



The DA's Rescue Plan for South Africa

Election Manifesto
2024



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Leader's foreword

Our Rescue Plan for South Africa



The 2024 election provides a historic opportunity to rescue South Africa. For the first time in 30 years, South Africans have a realistic chance of electing a new government this year. For the first time in 30 years, the DA has a credible path into national government if enough of our voters turn out on Election Day.

The creation of the Multi-Party Charter for South Africa, an initiative I first announced from the floor of the DA's Federal Congress in April 2023, has been a political game-changer. By forging a common vision among opposition parties to work together to unseat the current governing party, the Charter provides a clear path to power for an alternative government. As we have seen time and again in South Africa, we are indeed Stronger Together.

For the first time in our lifetime, change is possible. The ANC already fell below 50% in the 2021 local government elections. All credible polling confirms that the same can happen in this year's national and provincial elections if enough citizens turn out to vote. With the ANC below 50% nationally and in various provinces, the door will open for the DA to enter government in more places to fix South Africa.

But we have also seen that, for any multi-party government to be stable, it must be anchored by a big, strong party at its centre. Multi-party governments only fail when the vote is fragmented among dozens of parties. Multi-party governments only work when they have a strong anchor party to ensure stability.


Only the DA has the size, experience and demonstrated track-record of good governance to serve as the anchor for a stable and successful Multi-Party Charter government. A vote for the DA will not only ensure stability, but will also help to propel the Charter beyond the magical threshold of 50%-plus-one required to form a new national government.

Voting for the DA has never been more urgent. If voters do not put the Multi-Party Charter in a position to succeed, there are other parties, such as the EFF, waiting in the wings to form a coalition of corruption with the ANC. The best way to prevent a coalition between the ANC and EFF from finally destroying South Africa is by voting for a strong DA.

In this election, voting for the DA is a win-win proposition.

A vote for the DA is a vote to help the Multi-Party Charter to win.

A vote for the DA is a vote to prevent an ANC-EFF coalition.



A vote for the DA is a vote for a stable multi-party government that can rescue South Africa.

If you vote for the DA to help the Multi-Party Charter succeed, you will get a new government with a clear vision to rescue South Africa. Instead of endless commissions, talk shops and summits, you will get a new government that gets things done. The DA has already demonstrated that where we govern in places like the Western Cape, uMngeni, Cape Town, Tshwane and Midvaal, we have the ability to turn our pledges into concrete actions that deliver for all.

In 2024, we can do the same across South Africa to rescue this beautiful country before it is too late.

As the anchor tenant in a new Multi-Party Charter national government, the DA's Apex Priorities during the 2024-2029 term will be to:

1. create two million new jobs;
2. end load-shedding and water shedding;
3. halve the rate of violent crime – including murder, attempted murder and gender-based violence;
4. abolish cadre deployment in favour of merit-based appointments and a capable state that delivers for all;
5. lift six million people out of poverty;
6. triple the number of grade four learners who can read for meaning; and
7. ensure quality healthcare for all, irrespective of economic status.

Achieving these Apex Priorities will guide everything the DA does in government. The rest of this manifesto outlines how we will do it. Given the extent to which the ANC has destroyed the capacity of the state and economy, achieving these goals will not be easy. But they are the only goals worth pursuing if we are to rescue South Africa.

The choice before voters has never been clearer, or more urgent. South Africa will be plunged into even greater hardship if you sit back and allow an ANC-EFF coalition of corruption to come to power. But if you come out on Election Day and place your cross next to the DA, you can help elect a new government to rescue South Africa.

If you want to help the Multi-Party Charter to win, vote DA.

If you want to prevent an ANC-EFF coalition of corruption, vote DA.

If you want a stable government with a big, effective, and experienced anchor tenant, vote DA.

If you want a government with a concrete plan to rescue South Africa, vote DA.

In this election, the stakes are too high to stay home.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "John H. Steenhuisen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature, there is a horizontal line that starts under the first 'J' and ends under the 'n', with a small arrowhead pointing to the right at the end of the line.

John Steenhuisen
Federal Leader of the Democratic Alliance



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OUR
APEX
PRIORITIES

1. [Create two million new jobs](#)
2. [End load-shedding and water-shedding](#)
3. [Halve the rate of violent crime, including murder, attempted murder, and gender-based violence](#)
4. [Abolish cadre deployment in favour of merit-based appointments and a capable state that delivers for all](#)
5. [Lift six million people out of poverty](#)
6. [Triple the number of grade four learners who can read for meaning](#)
7. [Ensure quality healthcare for all, irrespective of economic status](#)



Introduction

The DA's Rescue Plan for South Africa

Our country is in crisis. After just 30 years in government, the ANC has eroded state institutions through cadre deployment, corruption, and criminality. As a result, we no longer have a reliable power supply, crime is out of control, too many children cannot read and write at the required level, there are water shortages all over the country, our ports are failing, and our towns and cities are in decay. These problems have killed South Africa's economic growth prospects and ability to create jobs.

The DA has a plan to rescue South Africa from state collapse. We will start fixing what is broken in government by abolishing cadre deployment, firing corrupt officials and appointing competent people with the skills to deliver services. We will build a capable state to partner with the private sector and civil society to rescue South Africa. This 'whole-of-society' approach has worked in every place we already govern, and we plan to replicate it across the country to get South Africa moving in the right direction.

The ANC's fixation with state control over the economy, its protection of COSATU's vested interests, and its obsession with race-based policies, such as so-called "Broad-Based" Black Economic Empowerment and race quotas, have come at the expense of the poor and the unemployed. As a result, South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, with one-third of our working-age population out of jobs. To rescue South Africans from unemployment and get more people into jobs, we need to loosen up the labour market, upskill our workforce, and make it easier for businesses to invest in the economy.

The ANC's state-led power generation model, the ransacking of Eskom and a failure to diversify our energy mix has brought our economy to its knees. In 2022, load-shedding cost the economy R300 billion and cut GDP projections by 5%. To rescue South Africans from the energy crisis, we need to get the state out of the power generation business, diversify our energy mix, and encourage the emergence of private prosumers (individuals who both produce and consume electricity) so that we can bring load-shedding to an end.

Political interference, law enforcement officials acting outside the law, and a lack of well-trained police officers have left South Africans feeling unsafe and insecure. Between April 2022 and March 2023, 27 272 people were murdered in South Africa; the highest annual murder rate on record in our country's history. To rescue South Africans from crime, corruption and lawlessness, we need a new independent crime-busting institution, to ensure that those guilty of crimes are put behind bars, and to devolve policing powers to competent provincial and local governments.

Instead of prioritising our learners, the ANC has protected the vested interests of its teacher union allies. It has failed to equip learners with the required reading, writing, and numerical abilities to fulfil their full potential: 81% of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning, and 60% have no foundational knowledge of mathematics and science. To rescue South Africans from a failing education system, we must ensure that each child gets 210 full teaching days per year, that teachers are competent, and that sufficient time is dedicated to developing children's ability to read, write and calculate.

The ANC's cadre deployment policy and corruption have led to the demise of many of our cities and towns, which are the portal to the economy and our link to the world. Of the 257 municipalities in South Africa, 151 are on the brink of financial collapse as they cannot pay their creditors, and 43 have already collapsed and are in crisis. To rescue South Africans from poor governance and failing service delivery, we need to abolish the ANC's practice of deploying party loyalists into government positions, professionalise the public service, and prioritise the delivery of basic services.

In 2022, there were 0.79 doctors per 1,000 citizens in South Africa, much lower than other middle-income countries such as Brazil (2.3 doctors per 1 000 citizens). The consequence is staff shortages, long waiting times for patients, and long working hours for staff. Instead of addressing poor governance, badly maintained facilities, and lack of services within the existing healthcare system, the ANC has chosen to pursue its disastrous National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme. To rescue South Africans from a broken healthcare system, we need to remove politicians from the running of healthcare facilities and increase access to healthcare services. We need to reject the NHI in favour of the DA's Universal Healthcare Coverage model, which aims to increase access to services in both the public and private health sectors, improve the existing healthcare system, and guarantee a basic level of care to all people.

The ANC's promise of race-based empowerment has failed. Instead, it has created a small group of politically connected people who benefit at the expense of the majority. South Africa remains the most unequal country in the world. Instead of getting better, inequality has gotten worse under the ANC government. The time has come to empower people based on material disadvantage, not skin colour. To rescue South Africans from poverty and inequality, we need to remove race as a consideration in policy and legislation, increase the child grant to the food poverty line, and expand the basket of essential food items exempt from Value Added Tax (VAT).

The DA has in-depth experience of what it takes to turn around governments ravaged by cadre deployment and corruption. We are under no illusions: if we are elected to govern South Africa, it will take a full term in office to get the national government on its feet again. But we are committed to rescuing this beautiful country, and we will make rapid progress if given the opportunity. It is still possible to rescue South Africa from becoming a failed state, but this requires every voter to get behind the DA so that we can get South Africa moving in the right direction.





**The DA will rescue
South Africans from
unemployment**



Create two million new jobs

The DA's values make the difference

The National Government's **inability to generate meaningful employment** for millions more people stems from the ANC's misguided belief that the state must exercise control over the economy. This approach has only resulted in greater **dependency on a failing state, the throttling of investment, and economic misery** for millions of South Africans. The ANC's perception of the **private sector as an enemy** has disincentivised enterprise, innovation and, therefore, job creation.

The DA believes in **building a capable state** which recognises that its role is **to create the conditions for private enterprise to flourish**. The state's role is to give every person the opportunities they need to participate in a growing economy, while at the same time providing a strong social welfare safety net for the most vulnerable.

How government's failures affect you

The consequence of government failures is a **deepening unemployment crisis** where the youth are hardest hit, with 70% of young people aged 15 to 24 unable to get jobs.

To illustrate the **failure of the government to create the conditions for businesses to grow**, our unemployment rate has increased from 20.0% in 1994 to 32.9% in 2023. The unemployment rate rises to 42.4% when you include discouraged work seekers.

To make matters worse, the ANC is shifting the consequences of their mistakes onto an already **shrinking tax base**. Due to slow economic growth, our tax-to-GDP ratio stands at 25.5%, one of the highest rates in the world. This means we pay much higher taxes than the average of 15.3% in developed countries and 10.7% in comparable middle-income nations.

The inability of the government to control public debt has left South Africa in a fiscal crisis. Currently, 20% of government revenue is used to pay off debt. For every R5 collected from taxpayers, R1 is used to pay down South Africa's increasing debt, which currently stands at more than R5.2 trillion. This excessive level of debt means we have to spend more money paying it off, which leaves less money for investment in growth-enhancing infrastructure and critical basic services.

How the DA will rescue South Africans from unemployment

The DA has multiple proposals to enhance economic competition, increase employment and unleash enterprise, starting with our Youth Employment Opportunity Certificate.

OUR BOLD SOLUTION: The DA's Youth Employment Opportunity Certificate

The DA plans to create more jobs for our youth by introducing a **Youth Employment Opportunity Certificate**. The certificate will empower young people to break free from the **constraints of the minimum wage**, giving them better chances of finding jobs. The goal is to make it easier for young people aged 18 – 35 to move from not having a job to having one by offering flexible employment terms. The certificate will be valid for two years and will be implemented to give unemployed people who have not been employed for 12 months or more the right to exempt themselves from sectoral wage agreements. This policy will make it easier for employers to hire those who have been out of work for long periods of time.



Furthermore, the DA will enhance job creation through **reforming the restrictive labour market** by:

- **Overhauling restrictive regulations within the Labour Relations Act** that currently deter hiring and, instead, fostering an environment that promotes job creation.
- **Facilitating skills development to carve out a distinct apprenticeship category** within the Labour Relations Act. By making apprenticeships a stand-alone category, we aim to encourage employers to hire, train and enhance the skills of our workforce. Currently, apprentices are categorised as employees. This disincentivises employers from hiring apprentices as they would need to comply with the same onerous labour regulations applicable to employees.
- **Removing racial targets or quotas in the Employment Equity and the Preferential Procurement Acts**, measuring progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an indicator of redress and development instead of using race.
- **Promoting the principle of non-racialism, fostering an environment where meritocracy and diversity thrive.**
 - The DA will amplify the SDGs' use and impact by leveraging private sector involvement through procurement. This policy would give preference to the company that makes the most positive socio-economic impact as measured by the SDGs.
- **Broadening the collective bargaining¹ system so that it is more representative of bargaining parties.** We will also exempt SMMEs from the administrative extension of bargaining council agreements.
 - This will be done by amending the Labour Relations Act so that small businesses do not have to participate in collective bargaining agreements. If parties are not signatories to collective wage agreements, they should not be subject to those agreements.
 - Collective agreements extended throughout an entire industry, including small businesses, compel these enterprises to implement the conditions contained in these agreements. This poses a financial challenge for small businesses as they struggle to match the economies of scale enjoyed by larger counterparts. Additionally, these agreements frequently overlook the financial viability of smaller entities. Exempting SMMEs from this obligation will make it cheaper and easier for them to hire people.
- **Making labour unions pay a deposit to an appropriate independent body before they can embark on legal strike action.** Any damage or destruction caused during strikes should be reimbursed out of deposits paid by those undertaking the strikes.

¹ The primary functions of bargaining councils are to conclude and enforce collective agreements in relation to terms and conditions of employment or matters of mutual interest.



The DA will change **the tax system** so that it encourages investment, creates jobs and restores public trust. We will do this by:

- **Committing to no new taxes.** People are already heavily overburdened by existing taxes. Rather than trying to extract more out of the approximately 5.5 million people who keep South Africa's coffers afloat, we need to broaden the pool of taxpayers.
- **Preventing hidden tax increases.** In the national government, the DA pledges that tax brackets will be adjusted for inflation. This way, income will not be depleted by the introduction of so-called stealth taxes.
- **Expanding the zero-rated food basket to include** bone-in chicken, beef, tinned beans, wheat flour, margarine, peanut butter, baby food, tea, coffee and soup powder. Additionally, we will conduct regular reviews on VAT zero-rated items, ensuring essential products remain affordable for low-income households.
- **Enhancing SARS' capabilities is a top priority.** We will ensure that everybody pays their fair share by intensifying SARS' efforts to fight tax fraud, illicit trade, collect unpaid income and VAT, and ensure taxpayers file and pay on time.

We cannot grow the economy without controlling our public finances, slashing red tape, and enhancing competition.

The DA will **get our public finances under control** by:

- **Stabilising public debt.** The DA will establish debt ceilings in the form of a fiscal rule to limit annual government borrowing, avoiding further debt crises.
- **Encouraging responsible fiscal spending.** Drawing on past government spending reviews, we are committed to enhancing fiscal efficiency and instilling a culture of responsibility in our financial management.
- **Improving state-owned enterprises (SOEs)** through a balanced approach to privatisation. The goal is to make SOEs financially responsible, fostering competition and innovation.
- **Developing a savings culture** through a formalised programme in which employees will be offered the opportunity to commit 10% of their salary towards their pension or an alternative savings instrument of their choice. The programme will be coupled with programmes designed to enhance financial literacy.

The DA will **slash red tape that holds back small businesses** through:

- **Accelerating the introduction of 'One-Stop-Shops'** for small businesses to reduce the time and cost of starting a business.
- **Making it easier for informal traders to sell their goods and services** by streamlining by-laws and regulations, expediting the licensing approval process, and assisting them to comply with health and safety standards.

The DA will **develop a competitive, export-orientated economy** by:

- **Making infrastructure development a top priority** by increasing the ratio of gross fixed capital formation² from 14% to 30% of GDP. The DA will harness public-private partnerships to strengthen crucial energy, communication, water, and transport infrastructure. This strategy is designed to spark industrial expansion and attract investment.
- **Implementing industrial and competition policy that supports all sectors equally.** The DA will implement a horizontal industrial policy that does not pick winners or losers. This will enhance competitiveness and foster a conducive business environment for enterprise to flourish.
- **Strengthening trade and internationalisation.** The DA will leverage key agreements and legislation such as AGOA and SACUM-EU EPA to enhance our trade connections, streamline trade procedures, and support the competitiveness of local firms in the global market. We do not, however, support existing localisation policies because they jeopardise local businesses' competitiveness, risk international retaliation, and increase the price of goods.

² Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) represents the total value of a nation's investments in long-term physical assets, such as infrastructure, machinery, and buildings, during a specific period.



**The DA will rescue
South Africa from
the energy and
water crisis**



End load-shedding and water-shedding

The DA's values make the difference

Load-shedding is **the most significant threat to South Africa's social and economic stability**. The National Government has **failed to ensure a reliable power supply** due to its insistence on utilising an outdated model of **state-led power generation**. This focus on state control has resulted in many missed opportunities, weak policy and unreliable energy supply due to resource, capacity and administrative constraints of the state. The state still wants to control all aspects of energy and electricity policy design, funding and implementation.

The Eskom monopoly has become inefficient and unable to meet the demand for power due to a combination of **cadre deployment, chronic mismanagement, and corruption**. This has left the utility with high levels of indebtedness, poorly maintained infrastructure, and a lack of skills. Our state-run power utility is in a death spiral, increasingly incapable of keeping the lights on.

A lack of investment in new power generation has resulted in Eskom being reliant on old and unreliable coal power stations. These power stations experience regular breakdowns and sabotage, resulting in significant amounts of unplanned maintenance, which reduces the predictability of the electricity supply. In addition, **a lack of investment in transmission infrastructure** has resulted in new Independent Power Producers (IPPs) being forced to put new projects on hold due to a lack of grid capacity.

The ANC's response to this crisis is characterised by confusion, with three ministers responsible for electricity all pulling in different directions, resulting in policy confusion that makes it difficult to stick to a single, clear plan to end load-shedding.

The solution to South Africa's electricity crisis must come from increased power generation outside of Eskom. South Africa requires a determined shift towards a **competitive energy sector** where the state does not have a monopoly on power generation, supply, and distribution. A multiplicity of private suppliers will provide competition, thereby improving service, increasing supply and lowering energy prices.

The DA will secure our country's power supply and end load-shedding by **breaking up the Eskom monopoly** and enabling **increased self-generation** among consumers, businesses, and municipalities in good standing.

The same pattern of decline that crippled Eskom is now also destroying South Africa's water infrastructure. This has already led to the **emergency of rolling water blackouts**, or water-shedding, in rural areas and some of South Africa's biggest cities. The DA will tackle the crisis of water-shedding with the same vigour that we seek to end load-shedding.

How government's failures affect you

An unreliable power supply **disrupts the lives of ordinary South Africans** and makes planning personal and business activities extremely difficult. A lack of reliable electricity supply prevents people from carrying out routine activities such as cooking dinner or doing homework. It also leads to an increase in crime, as criminals exploit dark streets to attack innocent people.

A lack of reliable electricity supply has resulted in **uncertainty for the business environment**, discouraging increased investment and job creation. In 2022 alone, load-shedding is estimated to have **cost the economy R560 billion**, resulting in the **loss of 650,000 jobs**. In addition, unreliable electricity supply has increased the costs of doing business, contributing to the **cost-of-living crisis**.

The load-shedding crisis created by the ANC has also **deepened energy inequality**, as poor households that are unable to afford renewable private solutions are left behind while industries and wealthier households transition away from Eskom. The resulting loss of revenue sends Eskom ever-deeper into its death spiral, negatively affecting the poorest households.

Like electricity, water is the next big crisis our country faces. Despite the fact that no human being can live without clean water, the latest Blue Drop report indicates that the majority of our country's water systems "fail to produce compliant final water quality." Over 40% of all the water in South Africa falls into the very worst category for microbiological compliance.

How the DA will rescue South Africans from load-shedding

A DA government will improve the reliability of power supply by **unbundling and restructuring Eskom** to establish an **open electricity market**. We will do this by:

- **Moving Eskom away from power generation** as far as possible while considering and assisting employees and communities who depend on Eskom.
- **Establishing the remaining part of Eskom responsible for transmission into a separate grid and market operator.** The entity will handle functions such as power planning, procurement, contracting, grid system and electricity market operation functions.
- **Prioritising investment in grid infrastructure.** We aim for a flexible grid, which can handle generation from different sources. This investment in the grid must be done concurrently with programmes to establish new power sources. Investment in infrastructure is crucial to support the National Electrification Programme, which aims to connect more households to the grid.
- **Regularly updating the Integrated Resource Plan** to ensure that planning for the electricity sector stays up to date with current energy realities and projected energy demands.
- **Ensuring a diversified and competitive energy sector**, including newly established public and private generators, IPPs and municipal generators.
- **Ensuring municipalities in good financial standing are incentivised** through an enabling regulatory environment to generate and buy their own electricity.

The DA's key proposal to create additional electricity supply and end load-shedding is the establishment of 'prosumers' (producers and consumers):

OUR BOLD SOLUTION: The promotion of 'prosumers'

The DA will actively promote the emergence of 'prosumers', which means that people who use electricity, but also generate more than they need, can share their extra power with the grid. This will be incentivised through a standard payment wherever the DA governs.

The DA will also provide a once-off solar tax rebate for installing solar systems and feed-in meters to assist in establishing greater numbers of 'prosumers' across the country.

The DA recognises that the encouragement of private renewable energy being fed back into the grid will decrease the strain on the current grid and boost the overall electricity supply. The promotion of prosumers will keep households on the grid and make the supply of electricity to poorer households more affordable.

A DA government will move away from reliance on Eskom and **increase the usage of renewable energy sources by:**

- **Building local manufacturing capacity for renewable energy technologies** without resorting to protectionist trade practices and incentivising the training and development of skills capacity in the renewable energy sector.
- **Reducing high tariffs on imports of renewable energy technologies (such as PV panels and other goods)** to ensure that these technologies are more affordable and accessible.
- **Committing to achieving net zero carbon emissions** to reduce the impact of energy generation on the climate. We will achieve this by diversifying the energy mix.

Where we govern: *DA-led Western Cape*

DA governments are **leading the way** in addressing the national crisis by adopting a proactive approach to mitigate the worst effects of rolling blackouts.

City of Cape Town energy resilience interventions

The City of Cape Town has been a trendsetter among the country's metropolitan municipalities in **pioneering innovative plans** to free residents from Eskom's rolling blackouts. These include:

- **Cash-for-electricity:** R53 million has been set aside to establish a cash-for-electricity initiative that would enable homeowners and businesspeople to sell to the City the excess power they generate privately.
- **Support for indigent households:** With a R2.37bn budget for indigent relief, Cape Town provides free basic electricity equivalent to 60 units kWh per month for every qualifying indigent household.
- **Independent Power Producer programme:** The City has gone to tender to procure up to 300MW of renewable energy from IPPs. These projects will focus on the generation and storage of electricity.
- **Atlantis Solar PV and Paardevlei Solar PV:** In 2022, the City issued a tender for engineering, procurement, and construction of its planned 7MW Atlantis solar photovoltaic (PV) plant. In addition, the City recently secured funding for designing, building and operating a solar PV (photovoltaic) plant with battery storage in Paardevlei, outside Somerset West.

George Municipality energy resilience interventions

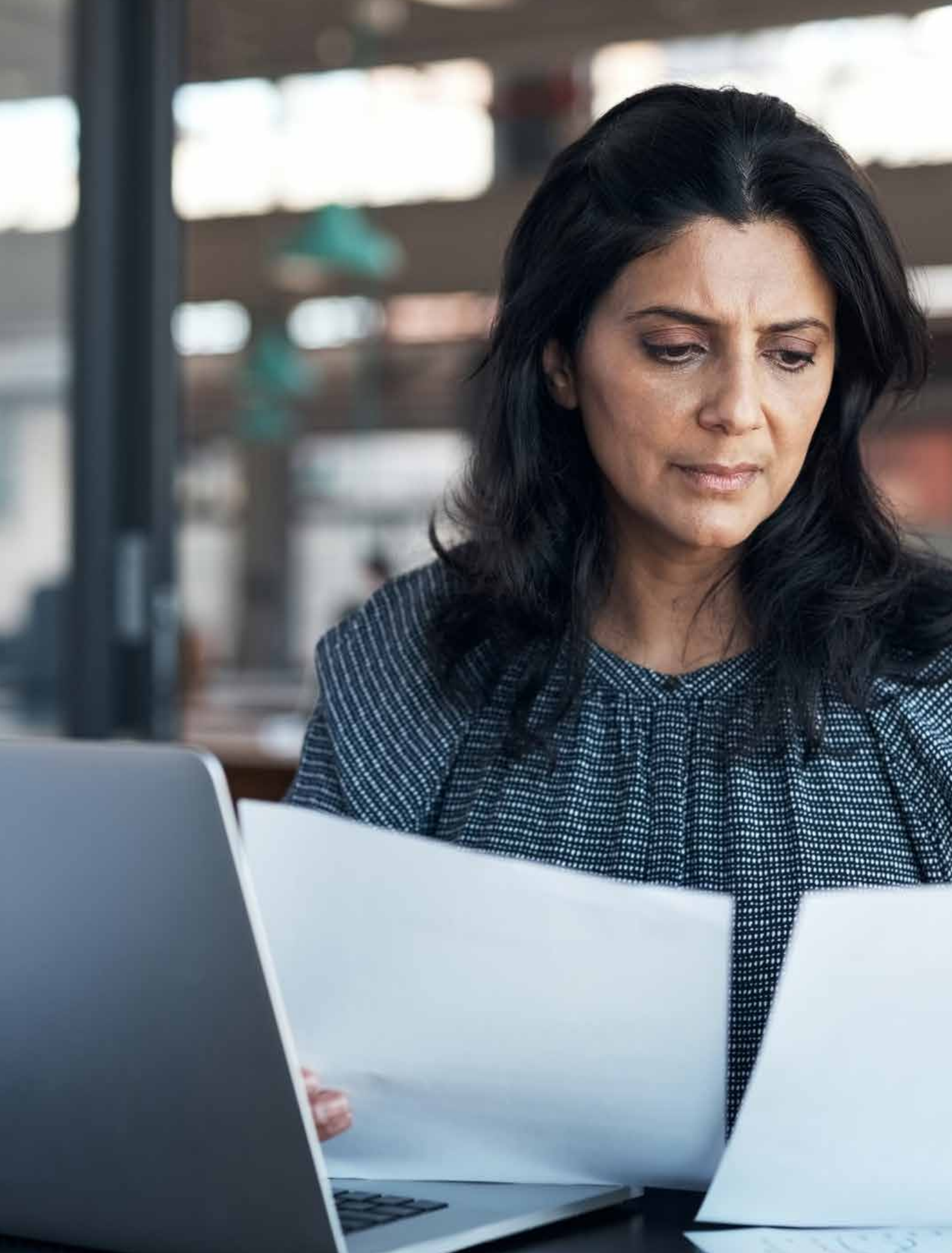
- **Grid-linked, self-generation projects (first phase):** Two solar plants, with a combined capacity of 1MW and 9MW, were commissioned in September and November 2023, respectively. In the second phase, self-generation projects will include a 30MW solar plant and a 100MW battery storage capacity.
- **High Buy Feed-In Tariff:** George Municipality has a feed-in tariff of 90 % of Eskom's time of use. A feed-in tariff is a credit that can be obtained for any unused electricity that is returned to the grid. This is amongst the best feed-in tariffs in the country.

How the DA will rescue South Africans from water-shedding

A DA government will urgently address governance challenges in the Department of Water and Sanitation and improve the **provision of clean, sustainable water supplies** by:

- **Involving private companies in water infrastructure projects through** a performance-based private-public partnership model.
- **Working towards developing water-sensitive cities** that seek to **optimise** stormwater and urban waterways for improved flood control and water reuse and developing public spaces that collect, clean and recycle water.
- **Developing water-wise citizens who can make good choices about water usage and re-usage.**
- **Adopting an Effect-Based Method (EBM)** for water quality testing and include EBM in all water safety plans. EBM captures the mixture effects of chemicals present in water and has been effective in assessing the risks related to chemical pollution.
- **Increasing the amount and quality of wastewater that is treated and reused.** The 2022 Green Drop report showed that many wastewater systems achieved scores below 31%.
- **Considering the establishment of a dedicated grant for water infrastructure maintenance,** ensuring that the funds are exclusively channelled into maintaining water infrastructure. The scale of the water infrastructure backlog is illustrated by Johannesburg Water estimating, in 2020, that R88 billion was required to replace and refurbish infrastructure.
- **Encouraging private investment in water infrastructure projects.**
- **Fast-tracking dam and water treatment works infrastructure development and maintenance.**







**The DA will rescue
South Africans from
crime, corruption
and lawlessness**



Halve the rate of violent crime, including murder, attempted murder, and gender-based violence

The DA's values make the difference

The National Government's **inability to reduce crime** cannot be solely attributed to socio-economic factors. The government continues to cling to the idea of a centralised national police force, while the DA believes in a decentralised, locally-accountable police force. This will bring law enforcement closer to the ground and allow for localised policing strategies tailored to the unique challenges within different communities. Over the past three decades, the government has failed to establish an effective South African Police Service (SAPS) due to a **lack of political leadership** and the prevalence of political interference in SAPS, resulting in **cadre deployment, the abuse of the police service to advance factional political interests, race-based policies, and weak oversight**.

The SAPS suffers from **severe capacity constraints** as evidenced by a reduction in its staff complement from 199 345 in 2011/12 to only 182 126 in 2021/22. There has also been a **loss of specialists**, a lack of evidence-based policing and a failure to utilise modern technology or keep abreast of international trends in crime-fighting.

The national government has failed to **meaningfully recognise and integrate private security services, neighbourhood watches and other private role players** in enhancing safety and security and has instead treated them as threats.

The criminal justice system suffers from a variety of **institutional and capacity issues**. The court system experiences **severe backlogs** caused by police dockets not being delivered to the Magistrates Courts and facilities being poorly maintained.

The National Prosecuting Authority's (NPA) **capacity has been significantly eroded**, the Hawks **lack sufficient independence or capacity**, and the State Security Agency (SSA) has been **heavily factionalised** and misused for political and personal interests.

How government's failures affect you

The **daily lives of South Africans are characterised by the constant fear of crime**. There is an ever-present risk of becoming a victim of theft, murder or rape on the streets of our cities, towns and villages.

Approximately 75 South Africans are **murdered** each day, and according to a World Bank study, rampant crime is costing South Africa at least 10% of its annual gross domestic product. South Africans **live in fear of crime** because they have no reason to believe that the SAPS will protect them.

Due to a lack of trust and confidence in the SAPS and justice system, there is **chronic underreporting of crime** and, in particular, crimes involving gender-based violence (GBV). This has inhibited our understanding of the **true extent of crime** and its effects on all South Africans.

A lack of specialised policing and a loss of skills in SAPS has resulted in an increase in gangsterism and the use of drugs as gangs have evolved into criminal empires running complex operations involving drug trafficking, robbery, money laundering, racketeering, extortion, human trafficking, and prostitution.

In rural areas, the remoteness and greater distances between properties compared to urban areas make visible policing almost impossible, resulting in an **escalation in farm attacks and farm murders**.

How the DA will rescue South Africans from crime, corruption and lawlessness

The DA recognises that the first duty of the State is to safeguard its citizens from violence and crime. The **most effective crime deterrent** is the certainty that the state's criminal justice system will apprehend and punish criminals.

A centralised police force under an incompetent central state, that abuses the law enforcement apparatus for party political ends, has resulted in the progressive collapse of policing in South Africa. To effectively deter crime, a core commitment of the DA is to decentralise the police service and ensure more local accountability.

OUR BOLD SOLUTION: The decentralisation of policing

A DA government will **decentralise policing** to capable provinces to effectively fight crime and protect citizens. This will involve devolving specific policing management and governance functions to competent local and provincial government while maintaining a national police force.

By allowing capable provincial and metro governments to manage their own SAPS forces, they can tailor policies and policing plans that are more appropriate to their specific needs, bringing security and safety closer to the communities they serve.

The DA will combat crime and improve our criminal justice system by:

- **Moving towards evidence-based policing** and increase the use of proven technologies to prevent, combat and investigate crime. Identifying crime hotspots will also be central to ensuring the efficient allocation of SAPS resources.
- **Addressing the under-capacity of SAPS by reducing bloated senior management.** This will free up resources for actual boots on the ground, increase procurement of equipment, and increase the utilisation of modern technologies.
- **Ensuring appointments and promotions** within the SAPS are based on merit.
- **Establishing coordinated partnerships with private security, neighbourhood watches, and other private role-players** in safety and security through a whole-of-society approach.
- **Ensuring that all whistle-blowers are adequately protected** by putting effective mechanisms in place to give them the confidence to come forward in the first place.
- **Conducting lifestyle audits** for all senior police management to combat police corruption.
- **Strengthening and better funding IPID** to ensure that SAPS officials who have committed wrongdoing will be dealt with speedily and golden handshakes will no longer occur.

- **Appointing the Executive Director of IPID by Parliament** following a shortlisting process by an independent panel. This will remove the minister's powers of appointment and entrench IPID's independence.
- **Strengthening the forensic capacity of the SAPS Forensic Division** to ensure the efficient processing of DNA samples. This will be supported by adequate funding and the appointment of external service providers within the private sector to bring down the number of outstanding forensic and DNA tests as well as reduce the backlog of unprocessed DNA kits.
- **Taking cybercrime seriously, using sophisticated technology** such as data analytics, Artificial Intelligence, and digital forensics to protect the state and the South African public against cybercrime.

The fight against the **scourge of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** will be a priority of a DA government. The DA will combat GBV by:

- **Training staff at police stations** for GBV-specific services so that victims receive justice whilst their dignity is maintained.
- **Ensuring that healthcare facilities and staff are equipped and trained** to use the necessary screening tools to identify GBV cases, report them to the SAPS, and support victims.
- **Ensuring that survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) can easily access the help they need.** This includes the provision of healthcare, legal services, safe houses and dignity kits.

The DA will ensure all citizens of South Africa are **protected from public violence** by:

- **Strengthening the Public Order Policing (POP) Units** by ensuring that members of the unit are adequately trained and capable of attending to public unrest and protest situations appropriately. A "use of force" policy will be adopted, specifically for the SAPS POP units, limiting lethal force to situations with no reasonable alternative.
- **Implementing the Panel of Experts Report recommendations** into the July 2021 Unrest by establishing a dedicated training facility for POP officers, conducting periodic assessments and properly equipping officers to deal with potentially fatal injuries. To avoid confusion, the DA will ensure POP officers are provided with proper, ascertainable standing orders.

The DA will approach **firearm ownership responsibly and innovatively** by:

- **Firmly supporting responsible firearm ownership.** South Africans' right to protect themselves and their families from violent crime must be defended. However, this must be accompanied by compliance with the relevant legislation governing firearms.
- **Creating an electronic system to streamline the Central Firearms Registry,** encapsulating the entire process from the application stage, to issuing, renewing, and monitoring licenses.
- **Cracking down on the smuggling of firearms by the SAPS to gangsters and criminals.**

The DA will **shield rural communities** from crime, including farm attacks and murders, by:

- **Implementing a tailor-made provincial and district rural safety plan** across all provinces, which must be adequately funded to support its implementation.
- **Creating rural safety units together** with Rural Community Policing Units.
- **Creating rural radio networks** including the use of CCTV and drones.
- **Adequately capacitating anti-stock-theft units.**
- **Introducing legislation to criminalise** and prevent orchestrated land invasions.





The DA will **reclaim our streets from gang violence** by:

- **Developing school awareness programmes** that educate learners about the risks associated with gang involvement. This will allow us to identify and support youth at risk of gang activity participation.
- **Investing in Youth Development Programmes** to provide skill-building and self-development activities to at-risk youth.
- **Developing community partnerships with civil society, faith-based and other organisations to reduce gang recruitment.**
- **Creating early detection programmes for substance abuse, rehabilitation programmes and appropriate intervention** in adult and youth correctional institutions to develop exit strategies.

The DA will ensure **the independence and effectiveness** of the judicial system by:

- **Establishing a genuinely independent anti-crime and anti-corruption unit** by dissolving the Hawks and establishing a new Chapter 9, Anti-Corruption Commission. This institution will be accountable only to Parliament. This “Scorpions 2.0” will be a new and improved version of the former independent crime-busting unit, which can only be shut down by a two-thirds majority vote in Parliament.
- **Ensuring the independence of institutions** such as IPID, the NPA and the Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services (JICS) by mandating that they report directly to Parliament and have a budget free from political interference.
- **Ensuring judicial officers are appointed based on merit.** Judicial selection criteria should focus on qualifications and experience to ensure that only the best are selected for the job. Furthermore, the DA will ensure judicial independence by setting clear and public selection criteria, clarifying the role of members of the JSC and the chair, and significantly reducing the number of politicians on the JSC, to prevent political interference during the interview process for potential candidates.
- **Establishing watching briefs** for poorly prosecuted crimes (gang violence, rape, farm murders and drunk driving). Watching briefs will involve appointing suitably trained people to attend court proceedings to identify challenges with police investigations, prosecution, and court processes.
- **Establishing an electronic case management system**, which ensures information is easily captured and shared between government departments and other entities.

The DA will establish an **effective and functional State Security Agency (SSA)** by:

- **Disbanding the existing SSA** and establishing a new independent, efficient, and transparent State Security Agency, free from party political interference.
- **Increasing Parliament's oversight role** over the new institution's operations. This will require the institution to report to the relevant standing committee on staffing and performance indicators.
- **Ensuring strong cooperation** between SAPS and the newly established intelligence agency to guarantee more effective crime prevention and prosecution.

The DA will build a **strong, capable, and independent NPA** by:

- **Introducing constitutional amendments** that ensure the power to appoint and fire the NDPP is not at the president's sole discretion.
- **Ensuring that NPA receives a sufficient budget** to fill vacancies.
- **Implementing measures to attract and retain** talented individuals within the NPA.
- **Ensuring the NPA's financial independence.**
- **Creating a legal obligation** for the NPA to record all its decisions on whether or not it prosecutes and the reasons for these decisions.

The DA will ensure a **victim-centred approach** to the criminal justice system by:

- **Providing sufficient shelters and rehabilitation centres** to victims of crime.
- **Ensuring court support services are available** to victims of crime.
- **Ensuring SAPS and the NPA provide feedback and progress** on investigations and prosecutions to victims.
- **Ensuring victims of crime and their interests** are placed at the centre of all proceedings.





**The DA will rescue
South Africa from
cadre deployment
and failing service
delivery**



Abolish cadre deployment in favour of merit-based appointments and a capable state that delivers for all

The DA's values make the difference

The National Government's **inability to effectively deliver basic services** to all South Africans is a result of diminished state capacity. The policy of **cadre deployment** is the root cause of our public service's reduced capacity, as appointments to key public service roles are made based on political affiliation (under the pretext of affirmative action) rather than merit and competency. Cadre deployment has reduced the state's ability to deliver essential services at all levels of government while enriching a politically connected elite. This practice also lies at the heart of corruption and state capture.

The ANC continues to cling to this **destructive policy** even though its harmful effects were outlined extensively at the State Capture Commission and despite legal action taken by the DA to declare this practice illegal. Without an effective public service, implementing policies that will resolve our nation's challenges becomes impossible.

The DA will fill all posts in the public service with the **most competent and qualified individuals available**, thereby establishing a **non-partisan, professional public service**. This will improve the state's capacity, which is foundational to securing a prosperous future for all South Africans.

How government's failures affect you

An **incapable state** has left many South Africans **without reliable access to essential government services**. Roads are pothole-ridden, queues at Home Affairs are unacceptably long, and trains do not arrive on time, or at all. The deterioration of essential government services **disproportionally affects the lives of poorer South Africans**, as they are often unable to afford the high cost of private sector alternatives.

The government has become **bloated**, with little return on investment. Many cabinet positions are unnecessary and often used as political rewards rather than to serve an important function. There is a need to streamline the number of ministries and cabinet appointments in order to reduce unnecessary state expenditure and provide greater value for money to taxpayers.

Due to a deterioration in state capacity, South Africa faces a crisis of poor basic service delivery. This crisis is most pronounced in areas where people reside in sub-standard conditions characterised by insecurity and inadequate access to basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation, education, healthcare, public safety, road infrastructure and public transport.

In addition to obvious examples like worsening load-shedding, data indicate a **discouraging trend in terms of water accessibility** between the years 2002 and 2020, with an average *decrease* observed across six provinces. Significant declines were mainly recorded in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and the Free State, where the percentage of people with access to water declined by 2.6, 2.5, and 2.3 points, respectively. Additionally, Statistics South Africa has highlighted that 11% of households lack access to drinking water. Large parts of the country, such as Gauteng, are now plagued by regular water outages, further reducing access to water.

The Incapable state has been unable to maintain our railway systems at an acceptable level. This has resulted in a **decline in train usage**, as evidenced by the decreasing number of commuters opting for train travel and the reduction in freight transported by rail over the past five years. Commuter trips declined from 424 million trips in 2013 to 29,4 million trips in 2023 - a shocking 93% decline. Rail freight dropped from 230 million tons in 2017 to 179 million tons in 2021. Over 3 600 kilometres of freight rail lines have been destroyed by the ANC over the past three decades. This is enough railway line to cover the distance between Cape Town and Kilimanjaro.

Finally, poor service delivery has significantly increased the cost of doing business in South Africa and serves as a major disincentive to investment. Businesses have to procure services that should be provided by the state and that tax revenues have notionally paid for, even if they are not delivered.

How the DA will rescue South Africa from poor governance and failing service delivery:

For over two decades, the DA has warned that cadre deployment would lead to cronyism, corruption, and the captured, criminal state. This has now come to pass. The symptoms are corruption, financial mismanagement, poor financial planning, inadequate financial controls, insufficient monitoring, poor project management, compliance issues, and unreliable reporting - all of which contribute to deteriorating basic services.

One of the first priorities of a DA government will be to **establish an effective, professional, and merit-based public service system** with a sole focus on delivering quality services to all South Africans. The DA will achieve this by:

OUR BOLD SOLUTION: Outlawing Cadre Deployment

The DA will make political interference in recruitment and selection processes a criminal offence. This will ensure that the public service is staffed by competent and professional individuals rather than those with political connections.

The DA has already demonstrated its commitment to ending cadre deployment through our unprecedented and historic court action, which seeks to declare cadre deployment unconstitutional. This case serves as an important first step towards building a professional and accountable public service in South Africa.

Regardless of the final outcome of this case, a DA-led government will end the practice of cadre deployment wherever we govern.

Once cadre deployment has been abolished, the DA will take further action by:

- **Rebuilding the Public Service Commission** to make it a politically independent institution with enhanced powers to oversee the implementation of merit-based recruitment and selection processes.
- **Replacing the Public Service Act with a new legal framework that separates the party from the state**, removes powers of appointment from politicians, and differentiates between the roles and responsibilities of politicians and officials.
- **Reforming recruitment and selection processes across the public sector** to ensure merit-based appointments at all levels by removing politicians from selection processes and requiring the Public Service Commission to create a pool of recognised experts who will serve on all selection panels. The appointing authority for any given position will select members for selection panels from this pool.
- **Reviewing and restructuring codes of good practice**, including the code for dismissal, to ensure they are clear, sustainable, and enforceable, and provide training to human resource managers to enforce disciplinary action consistently and without fear or favour.
- **Conducting regular lifestyle audits for politicians and officials** and hold offenders swiftly accountable.
- **Introducing mandatory pre-entry examinations** as a prerequisite for appointment to any position in the public sector while enabling headhunting for the recruitment of exceptionally skilled officials.
- **Building a new culture based on excellence, transparency and succession planning** throughout the public sector, including through the introduction of a Public Service Scholarship Scheme to produce a cohort of new graduates trained in critical skills who are mandated to work in public service for a set period after completing their taxpayer-funded studies.
- **Exploring ways of providing high-quality training to prospective public servants**, including the possibility of dedicated public service training institutes.
- **Embracing modern technological solutions to service delivery challenges.**
- **Once the reform process is complete**, transfer oversight and regulatory functions to a reformed, politically independent, and autonomous Public Service Commission, followed by the abolition of the Department of Public Service and Administration.

The DA will further seek to eradicate corruption and promote good governance by:

- **Containing the inflated costs of government** by reducing the number of ministers, deputy ministers, and ministerial offices.
- **Strengthening accountability and consequence management.** This can be done through improved monitoring of internal processes to ensure early detection of performance failures or financial transgressions. Accountability will be enforced without fear or favour for performance and delivery failures across the public service.
- **Ensuring continued upskilling** of all elected representatives and government officials.

Cadre deployment has resulted in a state which lacks the skills and capacity to provide the basic services we all rely on to survive, including water, electricity, housing, and transportation. Replacing cadre deployment with a skilled public sector is a fundamental prerequisite to address these issues.

Where we govern:

The DA sets the example of good governance. According to the Auditor General Report on the performance of municipalities, out of the top 38 municipalities that achieved clean audits, the DA leads with 23 out of the 38, encompassing 60% of the best-run municipalities. This demonstrates that effective leadership and sound financial management contribute to improved municipal performance and positive outcomes.







**The DA will enable
people to rescue
themselves from
poverty and
inequality**



Lift six million people out of poverty

The DA's values make the difference

South Africa faces a **high inequality and unemployment crisis** because of a painful history compounded by decades of job-killing **government failures, mismanagement, and corruption**. Our nation's capacity to create jobs has been severely impaired by the national government's politically manipulated and self-enriching "redress" policies, which deter investment, impede growth and lock the majority in poverty.

The national government has continued to pursue race-based policies, erroneously claiming that this is meant for upliftment and redress. In contrast, the **DA would adopt forward-thinking, non-racial policies** which target poverty and economic exclusion, which can be measured without resorting to race classification.

Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) has proven to be a **deeply flawed approach to economic inclusion**. In fact, BBBEE has promoted economic exclusion, as it empowers a small politically-connected elite. These BBBEE policies have circulated assets, jobs, and contracts to political insiders. To illustrate this, the 2023 Quarterly Labour Force Survey showed that between 2008 and 2023 (almost two decades), unemployment amongst black South Africans increased from 27.3% in 2008 to 37.2% in 2023. Therefore, the majority of those who require economic opportunities have not benefited from BBBEE.

Land policies have also failed to empower the majority of South Africans due to corruption, lack of capacity and insufficient funding. This has made it difficult for many South Africans to successfully lift themselves out of poverty. **Instead of expanding land ownership and extending property rights to the majority, the national government has actively sought to erode them.** They have done so by trying to amend section 25 of the Constitution and, more recently, through the Expropriation Bill. In contrast, **the DA would protect property rights as enshrined in the Constitution and expand land ownership by prioritising land reform in the budget.**

How government's failures affect you

The ANC's redress policies have failed to address inequality in South Africa. According to the World Bank's Gini Index, South Africa's inequality score increased from 0.57 in 2000 to 0.63 in 2014. According to the Gini Index, a score of '1' represents complete inequality, while '0' represents an absolute equality score between all members of society.

The **majority of South Africans**, who were meant to benefit from redress policies, are **excluded and unable to access opportunities**. Many remain **dependent on state grants**. Instead of experiencing

the dignity of a productive job, 18.6 million people rely on grants, a 50% increase since 2007/8. The number of taxpayers supporting these grants is comparatively small, with only 6127 new contributing PAYE taxpayers being recorded in 2022/23. There is an urgent need to grow the economy to reduce the number of South Africans reliant on grants and to increase the tax base which supports the payment of existing grants.

The national government has also failed to adequately increase the number of South Africans who own the land they live on. This is important as land ownership is one of the most important tools **to empower individuals to lift themselves out of poverty** and begin building wealth.

How the DA will rescue South Africans from poverty and inequality

Current levels of extreme poverty are an **unacceptable national tragedy**. A key role of the state is to promote **access to opportunities** for a growing number of South Africans.

A DA government will strive for economic justice by implementing policies to lift six million people out of extreme poverty and into dignity. A core proposal of the DA to uplift South Africans is to replace the policy of BBBEE, because it has only enriched a tiny, connected elite.

OUR BOLD SOLUTION: Scrapping BBBEE in favour of meaningful empowerment

The DA will replace the usage of BBBEE, with the internationally recognised Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This model will reward businesses that contribute positively to the SDGs, thereby removing race as the only quantifiable category for redress and development.

This will be achieved by removing BBBEE from all procurement legislation and replacing it with a point system which recognises a business's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals. Contributions made towards the Sustainable Development Goals will directly address the key drivers of poverty and inequality, which will ensure that the benefits of this policy reach only those who truly need it.



A DA national government is committed to **safeguarding the vulnerable** in our society by:

- **Ensuring that the child support grant is increased to the same level as the official food poverty line.** This means the child support grant, under a DA government, will be increased from R510 to R760 – an extra R250 per recipient every month. This proposal is important in a context where ANC corruption poses an existential threat to the sustainability of social grants. Only a government anchored in the DA's track record of sound financial management can protect the sustainability of social grants.



If implemented in the next financial year, the policy proposal will require an additional R39.6 billion in funding per financial year for the existing 13.2 million recipients. This proposal is possible if the government roots out corruption, cuts waste, and generates savings. Social grants and other forms of social welfare are not an adequate substitute for a job. Yet, they remain necessary for the economy because they protect the most vulnerable in society from extreme poverty.

- **Extending the child grant to cover pregnant mothers to support child nutrition goals.** Women and their unborn children are at heightened vulnerability during pregnancy. They are, therefore, in need of nutritious foods as well as other health care services.
- **Streamlining disability-specific grants** by creating a system to screen applicants at the beginning of the process to identify those who do not qualify. This will reduce the burden on the main assessment.
- **Making it faster for people with disabilities to get medical assessments required for accessing disability grants** by allowing private doctors to do the checks.
- **Effectively targeting vulnerable groups for protection** during food price shocks.
- **Ensuring there are sufficient social workers who can access the necessary resources to conduct their work** and improve remuneration packages to make the profession more attractive.

The DA will **safeguard the unemployed** by:

- **Converting the Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRD Grant) into a Job Seekers Grant.** This would require recipients to actively seek work opportunities and provide evidence to the Department of Social Development if they continue receiving the grant. The grant's continuation will only remain viable if there is economic growth and sufficient tax revenue to fund it. The DA opposes any tax increases to fund this expenditure and will identify savings and spending efficiencies in the public service sector to accommodate this expenditure.
- **Conducting assessments of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) system to identify any weaknesses or vulnerabilities.** These assessments will help us manage and minimise the risks associated with fraudulent activities and corrupt practices, ensuring a more secure and reliable UIF system.

The DA will make it a priority to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by:

- **Expanding the basket of essential food items** exempt from Value Added Tax (VAT). The goal is to provide relief to poor and low-income families by reducing the taxes they must pay on essential food items.
- **Promoting food gardens** to empower communities to independently enhance household food security, well-being and sources of income.
- **Utilising food hubs to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition.** A food hub is an organisation or business that aggregates, distributes, and markets locally sourced and regionally produced foods.

Ownership of the land one lives on **significantly empowers individuals** to lift themselves out of poverty and reduces inequality. Land ownership provides individuals with **a valuable asset** that can be sold, passed on to descendants and used as security to reduce the cost of borrowing. To improve the land reform process and enable more South Africans to own their own land, the DA will tackle corruption and inefficiency by:

- **Introducing a dedicated anti-corruption directorate** to investigate corruption and malpractices within land reform in line with our anti-corruption strategy. This will be essential to combat corrupt practices, where officials act in their own self-interest rather than the interests of beneficiaries.

The DA will empower South Africans through **land ownership** by:

- **Protecting private ownership of land as outlined in section 25 of the Constitution.**
- **Utilising government-owned land:** We will prioritise the use of land owned by the government, specifically focusing on the vast tracts currently held by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. The DA government will focus on underutilised state-owned land for land reform projects, including housing, farming, and providing land access for South Africans.
- **Improving post-settlement support** by strengthening the institutional capacity of provincial structures responsible for post-settlement support and establishing specialised units within provincial departments which are solely mandated with providing pre- and post-settlement support.
- **Prioritising land reform in the budget with feasible project plans:** The DA will commit increased funding to land reform, specifically emphasising post-settlement support for beneficiaries.







**The DA will rescue
learners from a
failing education
system**



Triple the number of grade four learners who can read for meaning

The DA's values make the difference

The National government's failure to enhance the quality of education stems from their belief that the failures of the education system are solely a result of the **legacies of apartheid**. The ANC's strategy for improving school quality involves **intervening in the admission and language policies of remaining high-performing schools** rather than focusing on enhancing the quality of failing schools. Additionally, the rights and comforts of teachers are prioritised at the expense of the child's best interests.

Furthermore, the present strategy for delivering education emphasises **the expansion of "access" to education but neglects the crucial aspect of enhancing the quality of education**. Despite increased access, learners often fail to achieve the necessary skills for meaningful employment, underscoring the disparity between expanded access and genuine educational advancement. Consequently, the education system falls short in imparting foundational reading, writing, and numeracy skills to children during their initial four years of schooling. A stark illustration of this failure is the fact that 81% of grade 4 learners struggle with reading comprehension.

In contrast, the DA believes that the failures of the education system are because the ANC has been unable to address the terrible legacy of unequal education after three decades in government, because it has allowed our education system to be captured by the vested interests of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). The DA is dedicated to expanding the availability of quality education while **preserving and not interfering with pockets of excellence in the existing system**. We will prioritise the improvement of the public education system while remaining open to opportunities for collaboration with the private sector. Our approach focuses on **putting the rights and interests of learners first**.

How government failures affect you

When the government fails to deliver quality education for all, it limits our children's opportunities, hinders their social mobility, and makes it difficult for them to live lives they value through achieving personal and professional goals. Such failure condemns young people to a cycle of lifelong poverty.

Quality education is a fundamental cornerstone in preparing children to play a role in the economy, to earn a living and achieve success in life. The country's education system grapples with numerous challenges, including **weak departmental and school management, poor teaching quality, exceptionally poor time management, unequal access to reliable internet and digital resources, a lack of accountability across the system, limited opportunities for technical and vocational education**, and increasing pressure on a small number of quality schools, without a

concurrent expansion of high-quality education options. Additionally, learners with special needs struggle to access quality education, particularly in poor communities.

The lack of effective management and governance capacity in many schools is often the result of positions of power being used as levers of corruption rather than improving school quality and functionality. In addition, where school management teams seek to impose accountability for performance, principals often face extreme resistance, to the point where some have been assassinated for reporting staff for disciplinary action. Failures in governance can be traced back to the influence of SADTU in capturing the education system. Efforts to implement mechanisms for accountability to enhance the quality of education have faced strong trade union opposition.

Since 1998, **SADTU has weakened systems for managing teacher performance**. Furthermore, SADTU not only undermines performance and accountability measures but also effectively dictates the hiring process, leaving it susceptible to **cadre deployment, nepotism, and conflicts of interest**. Instead of prioritising the needs of our learners, the ANC has instead safeguarded the interests of its teacher union allies. Additionally, staff appointments are protected by vested interests, particularly SADTU's control of appointments and promotions, rather than the educational interests of learners.

The root cause of many educational failures is that learners lose out on crucial teaching and learning time because **schools cannot manage their time effectively**, being unable to cover key concepts of the curriculum adequately, if at all. Typically, the teaching programme seldom starts on the first day of the new term and ends before the last. Tuition time is constantly sacrificed to other priorities, including perennial late-coming, early departures, absenteeism, Union meetings, remembrance services, staff meetings, choir practices, outside NGOs and other external agents seeking to promote their products and advance interests through the platform of public schools.

60% of TVET graduates are not absorbed into the labour market. This is because of the poor alignment between the requirements of the economy and the skills with which students “graduate” from these colleges. Low economic growth is also a contributing factor.

Even when a learner achieves commendable results amidst challenging conditions, the prospect of pursuing higher education remains a distant dream for the majority. The **high cost of higher education** excludes many students from future economic participation. Young people with tertiary qualifications can earn up to six times more than those without matric or equivalent qualifications, yet tertiary education remains unaffordable to many, particularly the “missing middle”. Over one-third (3.5 million) of young people aged 15-24 are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET).



How the DA will rescue learners from a failing education system

The DA has multiple proposals to address the failures of the basic and higher education system. However, we will face two harsh realities in a new government anchored by the DA. Firstly, **Treasury is slashing provincial education budgets**. Second, **education departments outside the Western Cape are dominated by ANC cadres**, who are likely to resist DA reforms that switch the focus from the comfort and convenience of staff to the interests of learners.

The DA recognises that for the first term in office, the focus must be primarily on improvements in the system that can make **positive educational impacts without costing significant additional amounts of money which will not be available**. We will begin by placing a greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy in the foundation phase (first three years of school). To support this, the DA will focus on enhancing education outcomes by improving the foundational skills of reading and numeracy, and testing children for these skills at the end of Grade 3. Our Apex Priority in this regard is to increase the percentage of grade four learners who can read for meaning from 19% to 60%.

OUR BOLD SOLUTION: Ensuring that our children write and count

The DA will ensure that all learners are literate and numerate by implementing the following proposals:

- **Ensuring that each child gets 210 full teaching days per year**. This will require a culture of being “present, punctual and prepared” for every task at every level of the education system. Good time management and adequate preparation by officials, educators and learners will do more than any other intervention to improve education without increasing costs.
 - To ensure that learners get a full 210 days, the DA will **implement a Time-on-Task philosophy** in all schools. Time-on-Task is an internationally recognised education concept defined as the amount of time spent actively involved in the learning process, acquiring new skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes.
 - The Department of Education must break down the curriculum for every grade and link it to the amount of time in the annual programme that should be devoted to the different components. This should be widely publicised to give parents, learners, and teachers a better understanding of **how to manage the time available** for teaching and learning each year.

Improving time management in education could leverage a significant improvement in learning outcomes, given the amount of time wastage across the system. Time management is integral to a culture of excellence.

- **Devoting the first two hours of each school day in the Foundation Phase** (Grade R – Grade 3) to developing reading and writing skills.
- **Devoting one hour each day in the Foundation Phase to numeracy skills**.
- **Introducing a national literacy and numeracy test at the end of the Foundation Phase**, under independent invigilation, to assess whether learners have acquired these foundational skills. Release these results to parents and intervene appropriately in schools with a high failure rate to identify the causes and take appropriate rectification steps.



The DA will further **enhance education outcomes** by:

- **Improving access to, and the quality of, the Grade R** year so that all children are school-ready by Grade 1.
- **Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)** education by early identification of learners with a strong aptitude for these subjects and accommodating them in specialist schools devoted to developing these skills.
- **Implementing a plan to ensure all schools have Internet access** and free digital content.
- **Defending the constitutional right to Mother Tongue Education** where parent communities opt for it, in line with our constitution.

The DA will **enhance access to basic education for learners with disabilities** by:

- **Strengthening the District Office with appropriate staff** (e.g. psychologists, social workers, audiologists, optometrists) to serve a range of schools in each district to support learners with special educational needs and find the optimal available solution for them. These solutions may range from “mainstreaming” to specialist schools, depending on the needs of the learners.

The DA will address **poor-quality teaching** by:

- **Testing teacher competence after their initial training**, before they formally enter the profession, and in schools with poor learning outcomes in order to take remedial action.
- **Introducing independent, national tests at the end of grades 3, 6, and 9** to assess levels of literacy and numeracy against international benchmarks.
- **Establishing targets for each school to meet based on that school’s previous best results.** We will make the test results available to parents and forge joint parent/teacher partnerships to drive improvements.
- **Tailoring differentiated interventions to schools that deliver poor learning outcomes to deal with core problems.**
- **Ending trade union control of teacher appointments** and introducing a strict meritocracy in the interests of learners.
- **Ensuring that textbooks and learning materials are delivered to schools in time** to be available in classes on the first day of the school year.

We will ensure the rigorous application of **accountability mechanisms** and **improve school governance** by:

- **Establishing School Evaluation Authorities (SEA) in every province based on the Western Cape model.** The SEA will independently evaluate schools and publish school evaluation reports so parents in each community can access information on their school’s performance and the core reasons for under-performance.
- **Expanding the footprint of the Collaboration Schools** pioneered in the Western Cape. These schools establish a partnership between school communities and independent educational experts and funders to govern schools in the interest of improving learning outcomes.
- **Enabling maximum autonomy to schools** that deliver quality learning outcomes.

The DA will **address high learner dropouts** by:

- **Introducing greater curriculum diversification** from Grade 9 onwards so that learners can pursue vocational, technical, and academic education depending on their aptitudes and needs.
- **Aiming to reduce the school dropout rate by 10% annually** through appropriate educational interventions and support.

The DA aims to provide quality education to move people from poverty and unemployment into opportunity, jobs, and prosperity. This requires enhanced access to further education and training, especially for those in the “missing middle” class who are not poor enough to qualify for NSFAS funding but who nevertheless cannot afford further education.



The DA will **ensure higher education is more accessible** and affordable by:

- **Reforming NSFAS into a tiered system of bursaries and loans** to ensure opportunities for the “missing middle” currently excluded from accessing higher education¹. We will provide proportional assistance to those in the “Missing Middle” who can afford to pay a portion of their expenses.

A hypothetical example of such a banded system is given below:

Annual household income	Loan/bursary
R0 - R180 000	Full cost of study
R180 001 - R350 000	66 % of the full cost of the study
R350 001 - R600 000	33 % of the full cost of study

The current fee-free higher education model is unsustainable, considering that students are not required to pay any of the funds back. This is made worse in the context of poor fiscal management, corruption and a declining economy and tax base to support it. To illustrate poor fiscal management, NSFAS experienced R5 billion in irregular expenditure in the 2019/20 financial year and R3.9 billion in 2018/19.

The funding model of the DA aims to bring a cash injection into the NSFAS system, ensuring its long-term sustainability and enabling the rotational support of new students. To highlight the financial impact of the existing model, in 2021, the student loan book of NSFAS, representing funds which do not require repayment, amounted to R41 billion.

The DA will ensure funds come back into the system by:

- **Establishing an effective debt collection system** by collaborating with the South African Revenue Services, the Credit Bureau, and potential employers.
- **Proposing that students pay back a portion of the costs of their studies** based on their ability to pay.
- **Providing flexible repayment conditions** to maintain affordability.

The DA Funding Model of loans will include scholarships as an option. This means that high-achieving students, whether in academics or other areas, may have a portion or the entirety of their educational expenses covered.

The DA will further enhance access to funding within the system for scarce skills by:

- **Collaborating with the private sector** to enhance access to student funding via bank loans and sponsored scholarships, specifically focussed on developing scarce skills the economy requires.
- **Streamlining student funding to specific career fields** to address critical skills shortages.

The DA will expand the existing quality within our universities by:

- **Investing in research and innovation** to improve higher education outcomes and tailor immigration policies to attract top-level researchers and excellent academics from around the world.

The DA will improve and increase technical and vocational learning by:

- **Initiating technical and vocational education and skills training through three distinct channels** within the educational system – schools, colleges, and universities. The integration of skills training will commence at the secondary school level, establishing dedicated technical schools and implementing technical streams within non-technical schools.
- **Establishing clear and effective linkages between the Department of Basic Education and the TVET sector.** This connection will enable learners to seamlessly transition from the school system to colleges, ensuring a continuous and well-supported path for technical and vocational education beyond basic schooling.
- **Supporting high-quality two-track (work and study) apprenticeship programmes** and increasing the involvement of companies, together with colleges, in training apprentices. The DA will implement a process for recognising apprenticeship work-based learning accreditation. The apprentices' skills will be recognised, ensuring increased access to economic opportunities.



Where we govern: The DA-led Western Cape Basic Education Department

The Back on Track programme

The DA-run Western Cape has invested in its R1.2 billion¹ Back on Track project to enhance literacy and reading comprehension. Additionally, R111 million has been budgeted for reading, notably in isiXhosa and Afrikaans schools. The outcomes speak for themselves. Western Cape learners scored, on average, 363 on the PIRLS survey – the highest in the country. Nationally, South Africa achieved an average score of 288.

The Western Cape's Back on Track programme also offered holiday classes to address learning losses and support learners who struggle to grasp concepts during the school calendar. The Western Cape identified schools that performed poorly via the province's systemic testing and targeted those schools for relevant intervention. In the July 2023 holidays, the Western Cape reached 23 447 learners in Grades 7,8,10 and 12 through the programme.

The Rapid School Build programme

To address the chronic placement challenges of overcrowding and shortage of facilities, the DA-led Western Cape Government initiated the Rapid School Build programme and at the end of 2022, the department built 164 classrooms. A further 510 classrooms have been scheduled for completion at the end of January 2023, and a final 168 by March 2023. By December 2023, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) delivered 788 classrooms. To illustrate the WCED's commitment to school infrastructure, the department allocated R2.9 billion to the programme in 2024.





DA

**The DA will rescue
South Africans
from a failing public
health system**



Ensure quality healthcare for all, irrespective of economic status

The DA's values make the difference

Healthcare is one of the most significant line items on the South African budget, receiving an allocation of 8.5 percent of GDP (2020)³ across all departments and entities. Despite the substantial expenditure on healthcare, the quality of healthcare services has deteriorated over the past 10 years.

Despite decades of failure, the National Government's proposed solution to deliver quality public healthcare to millions of South Africans is based on the misguided belief that the only way to ensure quality healthcare is by centralising all healthcare system functions through its National **Health Insurance (NHI) plan**. The NHI Bill, awaiting the President's signature, wants to centralise healthcare funding in a new state-owned entity for the health sector. The NHI aims to merge private sector resources (such as medical aid schemes) and state resources into a single funding pool controlled by the minister of Health.

State control opens the door to maladministration and wholesale corruption, which has characterised almost all state-controlled schemes. The most significant risk arises from the minister of Health's power to appoint the board of the NHI fund. This will likely facilitate cadre deployment and corruption, as has happened in all State-Owned Entities. The populist proposals contained in the NHI risk bankrupting the fiscus and deepening the healthcare system crisis.

The DA is committed to **universal access to healthcare for all citizens**. The key to achieving this over the next five years is to make the current district management model work through governance reform. We argue that by leveraging the **strengths of the private sector** in partnership with the public sector, we can improve health facilities and the quality of care for all.

How government's failures affect you

When a healthcare system fails, people cannot access the medical assistance they need. This can have a devastating impact on their quality of life and overall well-being.

In South Africa, the root cause of the challenges in the health sector lies in **governance failures**. As a result, we see poor **performance, a lack of human resource planning** and **ineffective accountability mechanisms**.

The consequences of these failings include inadequate infrastructure, regulatory gaps, and disparities in the quality of care provided. The majority of South Africans who make use of public

³ World Bank. (2023). Current Health Expenditure (% of GDP), South Africa, OECD members. [Online]. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS?locations=ZA-OE>. Accessed: 29 November 2023.

health facilities wait as long as four hours and no fewer than two hours to get medical services or treatment. After a lengthy wait, many patients encounter **chronic medication shortages and over-stretched healthcare professionals**. Healthcare facilities are chronically understaffed, and healthcare professionals are overworked.

In 2022, South Africa had 0.79 doctors per 1000 inhabitants, a decrease from 0.9 doctors per 1000 in 2019. This is much lower than the OECD average of 3.8 doctors per 1000 inhabitants and the average for low-middle-income countries of 1.4.

The surge in **medical negligence cases** over the last 10 years demonstrates a healthcare system in crisis. Between 2012 and 2021, medico-legal claims increased by 36.8 percent. The number of complaints received by the Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC) increased from 730 in 2016/17 to 2427 in 2020/21.

Private healthcare is becoming increasingly inaccessible to South Africans. The National Government has failed to use existing legislation to manage the private healthcare market, curb high private healthcare costs, and increase competition between healthcare providers and medical schemes. As a result, the private sector lacks efficiency and competitiveness.

Addressing these challenges requires the Government to build on existing capacity, improve coordination between these two sectors, and recognise that to provide quality healthcare, the public and private sectors need to be reformed.

How the DA will rescue South Africans from poor-quality healthcare

The DA's objective is to ensure that **no person is excluded from accessing quality healthcare or subjected to a higher premium based on their health status**. In addition, **no person should incur unaffordable out-of-pocket medical expenses**. To achieve our objective, the failures in the private and public health sectors need to be addressed.



OUR BOLD SOLUTION:

The DA will lower private healthcare costs and guarantee a minimum package of services: an alternative to NHI

We will begin by increasing competition in the private sector to **lower private healthcare costs** and out-of-pocket payments while at the same time **ensuring a minimum package of services**. We will do this by introducing social reinsurance and implementing a mechanism of risk equalisation. This will include:

1. Introduce social reinsurance for medical schemes. The solution to pooling problems in private health insurance markets is to establish schemes that can transfer the risks that individual insurers find difficult to cover. Instead of relying on private companies for this (reinsurance), a publicly run programme will be established. All primary insurers (medical schemes) would need to be a part of this programme. This method ensures that we maintain the regular insurance market but still achieve the goal of bringing together risks into one larger insurance fund.

- **This will function as a public secondary insurer.** Social reinsurance works by reimbursing actual expenses for expensive medical claims after they occur. See figure 1 below. Currently, to make it profitable to take on high-risk customers, medical aid companies reduce the benefits they offer. Establishing a public secondary insurer for medical aid companies will lower the risk that they take when considering high-risk customers.

2. Introducing a risk-equalisation strategy for medical schemes: Risk equalisation plans involve transferring funds between different health insurance plans to adjust for the expected costs of medical care. This is done in advance and is based on the average costs for a set of essential services for a population. The goal is to treat all insurance plans as if they are part of one large fund. This helps prevent individual plans from favouring healthier individuals over those with higher health risks. Instead, it encourages insurers to focus on managing costs and providing quality coverage to compete with other plans. See figure 2 below.

This means that high-risk customers will have more benefits at a reduced cost, and medical schemes will still be profitable. This will address the problem of private secondary insurers in the market, where medical aids reduce benefits for primary insurers (households) because it is not profitable to take on such high-risk cases. Our plan will enhance healthcare coverage without the need to overhaul the entire system.



Figure 1 below illustrates the private sector system framework.

Figure 1: DA Model: The Private Sector Framework

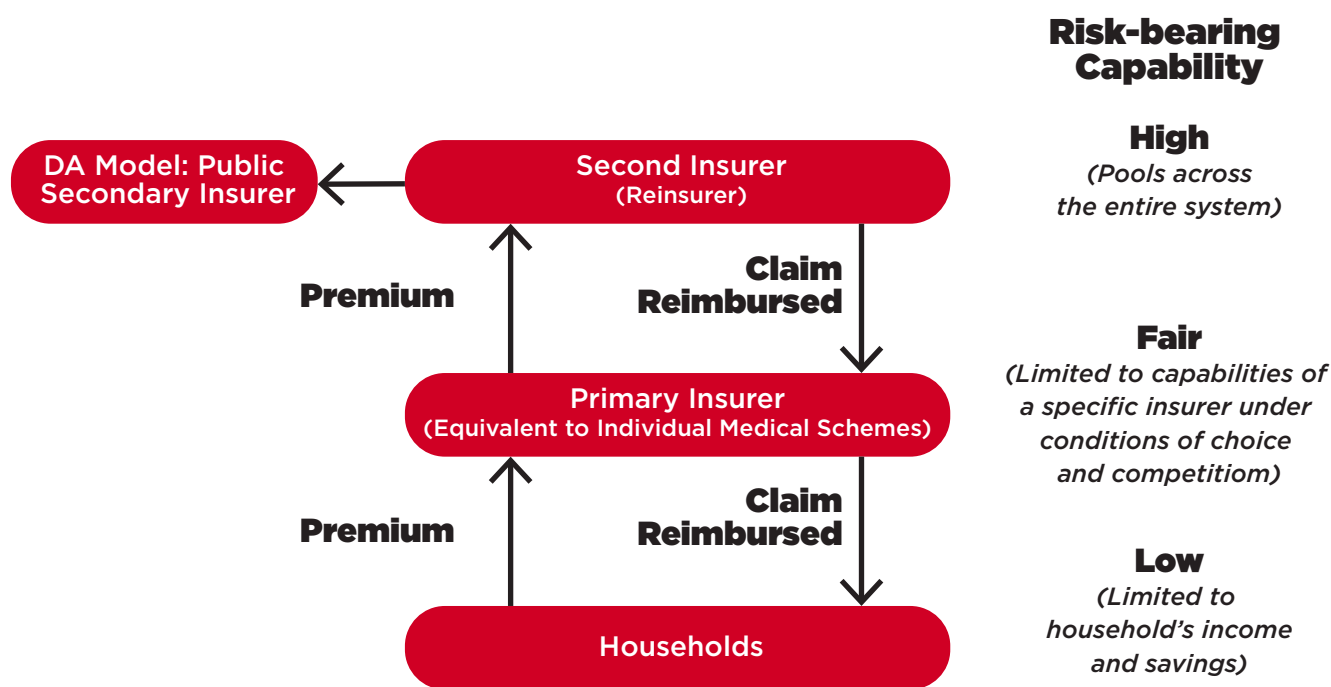


Figure 2: Strategic Pooling Framework for Medical Schemes

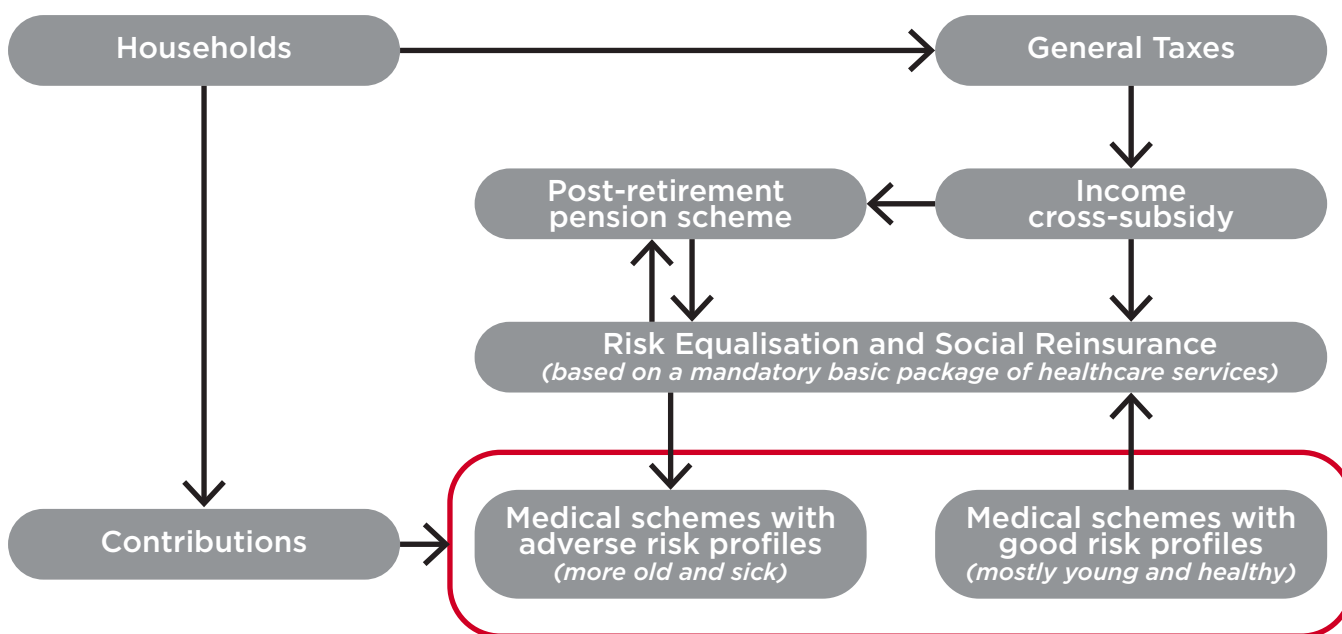


Figure 2 above shows the framework being proposed. In addition to risk equalisation, the DA's framework further recommends the following:

- **The inclusion of post-retirement protection for pensioners.** To ensure life-long coverage in the system of medical schemes, we propose that a system of cross-subsidies⁴ be developed to subsidise contributions in the post-retirement period.
- **Implementation of an income cross-subsidy.** This new subsidy would be based on a person's income and would help lower-income groups with their healthcare expenses. Instead of directly giving this subsidy to individuals, it would be given indirectly to the medical insurance plans they are a part of.

⁴ Cross-subsidisation is often used to promote fairness and equity in healthcare by spreading the financial burden more evenly across a diverse population, allowing everyone to access healthcare services when needed. This will be funded through general taxes.

The DA will **address corruption and enhance accountability** by:

- **Separating politicians from administrations, regulators, and all public entities** responsible for the delivery of healthcare services. This measure will prevent harmful conflicts of interest in the appointment of personnel and procurement processes from getting in the way of good governance and service delivery.
- **Establishing an investigative structure to address fruitless, wasteful and irregular expenditure.** Given the lack of financial controls in place, irregular expenditure amounted to R4.5 billion, and fruitless and wasteful expenditure across all entities amounted to R3.3 billion.
- **Establishing an Independent Watchdog for Health Entities** (also known as supervisory structures). The independent watchdog will supervise all regulators, all key hospitals, key health services and health districts. They will have the powers to supervise procurement processes, oversee human resource matters, and appoint and remove the relevant chief executives.
 - **The relevant chief executive or equivalent of health entities will report to the Watchdog.** They will be responsible for all aspects of their organisation, including finance, procurement, human resources, equipment, all administrative functions, and all capital expenditures.
- **Establishing an independent National Health Appointments Authority (NHAA)** to guarantee the autonomy of the Watchdog (supervisory structures). The NHAA will handle supervisory structure members' nomination, appointment, and removal processes, moving these responsibilities away from the executive.

The DA will address delays in **health infrastructure maintenance** and development by:

- **Ensuring all capital expenditure is directly financed and controlled by healthcare facility administrators** and not a public works department, whether national or provincial. For hospitals, all revenues raised outside of budgeted allocations will be retained and managed by the relevant hospital and deployed in accordance with their needs.

The DA will **enhance health workforce planning** and prevent shortages of doctors by:

- **Developing a national health workers plan** to identify skill shortages and to ensure that we have sufficient doctors, nurses and administrators in the system. This plan will rely on academic institutions, health departments and training facilities working together to prevent mismatches in supply that could lead to unemployed graduates.
- **Removing regulatory barriers to get private institutions involved in training doctors and nurses.** This would be done by amending the National Health Professions Bill to allow medical students the option to complete their internship and community service within the private sector.

The DA will ensure that every person in South Africa has **access to their prescription medications nationwide.** This will be done by:

- **Establishing a National Prescription Registry** that will allow patients to collect repeat prescriptions at any pharmacy in the country. This will be done by establishing a single access point for accessing a medication registry.

Furthermore, the DA will **improve the monitoring and evaluation** of health facilities by fixing the Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC), which is responsible for measuring the quality of services being provided. This will be done by:

- **Empowering the OHSC to evaluate both public and private facilities.** Currently, they are only measuring the quality of public health facilities. If facilities don't follow the rules, we will implement administrative penalties for non-compliance with required actions.
- **Ensuring all information gathered by the OHSC on the quality of health facilities is made public** to enhance accountability.
- **Making the appointment of OHSC the responsibility of the NHAA and not the Minister of Health.** This is to remove all political influence in such appointments.





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