creating unsustainable debt with informal tuck shops that they cannot afford to pay back in full every month simply because they need to feed their families.

It is a fact that trains are a far cheaper mode of transport. But with the lies that have been told by government regarding the Moloto Rail Corridor, is it then any wonder why the people of KwaNdebele only work towards food and transport. All this due to a failure to get things done by the ANC government.

Honourable Chairperson,

I am further reminded of a story narrated to me by Honourable Chris Hunsinger of a lady called Mirrian. She lives next to the destroyed Netreg station on the central line in Cape Town and works at the Pick 'n Pay in the V&A. Her cost for transport was 40% more compared to

when trains were available. At the time (January 2022), taxi prices had already increased twice. One cannot begin to imagine what the rise in fuel did to her family.

Mirrian's story is a perfect example of what happens when you have a broken transport system in the country. All this under an ANC government that has indeed lost touch with the realities of millions of South Africans.

Chairperson, the students of the University of the Free State, specifically those residing outside of campus, could be paying far less for public transport had the ANC run Mangaung Metro been able to implement their Integrated Public Transport Network, otherwise known as the Hauweng Bus Service. This bus service, if operational, would've offered students as opportunity to be able to afford basic foods as opposed to spending more money on transport.

Equally Chairperson, the people of Tlhabane, Geelhout Park and other areas in Rustenburg, could've equally benefited from the Rustenburg Rapid Transport Bus service, otherwise known as the Yarona Bus Service had the ANC-run Rustenburg Local Municipality been able to fully operate this bus service in order to allow residents to save on public transport.

But, like everything else under the control of the ANC government, it is the poorest of the poor who carry the biggest load from the mismanagement of State facilities and services.