



FW de Klerk
FOUNDATION

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE CABINET



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INTRODUCTION

As South Africa approaches the 30th anniversary of its democratic Constitution, the nation faces a defining question: Are our leaders fulfilling the Constitution's promise to "improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person"? The FW de Klerk Foundation's Constitutional Advancement Programme undertook a comprehensive assessment of the national executive - the President, Deputy President and all the Ministers and Deputy Ministers - to answer this question. This report evaluates whether each member of the executive is advancing the values and rights enshrined in our Constitution and moving the needle on the most critical issues gripping our nation.

At its core, South Africa's 1996 Constitution sets high standards for governance. It demands accountability, responsiveness and openness from those in power and it charges the state with respecting, protecting, promoting and fulfilling the rights of the people. These include fundamental rights to education, health care, housing, water, security and equality, as well as the basic socio-economic aspirations articulated in the Constitution's preamble and founding provisions. Every Minister and Deputy Minister swears an oath to uphold this supreme law. Our assessment examines how well they have honoured that oath through their policy choices, management of public funds and delivery (or lack thereof) of results.

This evaluation comes at a pivotal moment in our governance. In the wake of the 2024 general elections, a historic multi-party Government of National Unity ("GNU") was formed, bringing together the ANC, DA, IFP, FF+ and others in a single Cabinet for the first time since the Mandela era. With a bloated executive of 77 members - expanded from the previous administration - expectations were high that a unity government would marshal the best ideas across party lines to tackle South Africa's crises. Those crises remain profound: sky-high unemployment (hovering around one-third of the workforce), persistent poverty and inequality, failing and corrupt municipalities that leave citizens without reliable water, electricity or sanitation, an education system in crisis (evidenced by unacceptable literacy and matric outcomes), rampant crime and prison overcrowding and the ever-present scourge of corruption that erodes public trust. All these challenges strike at the heart of constitutional rights and values - from the right to basic education and clean environment, to the right to safety and dignity.

In this Introduction we acknowledge that the Constitution is not just an abstract document for jurists - it is a contract of accountability between the people and those who govern on their behalf. Section 92 of the Constitution makes the President and Cabinet collectively and individually accountable to Parliament. Section 195 sets out principles for public administration, including efficient, economic and effective use of resources and calls for services to be provided impartially, fairly and equitably. Our assessment measures each executive member against these benchmarks of good governance and constitutional fidelity.

INTRODUCTION

Are they managing their departments' budgets efficiently to deliver services? Are they initiating policies that advance constitutional rights and values? Are they being transparent and honest about challenges? Are they combatting maladministration and ensuring accountability in their ranks? These are some of the questions that guided our review.

Crucially, this report is independent and non-partisan. The FW de Klerk Foundation is not affiliated to any political party - our only allegiance is to the Constitution and the principles of good governance. In conducting this performance review, we judged merit and outcomes, not rhetoric or party politics. We recognise that members of the current Cabinet come from across the political spectrum, each bringing different priorities. Our concern is whether, in practice, they are delivering on the constitutional mandate to build a better South Africa.

The pages that follow provide a candid, evidence-based analysis of each Minister and Deputy Minister's performance over the past year (or since their appointment). We highlight successes achieved, challenges confronted (or avoided), use of public funds (budget allocations versus outcomes) and the real-world impact observed in each portfolio. By assigning each official a score and grade, we aim to distil complex performance narratives into an accessible form of accountability. We fully acknowledge that context matters - some Ministers inherited well-oiled machines, others walked into departments plagued by dysfunction and the time each has had in office varies. Nonetheless, every one of them is entrusted with the constitutional duty to deliver results, uphold ethical standards and remedy the injustices that continue to deny so many South Africans their rightful opportunities and services.

In summary, this report serves two purposes: to inform the public on whether the national executive is living up to its obligations and to encourage a culture of accountability in our democracy. The Constitution belongs to the people; it is in the people's interest to know how their leaders measure up. The findings herein should spur debate, reflection and ultimately, improvement. Anything less would betray the promise of 1994 and the hard-won constitutional order that underpins our freedom.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report asks a simple constitutional question: are the 77 members of South Africa's national executive - the President, Deputy President, 32 Ministers and 43 Deputy Ministers - actually giving effect to the promise in the Preamble to *"improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person"*?

Using an evidence-based rubric, we assessed each office-bearer against five dimensions drawn directly from the Constitution: leadership and vision, execution and impact, integrity and accountability, use of public resources (with section 195 as the benchmark) and advancement of constitutional rights (with section 7(2) and the Bill of Rights as the yardstick). The scores rest on publicly available data only - Auditor-General reports, departmental annual reports and budget votes, parliamentary oversight, court judgments and credible media investigations - and were peer-reviewed within the research team to minimise bias.

The picture that emerges is sobering. **No member of the executive achieved an "outstanding" A+ (90-100). Only one official - the Minister of Electricity & Energy, Kgosientsho Ramokgopa - broke into the A-range with 85/100**, reflecting real progress in stabilising load-shedding and beginning overdue structural reform in the energy sector. By contrast, the bulk of the Cabinet and their deputies cluster in the 60s ("fair/average") with a smaller group in the 70s ("good/fairly good") and a troubling cohort below 60, including several very low scores in the 30s and 40s where portfolios are in deep distress.

The most powerful offices do not lead this performance table. **President Cyril Ramaphosa scores 60/100 - a pass, but only just.** He has overseen a constitutional course-correction from the worst excesses of state capture and brokered a broad Government of National Unity (GNU), yet remains hampered by unresolved scandals, slow decision-making and a lack of visible follow-through on core socio-economic rights. **Deputy President Paul Mashatile fares worse at 50/100, reflecting ethical controversies and limited demonstrable leadership on cross-cutting priorities, despite his central role in coalition management.**

The leader of the second-largest party in Parliament and key GNU partner, **DA leader John Steenhuisen, now Minister of Agriculture, also scores 60/100.** While he has brought energy and visibility to the portfolio - including outreach to farmers and talk of reform - measurable improvements in land reform, rural livelihoods and food security remain limited at this stage. This underlines a central finding of the report: opposition credentials do not automatically translate into superior executive performance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the other end of the spectrum, a small group of ministers and deputies record very poor outcomes. Portfolios such as Police, Water & Sanitation, elements of Higher Education, Mineral Resources and Women, Youth & Persons with Disabilities show either persistent regression or scandal-tainted, low-impact leadership. In these cases, chronic service failures, non-compliance with court orders or weak consequence management raise serious questions about compliance with sections 92 and 195 and about the state's ability to progressively realise rights to safety, water, education and dignity.

Politically, the GNU remains heavily ANC-weighted. Of the executive positions, the ANC holds the clear majority of cabinet and deputy minister posts, with the DA a distant second and smaller parties (IFP, FF+, PA, GOOD, PAC, UDM, Al Jama-ah) occupying the remainder. Our grading shows that performance broadly tracks this dominance: ANC ministers and deputies account for most of the “average” and “weak” scores, but also include both the sole A-range performer (Ramokgopa) and several of the lowest-scoring portfolios. DA, IFP and other GNU partners also display a mixed picture: some strong reformers - for example in Home Affairs and Public Works & Infrastructure - sit alongside merely moderate performers and a few disappointments. **No party can claim a monopoly on either good or bad governance.**

Substantively, three cross-cutting themes emerge:

- **Implementation deficit:** Many portfolios have produced plans, master strategies and new legislation that read well against constitutional commitments, but have not yet shifted key indicators. Unemployment, local-government service failure, crime and learning outcomes remain stubbornly poor. In constitutional terms, the state is often meeting obligations “on paper” rather than in lived reality.

- **Improved candour, uneven accountability:** A positive change from the state-capture era is greater honesty about the depth of the crisis. Ministers in basic education, cooperative governance and other sectors have been frank about collapsing municipalities, weak literacy and poor audits. This is consistent with the values of openness and responsiveness. Yet candour without consequence is not enough: in too many portfolios, disciplinary action, restructuring and enforcement lag behind the rhetoric.

- **Pockets of reform that could be scaled:** Energy, infrastructure, immigration and environmental governance show tangible, if still fragile, gains where ministers have combined clear direction with operational focus and partnership with the private sector and civil society. These “bright spots” demonstrate what it looks like when section 195's injunction to use resources “efficiently, economically and effectively” is taken seriously.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall, this “Cabinet report card” finds a government that has begun to restore constitutional norms and to widen the political centre, but has not yet delivered the level of practical progress that the Bill of Rights requires. **The absence of more than a single A-range performer, the concentration of scores in the merely “fair” band and the persistence of very poor performers in critical portfolios all point to a gap between the promise of the Constitution and the everyday experience of many South Africans.**

This report is offered as a constitutional accountability tool, not a partisan weapon. It invites the President, coalition partners, Parliament and the public to use these scores to demand better stewardship of public power - so that, by the next assessment, more members of the executive will have moved from fair or poor to genuinely good and excellent guardians of South Africa’s constitutional project.



GRADING AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This assessment was conducted with an uncompromising commitment to objectivity and fairness. Over the past several months, our research team engaged in painstaking data collection and analysis for each of the 77 individuals in the Cabinet. We relied exclusively on publicly available information and verifiable data - ensuring that our sources are transparent and the basis for every evaluation can withstand scrutiny.

Key sources of information included:

- **Official records and reports:** We reviewed departmental Annual Reports, budget vote speeches in Parliament, Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) allocations and Auditor-General findings for the ministries in question. These documents provided quantitative indicators (e.g. funds spent vs. targets met) and revealed trends like audit outcomes, service delivery statistics and policy implementation status.
- **Parliamentary oversight and statements:** We examined parliamentary Q&A responses, portfolio committee reports and ministers' statements in the National Assembly and NCOP (National Council of Provinces). Hansard transcripts and committee minutes often yielded admissions of problems, progress reports, or lack thereof. For example, if a Minister claimed that "90% of unsafe school pit latrines have been eradicated" or a Deputy Minister conceded "we have no evidence of businesses still thriving five years after support," we took note. Such statements, especially when combined with follow-up questions from MPs, helped gauge honesty and accountability.
- **Media investigations and credible news outlets:** Our team scanned reliable media coverage (major newspapers, broadcasters and specialist outlets) for additional facts, context and independent analysis. Journalistic investigations sometimes uncover issues like corruption scandals, project failures, or success stories that official reports gloss over. We incorporated these where relevant - for instance, reports on prison escapes or court judgments (like the court interdict on the analogue TV switch-off) were used to assess a Minister's handling of their mandate. We have been careful to use media information that is well-sourced and factual, avoiding mere opinion or gossip.
- **Constitutional and legal benchmarks:** Since our focus is constitutional advancement, we measured actions against legal obligations. We checked whether ministers adhered to court rulings (e.g. respecting Constitutional Court decisions on corporal punishment or language rights in schools) and whether they promoted the rights in the Bill of Rights through their policies. If a Minister proposed something outright inconsistent with constitutional provisions or principles, this was marked heavily against them. Conversely, if they took steps to fulfil constitutional rights - like improving access to healthcare, or ensuring equality in service distribution - it earned positive recognition.

GRADING AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Using these sources, each Minister and Deputy Minister was evaluated along several criteria:

The assessment framework evaluates each member of the executive across five interlinked dimensions that flow directly from the Constitution. **First, Leadership and Vision** focuses on whether an individual provides clear direction, sets coherent priorities for their portfolio and aligns these with constitutional values and the public interest. This includes their policy agenda, legislative initiatives and their ability to articulate a credible response to South Africa's core challenges such as poverty, inequality, unemployment and failing services. Leaders are judged not only on what they promise, but on whether their vision is concrete, coherent and anchored in the spirit of the Constitution.

Second, Execution and Impact and **Integrity and Accountability** examine how that vision is carried out in practice. Execution is assessed through measurable outcomes: changes in crime levels, access to water and electricity, quality of schooling, or other sector-specific indicators. It also considers whether programmes are implemented on time, on budget and whether longstanding backlogs or irregular expenditure are addressed. Time in office matters: new appointees are evaluated on early actions and momentum, while longer-serving officials are expected to show a track record of results. Integrity and Accountability look at ethical conduct and response to wrongdoing - whether the person tackles corruption, orders investigations and acts against errant officials, or allows misconduct and maladministration to persist. Transparency before Parliament and the public is central: honest, accountable leadership is rewarded, evasiveness and opacity are penalised.

Third, Use of Resources and Advancement of the Constitutional Mandate test stewardship and constitutional impact. Resource use asks whether budgets translate into real improvements or are underspent or wasted and whether administrative systems - staffing, procurement, audits - are strengthened or weakened.

Finally, advancement of the mandate offers a holistic judgment: has the person expanded access to rights (healthcare, education, safety, land), reduced inequality, strengthened democratic institutions and complied with court orders and Chapter 9 bodies? **Even in portfolios not linked to a single right, officials are assessed on their contribution to broader constitutional goals of dignity, development and equality.**

GRADING AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Each researcher compiled a dossier of evidence for the above dimensions per official. We then deliberated as a team to weigh qualitative and quantitative aspects and to ensure consistency of standards across portfolios. We were conscious to avoid any partisan bias: a unified grading rubric was applied whether the Minister was from the ANC, DA, IFP, or any other party. If anything, the unity government setting made it easier to focus on merit - we could clearly see that strong and weak performance has no political colour; there were standout reformers and underperformers in all quarters.

SCORING SYSTEM

After thorough evaluation, we assigned each individual a numeric score out of 100 and an accompanying grade description. To maintain clarity in our reporting, we developed a grading scale akin to an academic report card. This helps interpret what a given score signifies in terms of performance level. The scale is as follows:

- **90-100 = A+ (Outstanding):** Truly exceptional performance. The official has exceeded expectations, with almost all objectives met or exceeded. There is clear, compelling evidence of positive impact on their sector and on citizens' lives and virtually no significant failings. This grade denotes a leader who set the gold standard for what constitutional governance should achieve. (In practice, no one in the current Cabinet attained this level - an indication of how much improvement is still possible.)
- **85-89 = A (Excellent):** Excellent performance with only minor shortcomings. The individual came very close to fully realizing their mandate. Most targets were achieved and strong outcomes demonstrated, with perhaps one or two areas needing slight improvement. This reflects a minister or deputy who is strongly delivering on the Constitution's promises in their area. (Again, this was a rarefied high end of our scale - few, if any, scored in the high-80s.)

- **80-84 = B+ (Very Good):** A very good performance overall. The person made substantial progress and had a number of successes. Key initiatives are on track and the impact on the ground is noticeable, though not uniformly so. There may be a few moderate weaknesses or unfinished business preventing an excellent score. (A score in the low 80s signals that a minister is among the top performers in the Cabinet, demonstrating commendable leadership.)
- **75-79 = B (Good):** Good performance. This indicates the official has delivered above average results, with notable achievements in their portfolio. Important promises have been kept or significant problems addressed. However, some objectives remain unmet or some aspects of execution could be stronger. Overall, the positives clearly outweigh the negatives and the department is in a better place than it was. (Several of the higher-scoring ministers and deputies fell in this range, reflecting solid work that still left room for improvement.)
- **70-74 = B- (Fairly Good):** A slightly above-moderate performance. The individual has made some headway and their tenure has positive elements, but the successes are somewhat balanced by shortcomings. This might describe someone who generated good ideas or started important reforms, yet the follow-through or breadth of impact has been limited. It's a borderline category between truly good and just fair. (Many ministers in our unity government hovered around this threshold, indicating earnest effort that yielded moderate results.)
- **65-69 = C+ (Fair/Moderate):** A fair performance. This is a mid-range score indicating mixed results. The person likely has a few achievements to their name and has maintained stability, but also has significant weaknesses or unrealized goals. Impact on citizens' daily lives is modest. A C+ suggests that while the minister is doing an acceptable job in some respects, substantial improvement is required for them to be considered genuinely effective.
- **60-64 = C (Average/Fair):** An average performance verging on mediocre. The official might be managing to keep the ship afloat but is not driving real change. There may be small improvements or policy initiatives, but overall the portfolio's chronic issues remain largely unresolved. A score in the low 60s often signifies that the person acknowledged problems but has yet to deliver solutions. It's a pass mark, but only just - essentially reflecting constitutional obligations being met on paper more than in practice.
- **55-59 = D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement):** A poor performance that falls below what is expected from a national leader. Here we see minimal progress, with many targets missed or policies failing to translate into action. Often, a D+ official might talk a lot about plans, but the evidence of impact is lacking. Alternatively, they may have made one or two positive moves, but these are outweighed by ongoing failures, mismanagement, or lack of initiative. "Needs improvement" is the operative phrase - without significant changes, these individuals risk deeper failure. (Some deputy ministers with very limited visibility, or ministers who encountered scandals or persistent non-delivery, landed in this zone.)

- **50-54 = D (Poor):** A very poor performance. This score indicates that the person is plainly underperforming in their role. The majority of objectives are unmet and their department may even be in a worse state than before due to inaction or bad decisions. Issues like financial mismanagement, deteriorating service delivery stats, or high-profile fiascos would contribute to this grade. A D means the constitutional expectations for that portfolio are not being fulfilled in any meaningful way. Urgent action is needed either by the individual to improve, or by those appointing them to reconsider their position.
- **Below 50 = F (Failing):** Failure to perform. Such a grade would be assigned if an official utterly failed to execute their mandate or uphold their duties, perhaps even violating their oath. An F is reserved for a scenario where virtually nothing is going right - the department might be in complete chaos or collapse, corruption could be rampant and the public interest severely harmed. Fortunately, in our assessment of the current Cabinet, none scored in this extreme low range (even the weakest managed to clear the 50% bar by a few points), but the very possibility underscores why vigilant oversight is necessary. No Cabinet member should ever be allowed to slip to this level without consequence.

NUANCES

It should be noted that we use “+” and “-” modifiers to give nuance within a band. For example, a score of 56 (D+) versus 52 (D) reflects a slight difference in performance even though both are rated poor - 56 might indicate someone on the cusp of moving up if improvements are made, whereas 52 suggests a more entrenched underperformance. Similarly, a 79 (B) is a good score but just shy of very good, while an 81 (B+) has crossed that threshold. These nuances help explain why, say, one minister got 52 and another 56 - both did badly, but the latter showed a bit more merit (or fewer faults) than the former. By laying out this grading methodology transparently, we ensure that each score is justified and comprehensible to the public and the media.

The Foundation applied a rigorous and unbiased process to ensure that every score in this assessment is defensible, consistent and grounded in evidence. Each evaluation underwent internal peer review, meaning no score was determined by a single researcher. Discrepancies, especially in borderline cases, were debated collectively until consensus was reached. This approach helped prevent individual bias and ensured that each grade reflected a balanced, team-based judgment. Contextual fairness guided the assessment. Newer ministers were evaluated only on their early actions and responsiveness, not on predecessors’ failures or long-term outcomes they could not influence. Longer-serving officials were expected to show cumulative results. We also accounted for the differing scale of portfolios: leaders of large, crisis-ridden departments were judged with their complexity in mind, while smaller portfolios were assessed against their more focused mandates.

Grades were never predetermined or curved. Each official was rated purely on merit, with broader patterns reviewed only afterward to check for inconsistencies. The clustering of many scores in the 60s reflects genuine moderate performance, not methodological bias.

THE 2025 CABINET RANKINGS

MINISTERS

TOP PERFORMERS (RANKS 1-11)

Rank	Minister & Portfolio	Party	Score	Grade	Performance Summary
1	Kgosientsho Ramokgopa - Minister of Electricity & Energy	ANC	85	A (Excellent)	Stabiliser who's starting to lock in reform.
2	Dean Macpherson - Minister of Public Works & Infrastructure	DA	80	B+ (Very Good)	Moderniser driving an infrastructure turnaround.
3	Leon Schreiber - Minister of Home Affairs	DA	80	B+ (Very Good)	Moderniser driving efficiency and accessibility.
4	Dion George - Minister of Forestry, Fisheries & Environment	DA	76	B (Good)	Evidence-led conservationist with clear wins; execution friction and early exit.
5	Solly Malatsi - Minister of Communications & Digital Tech	DA	74	B- (Fairly Good)	Clear agenda on connectivity; SOE failures remain.
6	Barbara Creecy - Minister of Transport	ANC	70	B- (Fairly Good)	Strategic stabiliser bringing order but not yet momentum.
7	Khumbudzo Ntshavheni - Minister in the Presidency	ANC	70	B- (Fairly Good)	Coalition navigator with strategic strides.
8	Maropene Ramokgopa - Minister in Presidency (PME)	ANC	70	B- (Fairly Good)	Strengthening state planning and oversight.
9	Parks Tau - Minister of Trade, Industry & Competition	ANC	70	B- (Fairly Good)	Strategically sound, but materially underperforming.
10	Patricia de Lille - Minister of Tourism	GOOD	70	B- (Fairly Good)	Credibility restored; execution still uneven.
11	Mzamo Buthelezi - Minister of Public Service & Administration	IFP	68	C+ (Fair/Moderate)	Energetic reformer laying groundwork.

THE 2025 CABINET RANKINGS

MINISTERS

MID-TIER & MIXED PERFORMERS (RANKS 12-22)

Rank	Minister & Portfolio	Party	Score	Grade	Performance Summary
12	Velenkosini Hlabisa - Minister of CoGTA & Traditional Affairs	IFP	66	C+ (Fair/Moderate)	Clear diagnosis, but delivery still patchy.
13	Enoch Godongwana - Minister of Finance	ANC	65	C+ (Fair/Moderate)	Technically steady; politically mishandled VAT fiasco.
14	Buti Manamela - Minister of Higher Education & Training	ANC	64	C (Average/Fair)	Tackling systemic student-aid and skills challenges.
15	Blade Nzimande - Minister of Science, Technology & Innovation	ANC	62	C (Average/Fair)	Announcements outpace outcomes.
16	Gayton McKenzie - Minister of Sport, Arts & Culture	PA	62	C (Average/Fair)	Noisy reformer with flair, but governance still weak.
17	Siviwe Gwarube - Minister of Basic Education	DA	61	C (Average/Fair)	Frank about crisis, but too few results yet.
18	John Steenhuisen - Minister of Agriculture	DA	60	C (Average/Fair)	Visible reformer, but execution remains patchy.
19	President Cyril Ramaphosa - President of the Republic	ANC	60	C (Average/Fair)	Consensus-builder hampered by scandal and inertia.
20	Ronald Lamola - Minister of International Relations & Cooperation	ANC	60	C (Average/Fair)	Consistent global engagement; benefits unclear.
21	Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams - Minister of Small Business Development	ANC	60	C (Average/Fair)	Energetic champion with patchy execution.
22	Mzwanele Nyhontso - Minister of Land Reform & Rural Development	PAC	58	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Ambition outpacing delivery.

THE 2025 CABINET RANKINGS

MINISTERS

UNDERPERFORMERS (RANKS 23-33)

Rank	Minister & Portfolio	Party	Score	Grade	Performance Summary
23	Pieter Groenewald - Minister of Correctional Services	FF+	58	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Tough talk, erratic execution, misjudged rhetoric.
24	Aaron Motsoaledi - Minister of Health	ANC	50	D (Poor)	Experienced operator, but doubling-down on risky NHI model and uneven delivery.
25	Deputy President Paul Mashatile - Deputy President	ANC	50	D (Poor)	Scandal-tainted deal-maker with weak public credibility.
26	Nomakhosazana Meth - Minister of Employment & Labour	ANC	50	D (Poor)	Reformer in words, not results.
27	Sisisi Tolashe - Minister of Social Development	ANC	48	F (Failing)	Good intent, poor execution and troubling judgment.
28	Pemmy Majodina - Minister of Water & Sanitation	ANC	46	F (Failing)	Crisis awareness without operational turnaround; coordination outpaces delivery.
29	Angie Motshekga - Minister of Defence & Military Veterans	ANC	45	F (Failing)	Political heft, patchy grip on a technical portfolio.
30	Sindisiwe “Sindiswa” Chikunga - Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth & PWD	ANC	44	F (Failing)	Big promises, small levers; compliant budgets, little measurable change.
31	Mmamoloko Kubayi - Minister of Human Settlements	ANC	40	F (Failing)	Struggles on delivery, under cloud of spending scandal.
32	Gwede Mantashe - Minister of Mineral & Petroleum Resources	ANC	35	F (Failing)	Licensing paralysis, meddlesome lawmaking, investor flight.
33	Nobuhle Pamela Nkabane - Minister of Higher Education & Training	ANC	30	F (Failing)	Discredited; dismissed after SETA scandal.

THE 2025 CABINET RANKINGS

MINISTERS

UNDERPERFORMERS (RANKS 34-35)

Rank	Minister & Portfolio	Party	Score	Grade	Performance Summary
34	Senzo Mchunu - Minister of Police	ANC	30	F (Failing)	Suspended over alleged syndicate collusion; crime crisis unabated, no gang plan.
35	Thembisile “Thembi” Simelane-Nkadimeng - former Minister of Justice & Constitutional Development	ANC	30	F (Failing)	Axed after five months, under a VBS cloud, with no legislative wins.



THE 2025 CABINET RANKINGS

DEPUTY MINISTERS

TOP PERFORMERS (RANKS 1-11)

Rank	Deputy Minister & Portfolio	Party	Score	Grade	Performance Summary
1	Jane Sithole - Deputy Minister of Small Business Development	DA	75	B (Good)	Relentless red-tape cutter in a support role.
2	Njabulo Nzuza - Deputy Minister of Home Affairs	ANC	75	B (Good)	Expanded access and mobile service delivery.
3	Ashor Sarupen - Deputy Minister of Finance	DA	71	B- (Fairly Good)	Watchdog with impact, but delivery gap remains.
4	Mkhuleko Hlengwa - Deputy Minister of Transport	IFP	70	B- (Fairly Good)	Visible reformer whose energy now needs institutional outcomes.
5	Narend Singh - Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries & Environment	IFP	70	B- (Fairly Good)	Experienced bridge-builder; decent delivery, modest ambition.
6	Samantha Graham-Maré - Deputy Minister of Electricity & Energy	DA	70	B- (Fairly Good)	Energy-efficiency evangelist with limited levers.
7	Tandi Mahambehlala - Deputy Minister of Human Settlements	ANC	70	B- (Fairly Good)	Active implementation and focus on vulnerable groups.
8	Mimmy Gondwe - Deputy Minister of Higher Education	DA	68	C+ (Fair/Moderate)	Active outreach; outcomes still limited.
9	Sihle Zikalala - Deputy Minister of Public Works & Infrastructure	ANC	65	C+ (Fair/Moderate)	Constrained deputy, limited influence.
10	Zuko Godlimpi - Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry & Competition	ANC	65	C+ (Fair/Moderate)	Energetic and present, but still converting potential into proof.
11	Bernice Swarts - Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries & Environment	ANC	64	C (Average/Fair)	Inclusive intentions, limited scale, weak on efficiency.

THE 2025 CABINET RANKINGS

DEPUTY MINISTERS

MID-TIER & MIXED PERFORMERS (RANKS 12-22)

Rank	Deputy Minister & Portfolio	Party	Score	Grade	Performance Summary
12	Lindiwe Ntshalintshali - Deputy Minister of Correctional Services	ANC	63	C (Average/Fair)	Visible presence, limited structural impact.
13	Makhotso “Maggie” Soty - Deputy Minister of Tourism	ANC	62	C (Average/Fair)	Steady performer with limited initiative.
14	Mondli Gungubele - Deputy Minister of Communications & Digital Tech	ANC	61	C (Average/Fair)	Steady “brake” in a volatile portfolio.
15	Andrew Whitfield - former Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry & Competition	DA	60	C (Average/Fair)	Promising reformer undone by poor judgment.
16	Dickson (Namane) Masemola - Deputy Minister of CoGTA (Traditional Affairs)	ANC	60	C (Average/Fair)	Diligent fixer in the traditional sector; impact still incremental.
17	Ganief Hendricks - Deputy Minister of Social Development	Al Jama-ah	60	C (Average/Fair)	Discreet facilitator; needs firmer grip on payments and outcomes.
18	Nomalungelo Gina - Deputy Minister of Science, Tech & Innovation	ANC	60	C (Average/Fair)	Active science advocate, minor portfolio contributions.
19	Nonceba Mhlauli - Deputy Minister in the Presidency	ANC	60	C (Average/Fair)	Engaged communicator, awaiting measurable impact.
20	David Masondo - Deputy Minister of Finance	ANC	59	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Technocrat without bite.
21	Peace Mabe - Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts & Culture	ANC	59	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Steady but subdued; must turn activity into achievement.
22	Phumzile Mgcina - Deputy Minister of Employment & Labour	ANC	58	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Well-meaning, but light on delivery.

THE 2025 CABINET RANKINGS

DEPUTY MINISTERS

MID-TIER & MIXED PERFORMERS (RANKS 23-33)

Rank	Deputy Minister & Portfolio	Party	Score	Grade	Performance Summary
23	Pinky Kekana - Deputy Minister of Public Service & Administration	ANC	58	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Human-centred but limited impact.
24	Ntuthuko 'Jomo' Sibiya - Deputy Minister of Employment & Labour	ANC	57	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Energetic presence, but shallow results.
25	Alvin Botes - Deputy Minister of International Relations & Coop.	ANC	55	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Active diplomacy on humanitarian and bilateral issues.
26	Cassel Mathale - Deputy Minister of Police	ANC	55	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Policy-centric stabiliser, needs outcome focus.
27	Polly Boshielo - Deputy Minister of Police	ANC	55	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Visible blitzes, thin outcomes; bypassed in crisis.
28	Reginah (Makgabo) Mhaule - Deputy Minister of Basic Education	ANC	55	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Experienced steward, but little systemic impact.
29	Richard Mkhungo - Deputy Minister of Defence & Military Veterans	ANC	55	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Steady hand, but results thin and unproven.
30	Rosemary Nokuzola Capa - Deputy Minister of Agriculture	ANC	55	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Visible on the ground, but impact hard to measure.
31	Zolile Burns-Ncamashe - Deputy Minister of CoGTA (Governance)	ANC	55	D+ (Weak - Needs Improvement)	Process-heavy; little tangible impact so far.
32	Andries Nel - Deputy Minister of Justice & Constitutional Dev.	ANC	51	D (Poor)	Pro-active law reform and digital upgrades.
33	Bantu Holomisa - Deputy Minister of Defence & Military Veterans	UDM	50	D (Poor)	Candid inspector, thin on execution.

THE 2025 CABINET RANKINGS

DEPUTY MINISTERS

UNDERPERFORMERS (RANKS 34-42)

Rank	Deputy Minister & Portfolio	Party	Score	Grade	Performance Summary
34	David Mahlobo - Deputy Minister of Water & Sanitation	ANC	50	D (Poor)	Loyal functionary with pockets of competence, but lacking urgency and vision.
35	Kenneth Morolong - Deputy Minister in the Presidency	ANC	50	D (Poor)	Steady administrator, limited distinct imprint.
36	Isaac “Sello” Seithloho - Deputy Minister of Water & Sanitation	DA	49	F (Failing)	Dynamic advocate with heart for the grassroots, but light on delivery and reform.
37	Joe Phaahla - Deputy Minister of Health	ANC	48	F (Failing)	Understated operator, tied to an unaffordable NHI push.
38	Chupu Stanley Mathabatha - Deputy Minister of Land Reform & Rural Dev.	ANC	47	F (Failing)	Low visibility, legacy doubts.
39	Mmapaseka “Steve” Letsike - Deputy Minister of Women, Youth & PWD	ANC	45	F (Failing)	Inspiring voice, shallow delivery, bureaucratic drag.
40	Seiso Mohai - Deputy Minister in Presidency (PME)	ANC	45	F (Failing)	Experienced oversight, future impact uncertain.
41	Judith Nemadzinga-Tshabalala - Deputy Minister of Mineral & Petroleum Resources	ANC	40	F (Failing)	Low-visibility role.
42	Thandi Moraka - Deputy Minister of International Relations & Coop.	ANC	40	F (Failing)	Undistinguished tenure so far.

WINNERS & LOSERS

MINISTERS



WINNING MINISTER (KGOSIENTSHO RAMOKGOPA):

Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, Minister of Electricity & Energy (ANC - 85/100, Very Good), emerges as the top performer for stabilising load-shedding, restoring operational discipline and initiating long-delayed structural reforms in South Africa's most critical portfolio.



LOSING MINISTERS (SENZO MCHUNU & THEMBI SIMELANE-NKADIMENG):

Senzo Mchunu, suspended Minister of Police (ANC - 30/100, Very Poor), and Thembisile "Thembi" Simelane-Nkadameng, former Minister of Justice & Constitutional Development (ANC - 30/100, Very Poor), finish at the bottom for presiding over deepening crises, offering little measurable progress and exiting their roles under clouds of scandal, paralysis or both.



WINNERS & LOSERS

DEPUTY MINISTERS



WINNERS (JANE SITHOLE & NJABULO NZUZA):

Jane Sithole (Deputy Minister of Small Business Development, DA - 75/100, Good) and Njabulo Nzuza (Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, ANC - 75/100, Good) stand out for driving practical, citizen-facing improvements from cutting red tape for small enterprises to expanding mobile Home Affairs services that improved access and efficiency.



LOSERS (JUDITH NEMADZINGA-TSHABALALA & THANDI MORAKA):

Judith Nemadzinga-Tshabalala (Deputy Minister of Mineral & Petroleum Resources, ANC - 40/100, Mediocre) and Thandi Moraka (Deputy Minister of International Relations & Cooperation, ANC - 40/100, Mediocre) rank lowest for limited visibility, weak delivery and no measurable impact in portfolios already facing serious structural pressures.



PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA (ANC) - GRADE: 60/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (CONSENSUS-BUILDER HAMPERED BY SCANDAL AND INERTIA)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

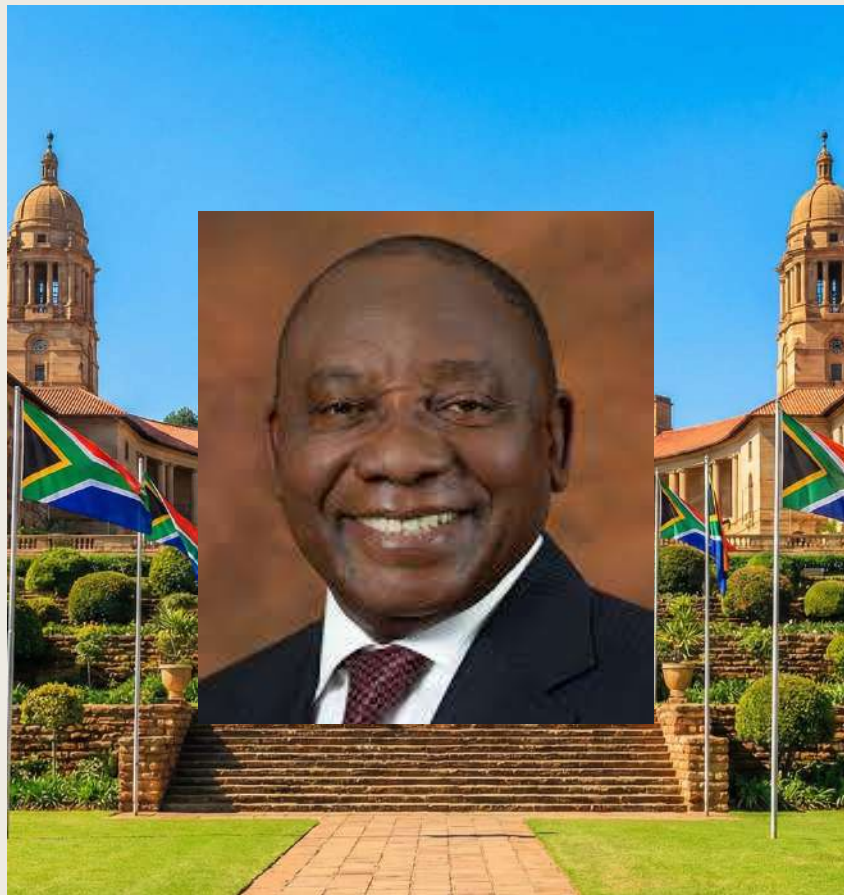


Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa has led South Africa since 2018, carrying with him the hope of a “New Dawn” after the Zuma era. A lawyer by training (B. Proc, University of South Africa), former trade unionist and successful businessman, he entered the presidency with a reputation for negotiation and pragmatism. In 2024, when the ANC lost its outright majority for the first time, Ramaphosa brokered a Government of National Unity (“GNU”) with ten parties - a bold gambit that preserved stability in a hung parliament. That coalition, which includes former opposition figures in the cabinet, speaks to his willingness to share power and manage political complexity.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Ramaphosa’s government advanced legislation to professionalise the public service and lessen political interference and he installed watchdog officials with stronger mandates. In energy, he moved to loosen licensing for private power generation and initiated unbundling of Eskom to improve accountability.

The Operation Vulindlela programme was launched to cut regulatory logjams in infrastructure sectors like ports, rail, energy and telecom - laying blueprints for future growth. He has kept the state apparatus functional through turbulence by managing public sector wage negotiations, continuing social grants despite tight finances and maintaining government operations. Internationally, he travelled in 2025 to meet US President Trump, aiming to mend bilateral ties and avoid trade ruptures, while positioning South Africa in global forums such as BRICS and the African Union. His diplomatic efforts yielded some relief on trade tensions and kept lines of engagement open.



PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA (ANC) - GRADE: 60/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (CONSENSUS-BUILDER HAMPERED BY SCANDAL AND INERTIA)



Ramaphosa's administration has sought to unite the coalition behind goals such as economic revival, anti-corruption and social inclusive growth. He often highlights long-term gains like expanded electrification, increased water access, higher tertiary enrolments financed through NSFAS as evidence that, despite slow pace, South Africa is making progress.

FAILURES

Yet Ramaphosa's governance is weighed down by persistent crises and credibility deficits. Unemployment lingers stubbornly (above 33%), especially among youth and economic growth remains tepid. Crime and lawlessness continue to erode public confidence in a "capable, ethical state." His policy reforms simply move too slowly to affect daily lives.

Within the ANC, Ramaphosa faces embedded factional resistance. He often appears hesitant to punish powerful figures, privileging unity over reform. That reluctance slows renewal and allows corruption to slip through political cracks.

The Phala Phala scandal remains a black mark. The theft of \$580 000 in cash from his private game farm and his failure to account for it properly triggered a parliamentary inquiry and deep reputational damage. Even though impeachment was blocked by the ANC majority, independent reviews judged parts of his explanation implausible and judicial commentary noted the lasting stain on his legacy. The episode undermined his anti-corruption narrative and gave political critics ammunition.



PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA (ANC) - GRADE: 60/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (CONSENSUS-BUILDER HAMPERED BY SCANDAL AND INERTIA)



On budget and executive structure, Ramaphosa oversees the Presidency's Vote 1, which critics claim has ballooned under his tenure. He has added advisers and ministries (like a Minister of Electricity) - moves decried amid austerity and service pressures. Ambitious infrastructure pledges (in excess of R1 trillion) abound, but actual execution is delayed and the tangible benefits remain distant. Meanwhile, the national debt rises and deficits widen, tightening fiscal space.

In foreign policy, his stance of non-alignment was tested during Russia's war in Ukraine and an alleged arms-loading scandal by a Russian ship linked to SA. In 2025 the US imposed 30% tariffs on South African exports, jarring key industries. Ramaphosa attempted a diplomatic truce in Washington, but the economic damage and diminished global credibility persist.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



A score of **60/100** reflects a president who has held things together during a fractious era and advanced reforms in principle, yet whose impact is hampered by scandal, risk aversion and slow execution. Ramaphosa has preserved stability, renewed some institutional integrity and avoided demagoguery. But his leadership often looks deferential, not driving; his coalition is functional but fragile; and the crises of power, jobs, crime and trust still fester. Unless he accelerates delivery and rebuilds public faith, his tenure risks being remembered as a period of unfulfilled promise rather than transformation.

President Ramaphosa's record reflects partial fulfilment of his constitutional duties under sections 83(b) and 85(1) to promote unity and execute national policy, evident in stabilising the GNU and advancing regulatory reforms. His efforts to strengthen institutions align with section 195 on accountable, professional public administration. However, persistent governance failures in energy, policing and employment raise concerns under sections 7(2) and 237, which require the state to respect, protect and progressively realise rights with diligent performance. The Phala Phala scandal further challenges compliance with section 96(2), weakening public trust and undermining constitutional integrity.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT PAUL MASHATILE (ANC) - GRADE: 50/100 - POOR (SCANDAL-TAINTED DEAL-MAKER WITH WEAK PUBLIC CREDIBILITY)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Paul Shipokosa Mashatile assumed the deputy presidency in February 2023 (succeeding David Mabuza) and carried the position into the GNU cabinet of 2024. A seasoned ANC operator with decades in party and government roles (Gauteng Premier, Arts & Culture Minister, ANC Treasurer-General), he entered office with formidable political capital but little reputation for bold policy leadership. His formal academic credentials are modest: a Postgraduate Diploma in Economic Principles from the University of London and prior but incomplete legal studies. Given his track record as a behind-the-scenes negotiator, he was tapped as Leader of Government Business, charged with escorting the executive's legislative agenda through a fragmented Parliament.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past year, Mashatile has branded himself the GNU's coalition whisperer - a political fixer whose principal value lies in brokering compromise. Allies say he defused tensions when the DA threatened to block parts of the 2025 budget; for instance, he was integral to negotiations that led to the firing of a minister to placate coalition partners and avert a crisis. That kind of mediation - while unspectacular - helped preserve government functionality. He has also engaged in high-visibility roles on trade diplomacy; during the US tariff dispute of 2025, Mashatile publicly warned of "serious consequences" and pushed for a Washington delegation to defend South African export interests.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT PAUL MASHATILE (ANC) - GRADE: 50/100 - POOR (SCANDAL-TAINTED DEAL-MAKER WITH WEAK PUBLIC CREDIBILITY)

FAILURES



Domestically, Mashatile's influence has been more ceremonial than catalytic. He is nominally tied to many anti-poverty initiatives and often tours provinces or chairs public forums. Yet critics say many of these appearances amount to photo-ops rather than real deliverables. He was entrusted with championing the District Development Model, but visible progress under his watch is scant.

Where Mashatile's weaknesses are glaring is in ethics and public trust. Early in his tenure, reports surfaced that he used luxury properties linked to political benefactors without clear disclosure or justification. Meanwhile, his VIP security detail was filmed assaulting civilians in 2023, reigniting perceptions of elite impunity and misuse of power.

Even more seriously, Mashatile is reportedly under investigation by the Hawks for submitting a false affidavit to court - a potential perjury or fraud case. If charges follow, ANC rules may force him to "step aside," threatening both his influence and the coalition's stability. He has denied wrongdoing, claiming political targeting, but the cloud of legal jeopardy severely undermines his moral authority.



Mashatile remains in office, largely untouchable within the ANC, despite his scandals. This tolerance underscores a deeper weakness in accountability: leaders can endure alleged misconduct so long as they remain politically useful. As one commentator noted, his survival is "not only personal resilience, but indictment of a system that absorbs scandal rather than punishing it."

DEPUTY PRESIDENT PAUL MASHATILE (ANC) - GRADE: 50/100 - POOR (SCANDAL-TAINTED DEAL-MAKER WITH WEAK PUBLIC CREDIBILITY)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



In balance, **50/100** reflects his mixed utility: he keeps the coalition machinery moving and leverages negotiation skills, but his lack of reform vision and his ethical baggage cripple his legitimacy. Without decisive policy achievements or credible cleansing of his public image, Mashatile's role risks being seen as that of a political leader burdened by scandal, rather than a genuine contributor to the public good.

As Deputy President, Mashatile is bound by sections 91(2) and 92(2) to assist the President and act collectively and accountably. His coalition mediation efforts arguably advance section 41(1)(h), which requires cooperative governance and conflict resolution within the state. However, ethical controversies - undisclosed benefits, the VIP assault incident, and a reported Hawks investigation - raise serious concerns under section 96(2), which prohibits conduct exposing the office to ridicule or conflicts of interest. Limited delivery on assigned programmes also implicates section 7(2) and section 195, which require diligent performance and integrity in public administration. Overall, his constitutional compliance appears weak and uneven.



STELLA NDABENI-ABRAHAMS - MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (ANC)

GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (ENERGETIC CHAMPION WITH PATCHY EXECUTION)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams brings a mix of political flair and technocratic credentials to the Ministry of Small Business Development. Her qualifications include a Diploma in Telecommunications & Management Systems from the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation, a Certificate in Telecommunications Policy & Regulation from Wits, an Advanced Certificate in Project Management from Rhodes and a Project Management Diploma from Cranefields. This academic grounding in management and regulation reflects a minister well-versed in systems and structure, though her challenge has always been translating vision into impact.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Upon her return to the portfolio in July 2025, she wasted little time in asserting her message: township and rural entrepreneurs must be placed at the centre of South Africa's growth story. Her 2025/26 Budget Vote carried that promise with headline commitments of R2,918 billion, including R1,9 billion channelled into the newly formed Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency ("SEDFA"). This consolidation of the Small Enterprises Finance Agency, Small Enterprise Development Agency and the Cooperative Banks Development Agency was a long overdue step towards reducing duplication and creating a single front door for finance and support. Policy signalling has been strong, with initiatives ranging from blended-finance funds to spaza shop upgrades, co-operative support and MSME hubs. South Africa's G20 presidency added an international platform, positioning her as a visible advocate for entrepreneurs and small firms.

STELLA NDABENI-ABRAHAMS - MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (ANC)

GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (ENERGETIC CHAMPION WITH PATCHY EXECUTION)



These achievements are not insignificant. Entrepreneurs like Wonder Snacks and Jacob's Jams, showcased in her speeches, demonstrate that government support can help small players break into formal retail markets. Yet the recurring problem is scale. For every showcase success, thousands of other entrepreneurs remain mired in red tape, struggling with compliance costs and slow disbursements. The oft-promised "one-stop shop" that would simplify starting and running a small business has yet to materialise, leaving most traders navigating the same bureaucracy that has long strangled enterprise.

FAILURES

Yet the recurring problem is scale. For every showcase success, thousands of other entrepreneurs remain mired in red tape, struggling with compliance costs and slow disbursements. The oft-promised "one-stop shop" that would simplify starting and running a small business has yet to materialise, leaving most traders navigating the same bureaucracy that has long strangled enterprise.

Parliamentary oversight in 2025 revealed further cracks: underperformance in key programmes, sluggish rollout of funds and poor evidence that firms supported five or more years ago have survived or grown. The fundamental test is not how many loans are approved, but how many firms thrive sustainably. Here, her department has fallen short.



STELLA NDABENI-ABRAHAMS - MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (ANC)

GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (ENERGETIC CHAMPION WITH PATCHY EXECUTION)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Ndabeni-Abrahams is a persuasive champion, but to elevate her performance she must deliver beyond symbolic programmes. What would make her better is a sharper embrace of competition, efficiency and self-reliance in enterprise policy - creating an environment where entrepreneurs succeed because barriers are removed, not because a ministerial hand picks winners. Until she prioritises systemic ease of doing business over episodic success stories, her grade of **60/100** will reflect ambition without full execution.

Building on that assessment, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams' constitutional record as Minister of Small Business Development reveals both alignment and tension with South Africa's founding principles. Her rhetoric and initiatives - particularly the creation of the SEDFA - echo the economic transformation aims of section 195(1)(b) and (f) of the Constitution, which demand efficient, accountable and development-oriented public administration. The consolidation of agencies into a single platform for entrepreneurs reflected a legitimate effort to reduce duplication and advance section 217(1)'s requirement that public resources be used in a system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective. Her emphasis on township and rural entrepreneurship aligns squarely with the section 9 equality clause and section 22's guarantee of the freedom to choose a trade, occupation or profession.



However, constitutional fidelity is measured not by aspiration but by execution. Persistent red tape, delayed disbursements and poor programme sustainability undermine the section 195(1)(b) obligation of "efficient, economic and effective use of resources." Where oversight committees flagged weak monitoring and unclear impact metrics, they pointed to a deeper issue of accountability - a cornerstone of the founding value in section 1(d) and reinforced by the duty of openness and responsiveness in section 41(1)(c).

JANE SITHOLE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (DA)

GRADE: 75/100 - GOOD (RELENTLESS RED-TAPE CUTTER IN A SUPPORT ROLE)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Jane Sithole, a seasoned administrator and politician from Mpumalanga, has equipped herself with a BA in Communications from UNISA, a National Diploma in Office Administration from TUT and advanced training in Political Leadership and Governance (Wits), alongside management programmes at the University of Pretoria. This background gives her a practical grasp of governance, communication and organisational efficiency - skills she has brought into her role as deputy minister.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Since joining the GNU in 2024, Sithole has focused on the everyday barriers throttling entrepreneurs. She has made regulatory reform her trademark, warning in the NCOP that South Africa's over-regulated system "entrenches inequality" and stifles entrepreneurship. Achievements include foregrounding "ease-of-doing-business" workstreams across spheres of government and backing the establishment of a Small Business Ombud via the National Small Enterprise Amendment Bill of 2024 to tackle chronic late payment - one of the quickest ways to keep small firms alive.



Her candour has set her apart. By admitting that her department has little evidence of businesses still thriving five years after initial support, she has placed overdue pressure on the department to track outcomes rather than headlines.

FAILURES



Her achievements remain more structural than felt: entrepreneurs still face sluggish municipal licensing, slow disbursements and costly compliance.

JANE SITHOLE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (DA)

GRADE: 75/100 - GOOD (RELENTLESS RED-TAPE CUTTER IN A SUPPORT ROLE)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

B

To raise her impact, Sithole must shift from diagnosing problems to delivering measurable results: hard targets on permit timelines, automatic fee relief, strict payment enforcement and a visible “bottleneck kill list.” Such reforms would not only reduce dependency but unlock the conditions for entrepreneurs to thrive on their own terms. She receives **75/100**.

Jane Sithole’s approach as Deputy Minister reflects a practical alignment with several core constitutional principles - particularly those relating to efficiency, equality and accountability in governance. Her drive to cut red tape and promote ease of doing business gives tangible expression to section 195(1)(b) and (f) of the Constitution, which require public administration to be development-oriented and to use resources effectively, economically and efficiently. By championing regulatory reform and transparency in departmental reporting, Sithole has also advanced the founding value of accountability under section 1(d) and the duty of cooperative governance in section 41(1)(c), encouraging intergovernmental coordination on small business support.

Where constitutional adherence falters is in implementation. Despite good intent, the continued bureaucratic burden faced by small firms raises questions under section 195(1)(b) - efficiency remains more aspirational than real.



Her support for the National Small Enterprise Amendment Act of 2024, particularly the creation of a Small Business Ombud, demonstrates respect for section 33, the right to just administrative action. It also recognises the section 22 freedom to choose a trade or profession, ensuring that entrepreneurs are not unreasonably restricted by state inefficiency.

JOHN STEENHUISEN - MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DA)

GRADE: 60/100 - MODERATE BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

(VISIBLE REFORMER, BUT EXECUTION REMAINS PATCHY)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



John Steenhuisen, the DA's outspoken opposition leader, entered the GNU Cabinet in July 2024 as Agriculture Minister. His background is unconventional for a portfolio so technical: he matriculated at Northwood Boys' High in Durban and has no university degree, relying instead on long political experience as DA chief whip and party leader. This lack of formal training in agriculture or economics has left him leaning heavily on departmental technocrats and industry players for substance.

ACHIEVEMENTS



In his first year, Steenhuisen has shown undeniable energy. He pursued market diversification with urgency, securing openings for avocados into China, grapes into the Philippines and pushing for first consignments into India and Japan. When Washington slapped a punishing 30% tariff on South African exports, he used diplomacy and diversification to soften the blow. Exports in Q1 2025 grew 10% year-on-year - a visible achievement in a sector where global demand is volatile. He also acted swiftly during foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks, procuring vaccines and enforcing quarantines, while promising a long-overdue domestic vaccine production drive. On paper, these moves suggest a minister attuned to global markets and local risks.



Steenhuisen's R7,6 billion budget for 2025/26 shows intent but also exposes limits. With nearly 60% tied up in transfers and just 1% in capital assets, it leans heavily on subsidies and provincial grants rather than the hard infrastructure needed for long-term resilience. While his focus on farmer support and crisis response is understandable, the imbalance leaves labs, border posts and vaccine capacity underfunded. For an export-driven strategy to succeed, a stronger tilt toward capital investment and tighter oversight of conditional grants would be essential.

JOHN STEENHUISEN - MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DA)

GRADE: **60/100** - MODERATE BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

(VISIBLE REFORMER, BUT EXECUTION REMAINS PATCHY)

FAILURES

Yet beneath the headlines, Steenhuisen's record looks thinner. Biosecurity responses have been reactive rather than institutionalised; outbreaks kept recurring into winter 2025, underlining weak surveillance and cold-chain gaps. His legislative timetable has slipped: promised updates to animal health and regulatory frameworks remain in consultation stages. For small farmers, access to credit, extension support and predictable permits is still patchy, with little evidence that new policies have reached beyond commercial hubs. His rhetoric on land reform - title deeds and empowerment without quotas - resonates, but translating that into scalable programmes is unfinished business.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

To be more effective, Steenhuisen must trade political showmanship for systemic delivery. Publishing measurable targets on permits and inspections, tying farmer grants to outcomes, fast-tracking market agreements into year-round shipping contracts and ring-fencing biosecurity investment would transform his ministry from reactive to resilient. Until then, his score sits at **60/100** - strong on diplomacy and crisis optics, but not yet on the enduring systems that would free agriculture from constant firefighting.



JOHN STEENHUISEN - MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DA)

GRADE: 60/100 - MODERATE BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

(VISIBLE REFORMER, BUT EXECUTION REMAINS PATCHY)



John Steenhuisen's constitutional record as Minister of Agriculture presents an active but uneven alignment with South Africa's supreme law. His efforts to open export markets and strengthen disease control resonate with the objectives of **section 195(1)(b) and (f)** - promoting efficient, development-oriented public administration and the effective use of resources. Likewise, his market-diversification diplomacy and defence of farmer livelihoods give practical effect to section 22, which protects the right to choose one's trade or profession freely and to section 9(2), which empowers the state to take legislative and policy measures to advance substantive equality in opportunity.

However, the weaknesses in institutional delivery - recurring biosecurity lapses, underinvestment in infrastructure and stalled legislation - reveal shortfalls in fulfilling the section 7(2) duty on the state to "respect, protect, promote and fulfil" rights. The persistent vulnerability of smallholders also strains section 27(1)(b), which guarantees access to sufficient food, a goal dependent on stable, well-regulated agricultural systems. Moreover, the lag in regulatory reform and oversight of conditional grants touches on the section 195(1)(d) requirement for accountability and transparency in the public service, particularly since lags in reform are not in concert with the fair, impartial and equitable provision of services.

Steenhuisen embodies the spirit of constitutional coherency under section 41(1)(c) but has yet to institutionalise it.



ROSEMARY NOKUZOLA CAPA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 - FAIR (VISIBLE ON THE GROUND, BUT IMPACT HARD TO MEASURE)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Rosemary Capa, a long-serving ANC parliamentarian, trained as a nurse and midwife at Holy Cross Hospital before entering politics. She has held several deputy ministerial roles, including Small Business Development and Rural Development, before returning to Agriculture in July 2024. Her strength lies in community engagement and provincial liaison rather than technical or economic expertise.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Capa has been tireless in grassroots outreach, visiting projects, holding imbizos and pressing for women's empowerment in agriculture. Her inspection of citrus packhouses in Limpopo and advocacy for women farmers reflect a consistent focus on inclusivity. Internationally, she co-chaired South Africa's G20 Agriculture meetings in September 2025, where she championed smallholder issues on a global stage. On the domestic budget front, she presented allocations of R1,685 billion through Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme ("CASP") (supporting 10,350 farmers) and R677 million via Ilima/Letsema (inputs to 37 307 farmers and 63 310 households). This shows attentiveness to programme delivery and alignment with ANC priorities of food security and farmer support.



FAILURES



The real test is whether these billions change farmer livelihoods. Too often, programmes under her watch generate outputs without outcomes - centres built but underutilised, grants disbursed without clear gains in productivity or market access. Weak monitoring means it's unclear if beneficiaries thrive five years later. To improve, Capa should insist on outcome-based metrics - hectares rehabilitated, yields lifted, contracts secured - and shift a portion of funds from subsidies into infrastructure and extension capacity that delivers durable returns.

ROSEMARY NOKUZOLA CAPA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 - FAIR (VISIBLE ON THE GROUND, BUT IMPACT HARD TO MEASURE)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Rosemary Capa, a long-serving ANC parliamentarian, trained as a nurse and midwife at Holy Cross Hospital before entering politics. She has held several deputy ministerial roles, including Small Business Development and Rural Development, before returning to Agriculture in July 2024. Her strength lies in community engagement and provincial liaison rather than technical or economic expertise.

Her visible community engagement and advocacy for women farmers align with section 9(2) of the Constitution, which allows measures to promote substantive equality and section 27(1)(b), which recognises access to sufficient food as a fundamental right. Her emphasis on inclusivity and smallholder empowerment also echoes the founding values in section 1(a) - human dignity, equality and freedom - and the developmental obligations under section 195(1)(b) to make public administration people-centred and effective.

However, the persistent lack of measurable outcomes weakens alignment with section 195(1)(d) and (f), which require accountability and equitable service provision. Without reliable monitoring or proof of lasting impact, constitutional responsiveness risks becoming symbolic rather than structural.



SIVIWE GWARUBE - MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION (DA)

GRADE: 61/100 – MODERATE BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

(FRANK ABOUT CRISIS, BUT TOO FEW RESULTS YET)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Siviwe Gwarube, a rising DA leader, holds a BA in Law, Politics and Philosophy from Rhodes University. Her political pedigree includes service as DA spokesperson on health and as Chief Whip in Parliament before entering Cabinet in 2024. While she is an effective communicator with political management skills, she lacks technical grounding in education policy - a gap evident in her reliance on departmental officials to drive the detail.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Gwarube has been commendably candid about the education crisis, making foundational literacy and numeracy her flagship priority. She ring-fenced R4,6 billion for curriculum support and R1,2 billion for the national workbook programme in her R35 billion 2025/26 budget. She has also claimed progress on the pit toilet backlog, with over 90% of unsafe latrines replaced, though 141 schools still await upgrades. On policy, she moved the controversial Basic Education Laws Amendment Act of 2024 ("BELA Act") into implementation by gazetting regulations for admissions and language policies, adopting a consultative posture rather than heavy-handed enforcement. Her transparency - admitting that 74% of schools lack libraries, for example - has been refreshing in a sector long dogged by denial.



FAILURES



Yet transparency does not equal delivery. Teacher shortages remain dire: nearly 30 000 vacancies, including 14 800 posts for educators, strain class sizes and blunt literacy interventions. Textbook distribution continues to falter due to weak logistics and uncontrolled title changes. Infrastructure backlogs persist, with hundreds of schools still unsafe or overcrowded, compounded by uneven provincial spending of conditional grants. On BELA, she has drawn criticism for producing draft regulations that some argue centralise too much power in provincial HODs, risking both legal challenges and public resistance.

SIVIWE GWARUBE - MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION (DA)

GRADE: 61/100 – MODERATE BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

(FRANK ABOUT CRISIS, BUT TOO FEW RESULTS YET)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Gwarube must shift from inputs to outcomes. That means enforcing strict accountability on provinces for grant spending, publishing school-level dashboards on sanitation, textbooks and teacher placements and tying funding to measurable improvements rather than compliance paperwork. She should also fast-track teacher recruitment pipelines and ensure ECD expansion produces real learning gains. Until she translates her frank rhetoric into systemic improvements, her grade holds at **61/100** - a minister who speaks truth but has yet to bend the curve of delivery.

She reveals a leader who honours transparency but has yet to fully realise the transformative duties of her office. Her candid acknowledgment of systemic failures and focus on literacy align with section 29(1) (a) of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to basic education - a right the Constitutional Court in **Governing Body of the Juma Musjid Primary School & Others v Essay NO and Others** affirmed as immediately realisable, not subject to progressive fulfilment. By prioritising sanitation, infrastructure and foundational learning, she gives practical effect to section 10 on dignity and section 28(2), which requires that a child's best interests be paramount in every matter concerning them.

Gwarube's openness satisfies the founding value of accountability under section 1(d), but the Constitution demands measurable improvement, not just candour.



However, ongoing teacher shortages, uneven provincial performance and weak monitoring mechanisms undermine compliance with section 195(1)(b) and (f), which require efficient, equitable and development-oriented public administration. Similarly, the **BELA Act's** implementation risks tension with section 29(2), which protects learners' rights to receive education in the language of their choice where reasonably practicable.

REGINAH (MAKGABO) MHAULE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 – FAIR (EXPERIENCED STEWARD, BUT LITTLE SYSTEMIC IMPACT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr Reginah Mhaule, a former teacher and long-serving MEC for Education in Mpumalanga, has been Deputy Minister of Basic Education since 2019 and retained her post in July 2024. She holds a PhD in Public Administration (Fort Hare), an MPA (UP), BEd (Hons) (NWU/Potchefstroom), a BA and Further Diploma in Education (UNISA) and a Secondary Teachers' Diploma. Her academic and professional background equips her well for system management and oversight.

ACHIEVEMENTS



In the 2025/26 Budget Vote, Mhaule emphasised foundational learning, system planning and real-time monitoring. She oversaw retraining for a number of Foundation Phase teachers, while also highlighting ECD expansion, with R6,7 billion allocated to Grade R and a national registration drive for early childhood centres. She ensured continuity in the National School Nutrition Programme, which continues to reach over 9 million learners daily and represented South Africa in G20 education forums, championing data-driven accountability and gender equity. Her focus on dashboards to track conditional-grant spending shows intent to tighten oversight.



FAILURES



Yet results remain weak. Despite progress, 141 schools still use pit latrines and nearly three-quarters of schools lack libraries (see Minister of Basic Education above), undermining her literacy drive. Teacher shortages and textbook delays persist, as provincial inefficiencies blunt national priorities. While Mhaule talks monitoring, she has not enforced clear, public performance targets - provinces rarely face consequences for non-delivery. Her role as a steady administrator ensures stability, but it does not translate into measurable improvements in learning outcomes.

REGINAH (MAKGABO) MHAULE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 – FAIR (EXPERIENCED STEWARD, BUT LITTLE SYSTEMIC IMPACT)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Dr Reginah Mhaule must push beyond continuity. Tying grant payments to outcomes, publishing school-level dashboards and insisting on faster teacher placements and reliable textbook logistics would convert her technocratic oversight into real gains. Until then, her score remains **55/100** - stable but far from transformative.

Dr Reginah Mhaule's record reflects administrative steadiness but limited constitutional fulfilment. **Her oversight** of the school nutrition and ECD programmes advances section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution, which guarantees every child the right to basic education and supports section 28(2), ensuring the best interests of the child are paramount. Her commitment to gender equity and access also aligns with section 9(2) on substantive equality.

Yet persistent infrastructure failures, teacher shortages and poor provincial compliance weaken adherence to section 195(1)(b) and (f), which require efficient, accountable and development-oriented public administration.



SOLLY MALATSI - MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES (DA)

GRADE: 74/100 - FAIR (CLEAR AGENDA ON CONNECTIVITY; BROADCAST & SOE FAILURES DRAG)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



B-

Mmobba “Solly” Malatsi holds a BA in Administration (University of Limpopo) and an Honours in Political Studies (Wits). Before joining the GNU Cabinet in July 2024, he served as DA national spokesperson and Shadow Minister in the Presidency. His profile reflects political agility and communication skills rather than technical ICT depth - an asset for coalition management, but it leaves him reliant on technocrats to drive complex delivery.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Malatsi has re-centred the department on connectivity and market reform. The 2025/26 budget for his department stands at R2,545 billion (R7,8 bn over the MTEF), with R709,8 m ring-fenced for SA Connect rollout and R102 m secured for ICASA to prepare the second spectrum auction. Now, this is vital groundwork to lower data costs and expand coverage once digital dividend bands are freed. He also championed South Africa’s Roadmap for Digital Transformation of Government (May 2025), aligning with the G20’s digital infrastructure agenda and Operation Vulindlela. Transparency has improved: he publicly disclosed SABC’s more than R1 bn debt to Sentech, forcing long-ignored financial realities into the open.



On satellite connectivity, Malatsi defended his draft policy direction to ICASA, clarifying that no exemptions were granted exclusively to Starlink. Instead, his policy sought to align ICASA regulations with the B-BBEE Act of 2003 and ICT Sector Code, broadening compliance beyond rigid equity ownership rules to include mechanisms like Equity Equivalent Investment Programmes (“EEIPs”).

SOLOLY MALATSI - MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES (DA)

GRADE: 74/100 - FAIR (CLEAR AGENDA ON CONNECTIVITY; BROADCAST & SOE FAILURES DRAG)

B-

He argued that this framework applies generally to all potential entrants, ensuring transformation through measurable investments in black-owned enterprises, skills development and local industries. By situating Starlink's entry within this broader framework - and citing precedents like Microsoft's R1,3 bn EEIP and Amazon Web Services' R384 m scheme - Malatsi positioned himself as balancing innovation with transformation imperatives. Critics, however, note that while this avoided the perception of a carve-out for Starlink, it risks slowing uptake if compliance hurdles remain unclear for new entrants.

FAILURES ❌

The budget for his department is transfer-heavy: ICASA, SABC, SAPO and the Universal Service and Access Fund ("USAF") dominate allocations. Only around R709,8 m is directly ring-fenced for SA Connect within departmental spend. This skews resources toward bailouts rather than new capacity, like labs, site management and contracting. In practice, the budget is credible but too conservative, perpetuating survival transfers instead of seeding durable infrastructure.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT ⚖️

Yet, despite all of the above, it seems like Malatsi's reform drive is dragged down by unresolved legacy failures. The Pretoria High Court blocked his analogue switch-off deadline in March 2025, citing poor consultation and irrational planning, stalling spectrum release and marking a major policy embarrassment. His withdrawal of the flawed SABC Bill of 2023 was a principled reset but left the broadcaster's funding in limbo, with arrears worsening and no sustainable levy or hybrid model legislated. Meanwhile, the South African Post Office ("SAPO") remains effectively insolvent despite R1,8 bn over the MTEF and an emergency R150 m virement - money spent keeping doors half-open without a turnaround strategy.

SOLO MALATSI - MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES (DA)

GRADE: 74/100 - FAIR (CLEAR AGENDA ON CONNECTIVITY; BROADCAST & SOE FAILURES DRAG)

B-

Malatsi should, firstly, table a realistic, court-proof migration plan with satellite fallback and targeted vouchers; secondly, tie SABC transfers to strict quarterly covenants and legislate a lean, enforceable funding model; then convert SA Connect into milestone-paid, multi-operator contracts with penalties for delays; and finally confront SAPO's unsustainable model by slimming or exiting non-viable functions rather than drip-feeding cash.

Malatsi has outlined a reformer's blueprint. He's got a plan for spectrum readiness, digital government, private-sector leverage, but delivery lags intent. With broadcast migration stalled, SABC unreformed and SAPO still a fiscal drain, South Africans see more dysfunction than digital dividends. **74/100** is a fair score. The right instincts, but too little systemic change yet visible.

His commitment to expanding broadband access and driving digital inclusion aligns closely with section 16(1)(b) of **the Constitution**, which protects the right to receive and impart information and section 195(1)(b), which requires efficient, economic and effective use of resources – such as digital technologies being effectively used for the development and upliftment of communities. The **SA Connect** rollout, spectrum preparation and digital-government roadmap each advance section 7(2)'s duty on the state to “respect, protect, promote and fulfil” rights - especially by enabling equitable access to information and opportunity in the digital economy.



However, the stalled analogue migration and persistent SOE bailouts weaken compliance with section 195(1)(f), which demands accountability in public administration.

MONDLI GUNGUBELE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES (ANC)

GRADE: 61/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (STEADY "BRAKE" IN A VOLATILE PORTFOLIO)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

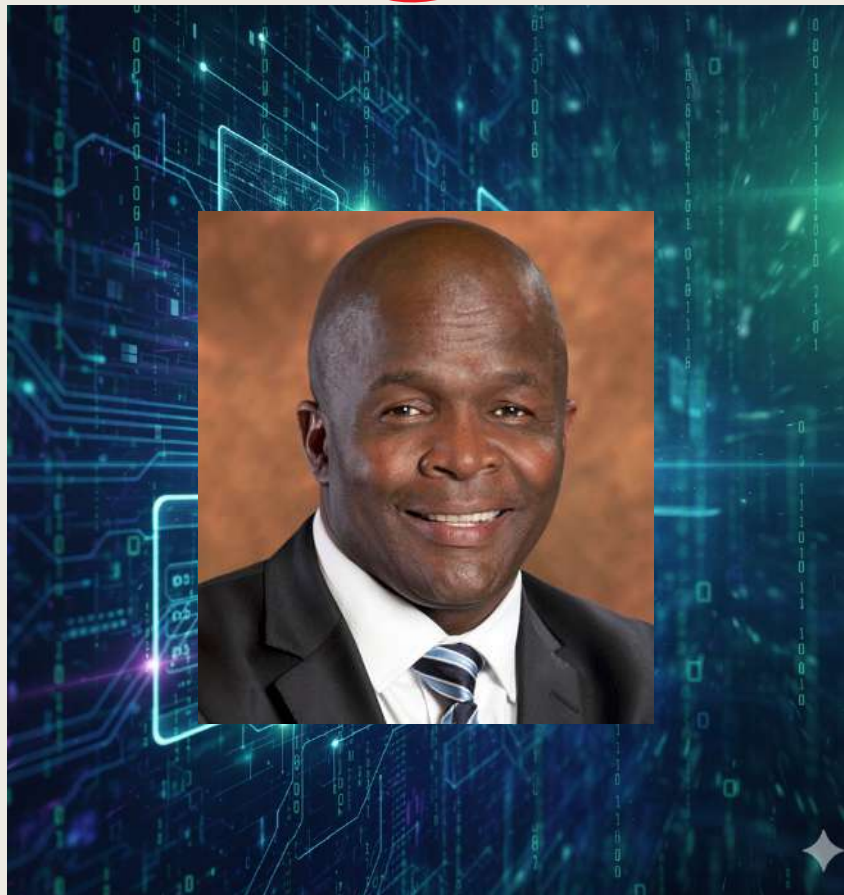


Mondli Gungubele is a veteran administrator with a BCom (Law) and a National Diploma in Nursing. His career has spanned multiple senior roles - Minister in the Presidency, later Minister of Communications & Digital Technologies (Mar 2023-Jun 2024), before becoming Deputy Minister in July 2024. That continuity across administrations gives him institutional memory, but his current role has been more about supervision than bold initiative.

ACHIEVEMENTS



His achievements lie in coalition management and system stability. In his July 2025 budget-vote speech, he backed core priorities - expanding SA Connect and preparing ICASA's second spectrum licensing round - necessary to bring down data costs and expand coverage. Budget oversight has also been steady: the 2025/26 Vote allocation of R2,545 billion is mostly transfers to entities (ICASA, SABC, SAPO), with around R710 million ring-fenced for SA Connect (see Minister of Communications above). His approach (incremental and orderly) keeps regulatory and fiscal momentum intact.



FAILURES



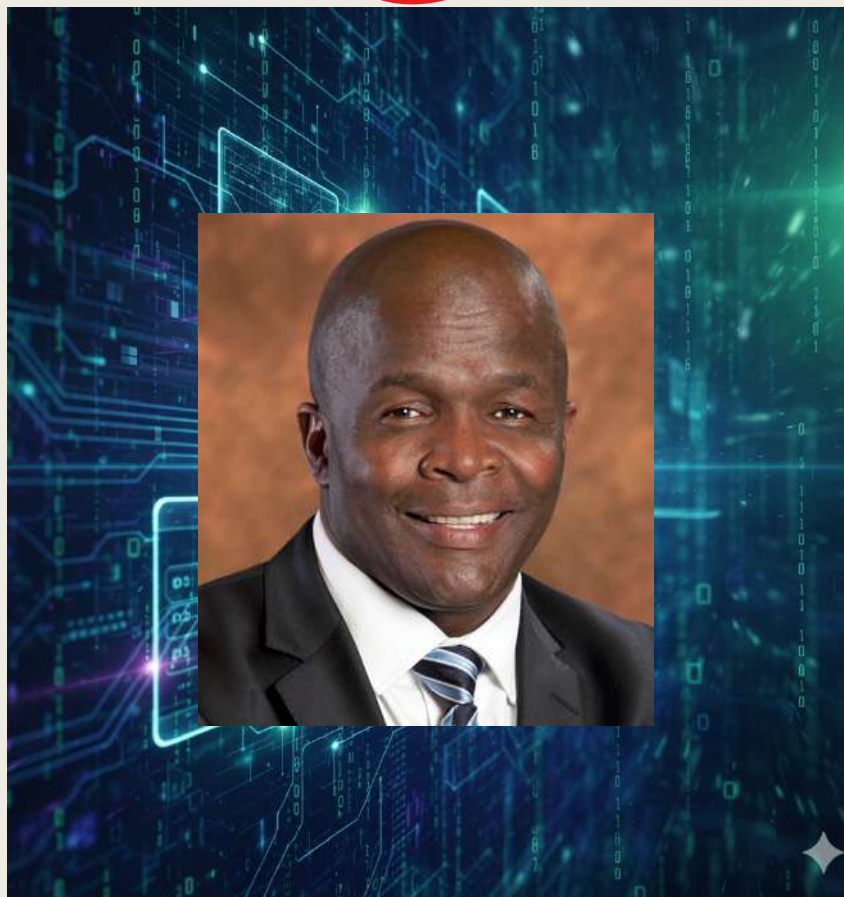
But here lies the limitation. Digital migration collapsed when the Pretoria High Court interdicted the 31 March 2025 analogue switch-off. Spectrum remains trapped while households still pay for dual illumination. Entity crises deepen: SABC's arrears to Sentech exceed R1 billion, while SAPO drifts in business rescue despite R1.8 billion over the MTEF and an emergency R150 million bailout (see Minister of Communications above). Gungubele has soothed political tempers but not delivered citizen-facing fixes.

MONDLI GUNGUBELE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES (ANC)

GRADE: 61/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (STEADY "BRAKE" IN A VOLATILE PORTFOLIO)

To rise above being the portfolio's "brake," he would need to tie transfers to measurable outcomes, publish transparent performance dashboards, enforce strict milestones in SA Connect and end SAPO's drip-feed funding by forcing a leaner, service-focused model. Until then, his cautious stewardship keeps the machine upright - but does little to accelerate delivery. **61/100** remains a fair reflection.

His support for broadband expansion and regulatory continuity aligns with section 16(1)(b), which guarantees the right to receive and impart information and section 195(1)(b), in which efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted. By maintaining fiscal order and interdepartmental coordination, he upholds aspects of section 41(1)(c) on cooperative governance.



VELENKOSINI HLABISA - MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (IFP)

GRADE: 66/100 - MODERATE (CLEAR DIAGNOSIS, BUT DELIVERY STILL PATCHY)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Velenkosini Fiki Hlabisa is a former teacher and principal. He holds a Senior Secondary Teachers' Diploma (SSTD) and B.Paed (History) from the University of Zululand and a BA (Hons) in History from UNISA. Before entering the GNU Cabinet on 3 July 2024, he was IFP president and mayor of Big Five Hlabisa. His background gives him credibility in leadership and education, though limited in technical finance or infrastructure.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Hlabisa injected candour into a struggling portfolio. His flagship move has been the review of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government under the campaign "Every Municipality Must Work", with nationwide submissions open until July 2025. He has also moved faster on disaster funding than predecessors: in July 2025, he reported R1,255 billion released for flood recovery, with assessments nearing R6,3 billion. Internationally, he positioned South Africa within the G20 Disaster Risk Reduction workstream, focusing on resilience and early warning.

On finances, he openly confronted municipal debt - most notably the R94 billion owed to Eskom - and supported conditional relief. His frank admission that nearly 90% of participating municipalities defaulted again showed an unusual willingness to face facts.



FAILURES



Despite strong rhetoric, only 41 of 257 municipalities achieved clean audits in 2023/24 (only 16%), with water leaks, sewage spills and power cuts persisting. It must be noted, however, that this figure does reflect a huge problem that the Minister here inherited. The Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent ("MISA") remains understaffed, slowing the Municipal Infrastructure Grant ("MIG") rollout. Transfers dominate his absolutely huge R410,9 billion budget, but without enforcement mechanisms, cash often vanishes into weak systems.

VELENKOSINI HLABISA - MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (IFP)

GRADE: **66/100** - MODERATE (CLEAR DIAGNOSIS, BUT DELIVERY STILL PATCHY)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Hlabisa is, if anything, a rational reformer in tone. But, the fact of the matter is that citizens still wait for taps to run and streetlights to work. Ahead of the 2026 local government elections, his credibility depends on translating reviews into visible improvements. He should tie transfers to milestones, claw back funds from non-performers and enforce prepaid revenue collection for debt relief. He must also expand MISA capacity with private-sector partnerships and deploy section 139 interventions (which are constitutional mechanisms allowing the provincial executive to step in when a municipality fails to fulfil its obligations, such as providing basic services or approving a budget) decisively where councils collapse.

A principled, outspoken minister who has set the reform table. But without tangible service gains before 2026, **66/100** remains an honest but limited score.



Velenkosini Hlabisa's constitutional performance reflects a minister who understands the gravity of cooperative governance but has yet to achieve full constitutional compliance in delivery. His candour and reform drive align closely with section 195(1)(b) and (f) of the Constitution, which demand efficient, accountable and development-oriented public administration. The review of the **1998 White Paper** and his willingness to confront municipal debt show adherence to section 41(1)(c), which calls for cooperative, coordinated government across spheres. His emphasis on disaster readiness and transparency also gives effect to section 24, safeguarding the right to an environment not harmful to health or well-being.

Yet, the persistence of municipal collapse, audit failures and poor water and sanitation outcomes signals weak compliance with section 152(1)(b) which compel municipalities to ensure sustainable services and accountable governance.

DICKSON (NAMANE) MASEMOLA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS) (ANC)

GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (DILIGENT FIXER IN THE TRADITIONAL SECTOR; IMPACT STILL INCREMENTAL)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr Namane Dickson Masemola is a veteran ANC administrator and former Limpopo MEC. He holds a PhD in Administration from the University of Limpopo, with a dissertation focused on leadership and socio-economic outcomes in municipalities. His career spans decades across provincial and local government - serving as mayor, MEC for Education, Public Works, Transport and Social Development - before his appointment as Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs on 3 July 2024.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Masemola's main lane is Traditional Affairs, where he mediates between municipalities and traditional leaders. He has brokered agreements for traditional councils to sit on municipal planning forums, helping unblock stalled service projects on communal land. In July 2025, he led outreach in Vhembe, Limpopo, harmonising roles between councils and municipalities to reduce land-use disputes.

He has also fronted the codification of succession rules to limit costly chieftaincy litigation and pressed for inclusion of traditional leaders in Integrated Development Plans. His involvement in the "Every Municipality Must Work" process ties him into Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa's reform drive (see Minister of COGTA above), while his work on disaster relief ensures that traditional communities are factored into post-flood funding allocations.



DICKSON (NAMANE) MASEMOLA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS) (ANC)

GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (DILIGENT FIXER IN THE TRADITIONAL SECTOR; IMPACT STILL INCREMENTAL)

FAILURES

Despite this, outcomes remain modest. Only 41 of 257 municipalities achieved clean audits in 2023/24 (only 16%) (see Minister of COGTA above), and Eskom debt relief has faltered 87% of participating municipalities defaulted again by June 2025. Service delivery in rural traditional areas remains poor, with weak Municipal Infrastructure Grant implementation and slow support from the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent. Masemola also suffers from a low profile, with no flagship initiative clearly bearing his imprint.

With the 2026 Local Government Elections looming, Masemola's role is pivotal. To improve his impact, he must push for outcome-tied transfers, quarterly performance dashboards for municipalities and strict enforcement of Eskom relief conditions. Piloting "Rural Service Compacts" in provinces could give him a visible, citizen-facing win.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Masemola is a steady coalition player who lowers tensions and mediates disputes. But until his diplomacy translates into measurable improvements - cleaner audits, working infrastructure and fewer chieftaincy conflicts - his score holds at **60/100**: competent, but not transformative.

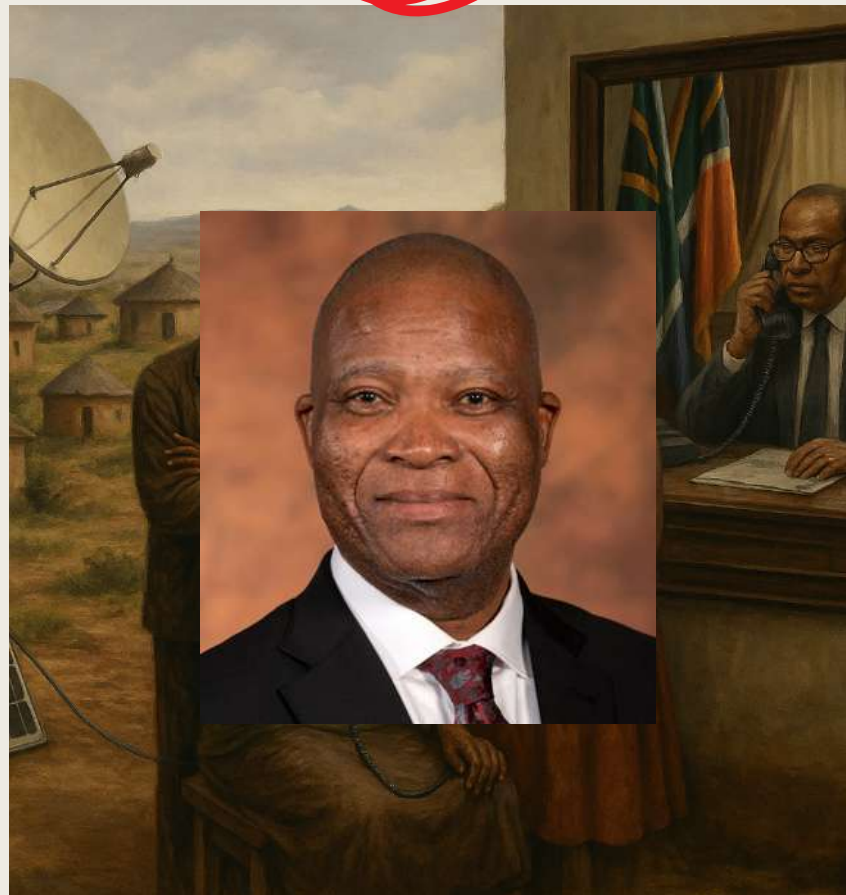
DICKSON (NAMANE) MASEMOLA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS) (ANC)

GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (DILIGENT FIXER IN THE TRADITIONAL SECTOR; IMPACT STILL INCREMENTAL)



His mediation between traditional councils and municipalities aligns with section 211(1) and (2) of **the Constitution**, which recognise the role and status of traditional leadership within the democratic order and with section 41(1)(h), which promotes cooperative governance and mutual trust among spheres of government. His work to codify succession rules and integrate traditional authorities into municipal planning also advances section 195(1) of the Constitution.

However, persistent service failures in rural areas and weak municipal oversight show gaps in fulfilling section 152(1)(b) ensuring sustainable service delivery and accountable governance.



ZOLILE BURNS-NCAMASHE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (GOVERNANCE) (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (PROCESS-HEAVY; LITTLE TANGIBLE IMPACT SO FAR)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Prince Zolile Burns-Ncamashe is a traditional leader of the amaRharhabe and an ANC MP since 2021. He holds a BA in Philosophy and Psychology, a BA (Hons) in Philosophy and a Master's in Social Science from the University of Fort Hare. He previously served in the Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders (1996-2017; deputy chair from 2002-2017). Appointed Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs ("CoGTA") in March 2023 and retained after July 2024, his current brief is governance and municipal administration.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Burns-Ncamashe has worked behind the scenes on the review of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, under the "Every Municipality Must Work" banner. He reinforced these themes at the National Council of Provinces ("NCOP") Local Government Week in September 2025, stressing professionalisation and Section 154 support (in this case, referring to measures by the national and provincial governments to support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities). He also oversees the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA), attempting to stabilise failing municipalities and troubleshooting cases in the Eastern Cape and Free State.



FAILURES

Yet his record is mostly process, not delivery. Audit outcomes remain dire, clean audits sit at just around 16% and water and sanitation backlogs persist. MISA's capacity still lags badly and conditional-grant underspending undermines service delivery (see Minister of COGTA above). Despite the scale of the CoGTA budget (R410,9 billion over the MTEF, with R57 billion for the Municipal Infrastructure Grant), his interventions have not yielded visible improvements. His low profile means any progress accrues to Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa.

ZOLILE BURNS-NCAMASHE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (GOVERNANCE) (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (PROCESS-HEAVY; LITTLE TANGIBLE IMPACT SO FAR)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



With the 2026 Local Government Elections looming, “quiet competence” is not enough. Communities judge by taps that run, refuse that is collected and potholes repaired. Unless Burns-Ncamashe translates frameworks into audited, measurable improvements, his grade drops to **55/100**: a diligent deputy, but still more administrator than reformer.

Prince Zolile Burns-Ncamashe’s constitutional alignment reflects procedural diligence but insufficient realisation of the state’s developmental mandate. His focus on professionalisation and section 154(1) support for municipalities gives effect to the constitutional duty on national and provincial governments to strengthen local capacity.



PIETER GROENEWALD - MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (FREEDOM FRONT PLUS)

GRADE: 58/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (TOUGH TALK, ERRATIC EXECUTION, MISJUDGED RHETORIC)

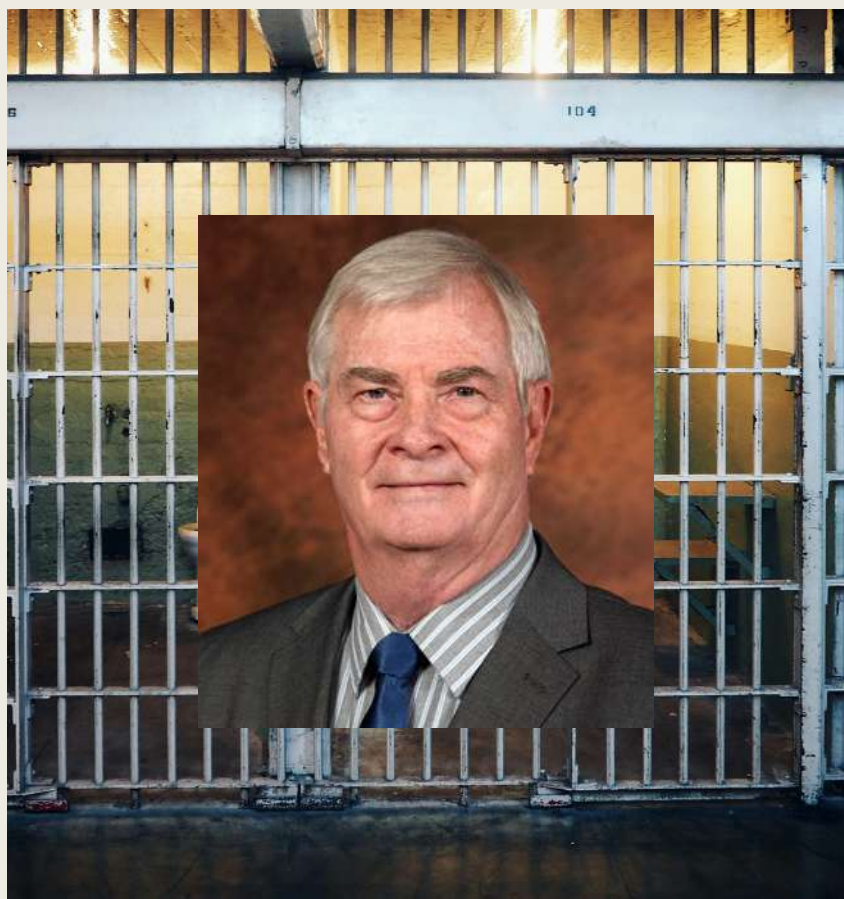
BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr Pieter Groenewald, former leader of the Freedom Front Plus, is one of the most experienced law-and-order politicians in the Government of National Unity. He holds a BA, an Honours and Master's degree in Political Science and a DPhil in Police Science from the University of Potchefstroom (now North-West University). His academic grounding in policing and security sets the tone for a direct, enforcement-oriented posture at Correctional Services.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Groenewald deserves credit for candour. He has consistently named the system's core problems: overcrowding, dilapidated infrastructure, staff collusion and corruption. In his 1 July 2025 Budget Vote, he secured R29,22 billion for 2025/26, rising to R31,95 billion by 2027/28 and warned that cuts were eroding safety equipment, nutrition and capital works. He has promoted efficiency through department-run bakeries and farms, aiming to cut food costs and redirect savings to security. He also initiated disciplinary action against 66 corrupt officials and emphasised intelligence-led searches. Oversight has been visible: unannounced inspections at high-risk prisons (like his famous Sun City prison raid) after the Thabo Bester scandal sent a clear signal that Pretoria is watching.



FAILURES

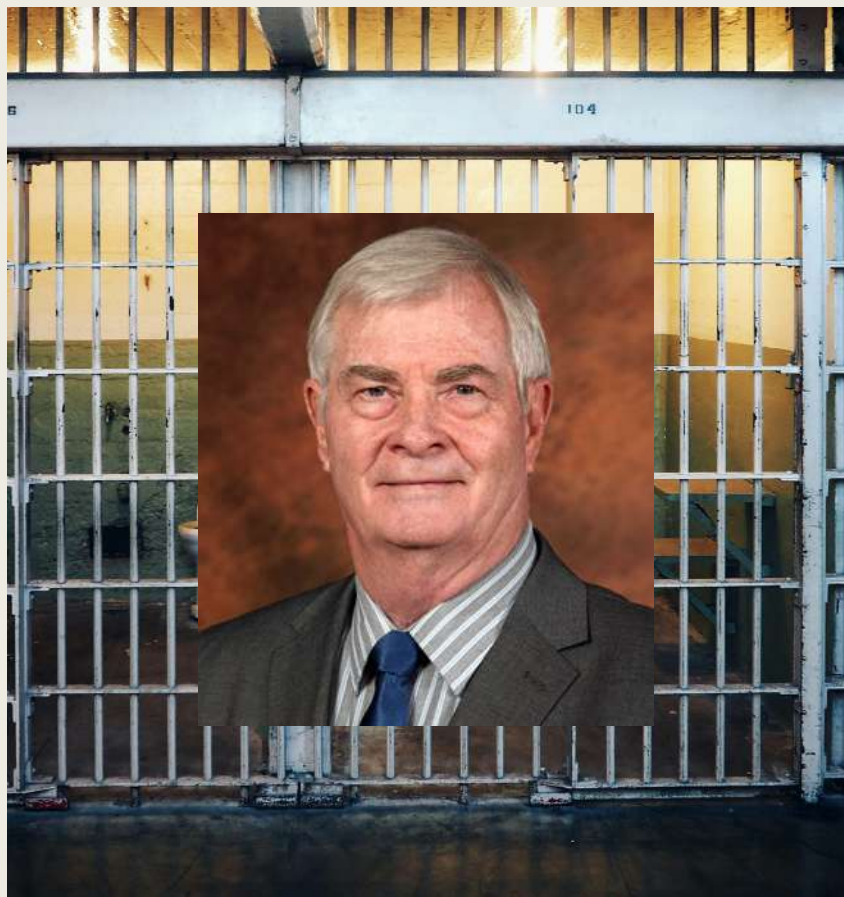
Yet outcomes remain thin. In February 2025, a Pollsmoor inmate escaped even as Parliament was being briefed on “zero escape” commitments - an embarrassment underscoring the gulf between promises and floor-level control. Infrastructure failures persist: reliance on the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure leaves prisons waiting for critical upgrades to fencing, fire systems and cameras.

PIETER GROENEWALD - MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (FREEDOM FRONT PLUS)

GRADE: 58/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (TOUGH TALK, ERRATIC EXECUTION, MISJUDGED RHETORIC)

Overcrowding remains the defining multiplier of violence, staff exhaustion and service backlogs, while rehabilitation and reintegration still receive a small slice of the budget (around 20%), leaving South Africa locked into warehousing rather than correction.

Groenewald's July 2025 call to "revisit" corporal punishment, framed as a fix for overcrowding and petty offenders, was a major misstep. Judicial corporal punishment was declared unconstitutional in S v Williams (1995), abolished in the Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act 1997 and further entrenched in Christian Education SA v Minister of Education (2000). Reviving it is legally indefensible, politically inflammatory and diverts scarce capital from real solutions like case-flow management, electronic monitoring and remand reduction. It damages his credibility as a reformer and exposes poor judgment.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Groenewald is a straight talker who diagnoses the prison system honestly and has introduced pockets of efficiency, but he has yet to deliver safer facilities, reduced overcrowding, or credible rehabilitation pipelines. His credibility depends on moving from words to measurable outcomes.

That requires tying regional managers' bonuses to hard security indicators such as camera uptime, contraband seizures and escape response times, ensuring accountability is enforced through performance contracts. He should also ring-fence a growing share of the correctional budget for rehabilitation and electronic monitoring, while fast-tracking capital works through a dedicated, audited fund that prioritises urgent safety upgrades.

PIETER GROENEWALD - MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (FREEDOM FRONT PLUS)

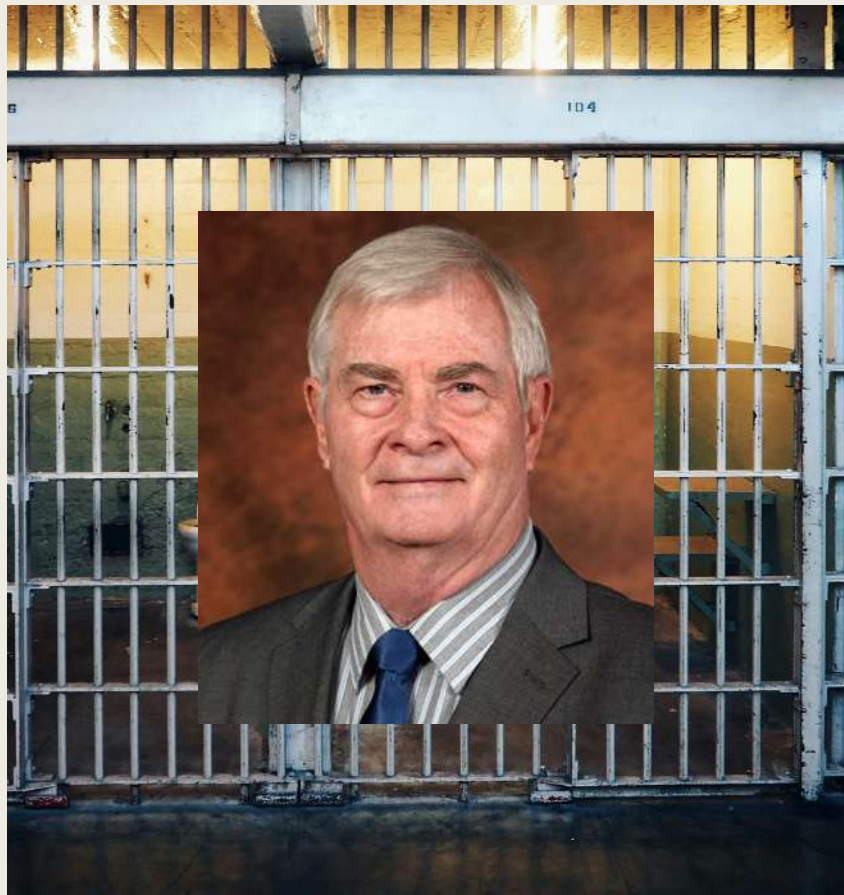
GRADE: 58/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (TOUGH TALK, ERRATIC EXECUTION, MISJUDGED RHETORIC)



At present, **58/100** is warranted: the right instincts on diagnosis, but inconsistent delivery and poor judgment on corporal punishment keep him in the “needs improvement” band.

Dr Pieter Groenewald’s constitutional record as Minister of Correctional Services reveals a paradox - strong on diagnosis, weaker on constitutional fidelity. His efforts to tackle corruption, overcrowding and inefficiency align with section 195(1)(b) and (f) of the Constitution, which require a public administration that is accountable, development-oriented and effective in using resources. His hands-on inspections and disciplinary actions reflect partial compliance with the section 165(4) obligation on organs of the state to assist and protect the courts by ensuring that their dignity - such as lawful detention and humane custody - is upheld.

However, the persistence of overcrowding, under-resourced facilities and minimal rehabilitation undermines section 35(2)(e), which guarantees detained persons the right to conditions consistent with human dignity. His public suggestion to “revisit” corporal punishment directly contradicts section 10 (human dignity), section 12(1)(e) (freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment) and established Constitutional Court jurisprudence in S v Williams (1995) and Christian Education SA v Minister of Education (2000).



LINDIWE NTSHALINTSHALI - DEPUTY MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (ANC)

GRADE: 63/100 - FAIR (VISIBLE PRESENCE, LIMITED STRUCTURAL IMPACT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Leonah Lindiwe Ntshalintshali, a former Emalahleni mayor and Mpumalanga MEC, became Deputy Minister of Correctional Services on 3 July 2024. Trained as a professional nurse at Mpumalanga Nursing College, she brings an instinct for welfare and community outreach but less grounding in security and corrections management. Her background explains her people-focused, highly visible approach.

ACHIEVEMENTS



She has been active in public engagement - visiting prisons, hosting imbizos and championing gender equity through initiatives like "Women Rising in Corrections." She frequently fronts community campaigns that link social ills to incarceration and has positioned herself as the department's empathetic face, attentive to staff morale and rehabilitation narratives. On oversight, she has been frank about budget stress, backing her minister's warnings that the three-year R29,2 billion allocation remains custody-heavy, leaving little room for capital works or rehabilitation expansion.



FAILURES



Yet her interventions have not translated into measurable change. Overcrowding persists, with some prisons exceeding 150% capacity; infrastructure is crumbling; and escapes continue - most notably the Pollsmoor lapse in February 2025 (*see Minister of Correctional Services above*), which undermined assurances of improved security. Much of her work - school visits, prayer sessions, community drives - builds goodwill but does not solve systemic failures like remand backlogs, weak parole supervision, or underfunded rehabilitation.

LINDIWE NTSHALINTSHALI - DEPUTY MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (ANC)

GRADE: 63/100 - FAIR (VISIBLE PRESENCE, LIMITED STRUCTURAL IMPACT)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



To raise her impact, Ntshalintshali must pivot from advocacy to enforcement: tying budgets to performance, accelerating life-safety infrastructure upgrades and demanding hard metrics on rehabilitation and remand reduction. Her visibility is an asset, but without structural gains, it risks being dismissed as public relations rather than reform. Score: **63/100**.

Her emphasis on rehabilitation and gender equity resonates with section 10 of the Constitution, which upholds human dignity and section 35(2)(e), guaranteeing detainees conditions consistent with dignity and humane treatment. Her visibility and community outreach also advance section 195(1)(e), promoting responsiveness and a people-centred public service.

However, the persistence of overcrowding, poor infrastructure and remand delays undermines section 12(1)(e), which protects against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and weakens compliance with section 195(1)(b) and (f) on efficiency and accountability.



ANGIE MOTSHEKGA - MINISTER OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS (ANC)

GRADE: 45/100 - POOR (POLITICAL HEFT, PATCHY GRIP ON A TECHNICAL PORTFOLIO)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Angie Motshekga, long-time Cabinet stalwart and former Minister of Basic Education, entered the Department of Defence and Military Veterans in July 2024 with significant political stature but little sectoral experience. Her academic qualifications are in education: she holds a Master's degree and a Bachelor of Educational Science degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, a Bachelor of Arts in Education degree from the University of the North and a Higher Diploma in Education. While these credentials reflect depth in teaching and policy, they did not directly prepare her for the technical, high-stakes demands of managing the South African National Defence Force ("SANDF"). She quickly coined the slogan of "putting the soldier first," promising improved welfare, refurbished barracks and better rations, but the translation of that rhetoric into hard results has been weak.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Her single most notable achievement was the completion of South Africa's troop withdrawal from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in mid-2025. More than 2 200 SANDF personnel and all equipment were repatriated without reported loss, a logistical success in a dangerous theatre. She also presented the 2025/26 defence budget with unusual frankness, admitting that 64% of the R57,1 billion allocation is swallowed by compensation of employees, leaving only about R12 billion to fund operations, border safeguarding and aging fleets. That candour earned her some credit.

ANGIE MOTSHEKGA - MINISTER OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS (ANC)

GRADE: 45/100 - POOR (POLITICAL HEFT, PATCHY GRIP ON A TECHNICAL PORTFOLIO)

FAILURES



Yet it is precisely on the DRC file that her leadership looks weakest. Parliamentary oversight on the draw-down collapsed when she skipped a key Joint Standing Committee on Defence meeting, forcing its postponement. This absence fed perceptions of contempt for oversight in a portfolio where civilian control is paramount. The withdrawal itself, while logistically neat, masked deeper issues: overstretched forces, broken supply lines and limited airlift that exposed how close SANDF came to failure. Instead of grappling publicly with these risks, Motshekga leaned on self-congratulation and avoided accountability.

Compounding matters, her permissive handling of SANDF Chief General Rudzani Maphwanya's unsanctioned diplomatic pledges in Iran drew harsh criticism. By declaring herself "satisfied" with his explanations and imposing no sanctions, she weakened civilian authority over the military. This tolerance of misconduct totally undermines South Africa's credibility abroad and signals to the ranks that accountability is negotiable.

Budget choices and optics also hurt her case. Opposition parties exposed millions spent on ministerial travel and luxury accommodation while soldiers remained underpaid and ill-equipped. Some trade unions, like the Public Servants Associations, have even called for her to be axed for this. Instead of front-footing transparency with quarterly breakdowns, her office let the scandal spiral. At the same time, the budget's structure - dominated by salaries, with capital works starved - remains unreformed. Troops still lack adequate equipment, depot maintenance is slow and flying hours and sea days fall well short of even minimum readiness benchmarks.



ANGIE MOTSHEKGA - MINISTER OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS (ANC)

GRADE: 45/100 - POOR (POLITICAL HEFT, PATCHY GRIP ON A TECHNICAL PORTFOLIO)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



In short, Motshekga brings political experience but not the technical acuity or discipline that Defence requires. She would perform far better if she tied every rand to measurable outputs: audited unit costs for rations and barracks upgrades, service-level agreements for readiness and quarterly oversight briefings published in full. By treating defence not as a stage for slogans but as a system to be run with efficiency, transparency and consequence management, she could restore credibility. Until then, 45/100 remains a fair reflection of a minister who talks about “soldier first” but delivers more speeches than security.

Angie Motshekga’s constitutional performance as Minister of Defence and Military Veterans raises serious questions about compliance with the foundational principles of accountable and transparent governance. Her openness in budget presentations aligns with section 195(1)(g) of the Constitution, which demands transparent and accurate information be given to the public, while the successful withdrawal of troops from the DRC partially fulfils section 200(2), requiring the defence force to act in accordance with the Constitution and the law.

The overall constitutional impression is of a minister who values optics over oversight - one whose rhetoric on “putting the soldier first” rings hollow against lapses in accountability, fiscal prudence and civilian control.



However, her failure to appear before the Joint Standing Committee on Defence breached the spirit of section 92(2), which holds Cabinet members collectively and individually accountable to Parliament and undermined section 41(1), requiring cooperative governance across the state. More gravely, her tolerance of the SANDF Chief’s unauthorised diplomatic activities contradicts section 202(2), which affirms that the defence force must be “exercised in accordance with the directions of the Cabinet member responsible for defence, under the authority of the President.”

BANTU HOLOMISA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS (UDM)

GRADE: 50/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (CANDID INSPECTOR, THIN ON EXECUTION)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Major-General (ret.) Bantu Holomisa, leader of the United Democratic Movement and former commander of the Transkei Defence Force, brings stature and decades of political experience to his role as Deputy Minister. His qualifications lie in military command and parliamentary oversight rather than the technical disciplines of defence finance, logistics, or procurement reform - giving him credibility as a voice, but not necessarily as a systems fixer.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Holomisa's main strength has been forthrightness. He openly acknowledged the failures of the Democratic Republic of Congo mission, admitted that state capture had hollowed out the South African National Defence Force ("SANDF") and even confirmed that the Navy had been improperly instructed to withdraw from a parliamentary briefing, thus aligning himself with accountability rather than secrecy. He has also spoken forcefully about rebuilding the defence industry, visiting facilities such as Rheinmetall Denel Munition and stressing disciplined partnerships to restore sovereign supply. Internally, he has undertaken inspections and advocated for soldier welfare, highlighting poor rations, crumbling barracks and the need for dignity in service.



FAILURES



Yet, a year into office, his footprint remains largely diagnostic. The defence budget still allocates more than 60% to salaries (see Minister of Defence above), leaving operations and capital starved, but Holomisa has not tied this imbalance to enforceable outputs like flying hours or barracks refurbishments.

BANTU HOLOMISA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS (UDM)

GRADE: 50/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (CANDID INSPECTOR, THIN ON EXECUTION)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



The backlog in military veterans' benefits remains stubborn, with no published plan to clear claims on a measurable timeline. His straight talk has won respect, but too often it sounds performative without delivery. To raise his impact, Holomisa must shift from commentary to contracts: publish readiness dashboards, enforce procurement milestones and run backlog blitzes with clear metrics. Until then, he remains a credible critic, but far from a proven reformer.

His transparency and willingness to confront failures align with section 195(1)(f) of the Constitution, which calls for accountability in public administration and with section 92(2), which requires Cabinet members to be collectively and individually accountable to Parliament. His inspections and advocacy for soldier welfare also give effect to section 10, safeguarding dignity and section 200(2), which demands that the defence force act in accordance with constitutional values and lawful authority.

However, his lack of measurable reform within the means of the department's budget weakens compliance with section 195(1)(b) - efficient, effective and economic resource use.



RICHARD MKHUNGO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (STEADY HAND, BUT RESULTS THIN AND UNPROVEN)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Richard Mkhungo, a long-time African National Congress cadre and former leader within the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), entered the Defence and Military Veterans portfolio in July 2024 without technical expertise in defence acquisition, logistics, or finance. His qualifications lie in civic leadership and political administration, which make him a competent liaison but leave him dependent on departmental officials for substantive reforms.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past year, Mkhungo has positioned himself as a stabiliser. He pressed for greater Defence control over base maintenance instead of relying entirely on the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (“DPWI”), chaired task teams on leakages in fuel and spares and served as a mediator with unions on housing and pay grievances. On the veterans’ side, he oversaw incremental rollout of the long-delayed Military Veterans’ Pension, providing some relief for aging beneficiaries. These are not trivial contributions, but they remain managerial rather than transformative.



FAILURES

The 2025/26 Defence vote of about R57 billion remains structurally distorted (see Minister of Defence above), with two-thirds consumed by salaries, leaving little for maintenance, capital renewal, or operations. The veterans’ budget remains constrained, plagued by arrears. Mkhungo has not introduced measurable, quarterly performance targets to track improvements in barracks, rations, or veterans’ claims. His interventions on infrastructure have been reactive, triggered by Parliament’s criticism and no costed, time-bound pipeline has been produced.

RICHARD MKHUNGO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS (ANC)

GRADE: **55/100** - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (STEADY HAND, BUT RESULTS THIN AND UNPROVEN)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Ultimately, Mkhungo is but a caretaker. He avoids controversy and keeps the machine turning, but with no bold ownership of projects or transparent metrics, his impact is modest. To improve, he must simply do more, like publish readiness dashboards, ring-fence life-support lines, clear veterans' backlogs visibly and digitise logistics. Until then, **55/100** reflects a deputy who keeps the lights on but has yet to prove value-for-money.

His mediation with unions and focus on veterans' welfare align with section 10 of the Constitution, which upholds dignity and section 195(1)(e), requiring responsive, people-centred public service. His oversight of infrastructure and corruption task teams also supports section 195(1)(f) on accountability.



KGOSIENTSHO RAMOKGOPA - MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY & ENERGY (ANC)

GRADE: 85/100 - VERY GOOD (STABILISER WHO'S STARTING TO LOCK IN REFORM)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr Kgosientsho “Sputla” Ramokgopa combines political seniority with technocratic depth. A former Executive Mayor of Tshwane and Head of Infrastructure & Investment in the Presidency, he holds advanced postgraduate qualifications in public affairs/administration and gained executional experience as Minister in the Presidency for Electricity in 2023–24 before assuming the merged Electricity & Energy portfolio in mid-2024. His background prepared him to manage Eskom’s operational crises and coordinate policy across Treasury, regulators and municipalities.

The baseline he inherited was dire. In the 2023/24 financial year, Eskom endured 329 days of load-shedding, burned R33,9 billion on diesel to keep turbines running, lost R23 billion to electricity theft and suffered a 3% fall in sales volumes - culminating in an after-tax loss of R55 billion. That cocktail of losses, theft and over-reliance on diesel underlined a utility in financial and operational freefall.

Under his watch, blackouts eased dramatically. By late 2024 and into 2025, South Africa enjoyed nearly ten months without outages - a radical departure from the prior year. The turnaround rested on disciplined planned maintenance, faster return-to-service of big coal units (notably Kusile) and curbing diesel use as a permanent crutch. Households and firms felt the difference in reliable hours of power, while Eskom’s diesel bill and system losses began to ease.



Just as important, Ramokgopa moved beyond firefighting to structural reform. He shepherded the Electricity Regulation Amendment Act of 2024 through Parliament and into law, enabling a competitive power market and an independent transmission/system operator. This shift is fundamental: it reduces over-reliance on Eskom’s monopoly and creates space for private megawatts and capital to flow in with lower risk.

KGOSIENTSHO RAMOKGOPA - MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY & ENERGY (ANC)

GRADE: **85/100** - VERY GOOD (STABILISER WHO'S STARTING TO LOCK IN REFORM)

FAILURES

Yet the system remains fragile. Winter 2025 revealed cracks when delayed unit returns forced a brief reintroduction of load-shedding. Eskom still battles station-level discipline, weak contractor performance and costly logistics gaps. The grid is the biggest bottleneck: Eskom estimates around R350 billion is needed over the next decade for new lines and substations, a bill far beyond its balance sheet. Without faster transmission build, new renewables and storage projects cannot connect. Here, Ramokgopa must do more to mobilise private investment - not just in generation but also in wires, substations and municipal distribution, where underfunded city networks risk becoming the next crisis.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

What would make him better is moving from speeches to scoreboards by publishing monthly plant-level performance reports, live ledgers on grid build and clear delivery milestones for the new system operator. Investors and citizens alike need visible proof that targets are met, savings are reinvested and bottlenecks are being cleared. Ramokgopa has stabilised the immediate crisis and shifted the rulebook, but only by drawing in sustained private capital and enforcing contract-like accountability can his reforms endure.

A



On that basis, **85/100** is warranted. It speaks volumes that he was given the additional responsibility of energy in addition to electricity and has handled the task well. He has been an impressive stabiliser, but one whose success will be measured by how well he converts policy gains into bankable, investor-backed megawatts and steel in the ground.

KGOSIENTSHO RAMOKGOPA - MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY & ENERGY (ANC)

GRADE: 85/100 - VERY GOOD (STABILISER WHO'S STARTING TO LOCK IN REFORM)



Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa's performance represents one of the clearest examples of constitutional responsiveness in recent governance. His stabilisation of the electricity system gives direct effect to section 195(1)(b) and (f) of the Constitution, which together demand efficient, accountable and development-oriented public administration. By reducing load-shedding and enforcing planned maintenance, he has advanced the section 24(a) right to an environment that is not harmful to health and well-being - a right inseparable from reliable, clean energy. His leadership in passing the **Electricity Regulation Amendment Act of 2024** demonstrates compliance with section 41(1)(c), promoting cooperative governance between the state and municipalities and gives substance to section 217(1)'s requirement for fair, equitable, transparent and cost-effective procurement.

However, ongoing grid bottlenecks and Eskom's weak internal controls continue to test adherence to section 195(1)(d) on services being provided impartially, equitably, fairly and without bias and section 195(1)(e) on people's needs being responded to. Without faster rollout of transmission infrastructure and measurable delivery reporting, constitutional efficiency risks stalling at the policy level.



SAMANTHA GRAHAM-MARÉ - DEPUTY MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY & ENERGY (DA)

GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (ENERGY-EFFICIENCY EVANGELIST WITH LIMITED LEVERS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Samantha Graham-Maré entered the GNU as Deputy Minister in July 2024 after a decade in local government and five years in Parliament, where she handled infrastructure and electricity briefs for the DA. She holds an LLB (cum laude) from UNISA (2021), a useful legal grounding for a portfolio reliant on standards, regulations and compliance.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Her most tangible workstream has been on the “use-less, waste-less” side of the crisis. She fronted the government’s “Becoming Energy Smart” push with practical measures for homes and businesses, like LEDs, solar geysers, smart thermostats, switching off standby loads and other such interventions, positioning citizens as part of the solution rather than passive victims of loadshedding. She also became the visible face of South Africa’s Energy Performance Certificate (“EPC”) regime for large buildings - an inexpensive, rules-based tool to cut demand. By 21 July 2025, 7 113 buildings had registered and 3 884 EPCs were issued, with a hard compliance deadline of 7 December 2025. The pace picked up in mid-2025, but issuance still lags registrations and the backlog is material. To build capacity, she backed recruiting and training 500 graduates as EPC assessors - sensible, targeted spend.



On system reform, she has supported the ministerial agenda publicly: Cabinet’s approval of the South African Renewable Energy Masterplan (known as SAREM); the Electricity Regulation Amendment Act of 2024’s market-opening provisions; and the National Transmission Company of South Africa becoming operational on 1 April 2025 - steps that matter for private investment and grid access, even if they sit largely in the Minister’s lane. She has been an active liaison with business and municipalities (e.g., Enlit Africa platform; AHK “Energy Matters” dialogue), reinforcing investor messaging.

SAMANTHA GRAHAM-MARÉ - DEPUTY MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY & ENERGY (DA)

GRADE: **70/100** - GOOD (ENERGY-EFFICIENCY EVANGELIST WITH LIMITED LEVERS)

FAILURES

Now, this department's budget envelope is modest by infrastructure standards, so value comes from steering and enforcement rather than capex. Over the MTEF government has set "just over R13 billion" aside for the Integrated National Electrification Programme ("INEP") where delivery depends on municipalities and Eskom. Graham-Maré's emphasis on compliance and low-cost demand-side measures is fiscally appropriate, but results must be measurable (peak reduction, certified floor area, retrofit uptake).

As a deputy, her mandate is supportive and sometimes overlaps with other energy actors; she influences but does not decide Eskom operations. The EPC push is credible but still far from economy-wide scale. Behaviour-change campaigns are hard to attribute and may be confounded by tariff pain. Politically, she opposed a VAT hike that would have lifted electricity costs; the final 2025 Budget dropped the VAT increase but raised the general fuel levy, which was mixed relief for consumers.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

So, she stands as a hard-working, technically literate deputy who has added visible value on efficiency, standards and stakeholder trust. The grade of **70/100** reflects solid delivery within a narrow brief. To climb higher, she must convert EPC deadlines and "energy-smart" advocacy into demonstrable demand cuts and faster municipal implementation. There are outcomes the public can feel.

B-



SAMANTHA GRAHAM-MARÉ - DEPUTY MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY & ENERGY (DA)

GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (ENERGY-EFFICIENCY EVANGELIST WITH LIMITED LEVERS)

Her leadership on energy efficiency and compliance regimes gives effect to section 195(1)(b) and (f) of the Constitution, which require public administration to be efficient and accountable, respectively. The “Becoming Energy Smart” initiative also advances section 24 - the right to an environment that is not harmful to health and that is protected through sustainable resource use.

B-



NOMAKHOSAZANA METH - MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR (ANC)

GRADE: 50/100 - WEAK (REFORMER IN WORDS, NOT RESULTS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Nomakhosazana Meth entered the Labour portfolio with an Honours in Public Administration and a collection of certificates in government law and leadership. On paper, she is well-equipped. In practice, she has proven more comfortable producing frameworks than delivering jobs.

ACHIEVEMENTS



She has been quick to point to “reforms”: minimum wage hikes, new safety regulations and a migration policy designed to regulate foreign quotas. In September 2025 she gazetted a new Code of Good Practice on Dismissal, loosening procedural burdens on small firms. These moves show she recognises the need for flexibility in the job market. But reforms on paper mean little when unemployment still sits above 33% and youth joblessness above 40%. The truth is that for ordinary South Africans, her ministry has not shifted the dial.



On budgets and delivery, her department’s 2025/26 budget totals R4,153 billion (R1,598 bn Compensation of Employees; R694.8 m Goods & Services; R1.738 bn Transfers - mainly CCMA, Productivity SA, NEDLAC; R121 m Capital). Separately, the UIF plans R38,4 bn in 2025/26 (R19 bn benefits; R10,98 bn labour activation targeting 240 000 placements this year) and the Compensation Fund budgets R1,6 bn for beneficiaries plus R5 bn for medical claims. These are huge levers if executed well.

NOMAKHOSAZANA METH - MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR (ANC)

GRADE: 50/100 - WEAK (REFORMER IN WORDS, NOT RESULTS)



Meth adjusted the National Minimum Wage to R28,79/hour from 1 March 2025, sustaining parity for domestic and farm workers, an income floor that matters in a high-inflation economy. She also promulgated new Occupational Health & Safety regulations (Noise Exposure and Physical Agents, March 2025) and released draft Construction Regulations 2025 for public comment which are incremental but important updates to workplace safety. On labour migration, Cabinet approved the National Labour Migration Policy and Employment Services Amendment Bill (May 2025), giving the Minister tools to set sectoral quotas for foreign nationals though implementation will be contentious.

FAILURES

The rot runs deeper in the very institutions under her control. The UIF and Compensation Fund - funded with billions meant to protect workers - remain black holes of inefficiency and corruption. Payments are delayed, records are chaotic and every year Parliament hears the same excuses. Meth has acknowledged these failures but has done little to fix them. Oversight without teeth is not oversight.

Her budgets are not small: billions flow annually into “activation schemes” and subsidies. Yet the returns are pitiful. Few placements are verified, retrenchments continue and the private sector sees little reason to expand hiring. A more pragmatic minister would focus less on drafting codes and more on clearing red tape, disciplining non-performing entities and making South Africa an easier place to employ.



NOMAKHOSAZANA METH - MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR (ANC)

GRADE: 50/100 - WEAK (REFORMER IN WORDS, NOT RESULTS)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



For now, Meth embodies a familiar pattern of being active in rhetoric, but weak in execution. Until she turns budgets into jobs and cleans up her entities, she cannot be credited with more than **50/100**.

Her adjustments to the national minimum wage and promulgation of new safety regulations give effect to section 23(1) of the Constitution, which guarantees fair labour practices and section 24(a), ensuring an environment not harmful to health and well-being. Similarly, the National Labour Migration Policy White Paper reflects responsiveness to section 195(1)(e), which requires public administration to be people-centred and responsive to community needs.

However, the continued dysfunction of the UIF and Compensation Fund violates the efficiency and accountability principles under section 195(1)(b) and (f). The state's constitutional duty under section 7(2) - to "respect, protect, promote and fulfil" the rights in the Bill of Rights - is undermined when funds meant to safeguard workers are mismanaged. Moreover, chronic delays and corruption within these entities erode the section 1(d) founding value of accountability.



NTUTHUKO 'JOMO' SIBIYA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR (ANC)

GRADE: 57/100 - WEAK (ENERGETIC PRESENCE, BUT SHALLOW RESULTS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Jomo Sibiya, a former KZN MEC with a BA in Political Science from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, came into national office with a reputation for grassroots activism. He has since styled himself as the Department's "field general," often leading dawn inspections of factories and farms. His enthusiasm is visible, but his actual impact remains questionable.

ACHIEVEMENTS



On paper, Sibiya has delivered. He fronted high-profile blitz inspections, including the closure of Mighty Bricks in Rustenburg and championed the National Day Against Child Labour. He has also positioned himself as an advocate for youth, praising gig-economy partnerships and speaking at platforms like Uber-Harambee's youth employment event. These gestures make headlines and signal intent.



FAILURES



Yet, the real test is whether his interventions move the needle on employment and compliance. Here, the picture is underwhelming. Blitz inspections grab attention but do not scale - an understaffed inspectorate cannot police thousands of workplaces nationwide. Convictions and fines are rarely reported, raising doubts about deterrence. His focus on symbolic issues like child labour, while worthy, skirts the far bigger crises of mass unemployment, red tape and stagnant hiring.

NTUTHUKO 'JOMO' SIBIYA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR (ANC)

GRADE: 57/100 - WEAK (ENERGETIC PRESENCE, BUT SHALLOW RESULTS)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Ntuthuko “Jomo” Sibiya’s record shows energy but limited constitutional execution. His workplace inspections and advocacy for youth employment align with section 23(1) of the Constitution, guaranteeing fair labour practices and section 28(1)(e), protecting children from exploitative labour. His responsiveness to community issues also gives effect to section 195(1)(e), which requires a people-centred, responsive public administration.

Meanwhile, billions allocated through UIF’s Labour Activation Programmes still lack verified placement results. Sibiya talks about innovation, but he has not forced hard accountability from entities sitting on enormous budgets. For now, it is fair that he received **57/100**.



PHUMZILE MGCINA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR (ANC)

GRADE: 58/100 - WEAK (WELL-MEANING, BUT LIGHT ON DELIVERY)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Phumzile Mgcina, a former ANC Youth League deputy president, holds an N6 in Public Management and a Certificate in Public Administration, with ongoing studies in Economics. Her background is more political than technical and this has shown in her time as Deputy Minister.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Her main achievements have been symbolic rather than structural. She acted as a liaison on mining Social and Labour Plans, officiating handovers of schools and water projects funded by mining houses. She also spoke on productivity at seminars, framing efficiency as community upliftment and represented South Africa abroad on mining labour issues. These efforts show commitment, but they are light-touch and peripheral to the Department's real levers like UIF, Compensation Fund, CCMA and labour activation programmes worth billions.



FAILURES



The challenges are stark, however. The UIF and Compensation Fund remain riddled with inefficiency (see Minister of Employment above), bleeding public confidence and value-for-money. Instead of confronting these failures, Mgcina praised departmental performance in Parliament, a response that looked tone-deaf to workers still waiting for payouts. Her productivity advocacy has yet to produce measurable gains and her overlap with other ministries further dilutes her impact.

PHUMZILE MGCINA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR (ANC)

GRADE: 58/100 - WEAK (WELL-MEANING, BUT LIGHT ON DELIVERY)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



To be more effective, she must move beyond ceremonial duties and focus on hard results: forcing accountability in UIF delivery, driving efficiency in Compensation Fund claims and tying mining SLPs directly to verifiable jobs and enterprise creation. Until then, her grade sits in the 50s which is a sincere but underwhelming in a portfolio that demands proof, not presence.

Her work on mining Social and Labour Plans supports section 24(b) of the Constitution, promoting sustainable development and community upliftment through the prism of safe environmental mining, while her advocacy for productivity and employment aligns with section 23(1), which guarantees fair labour practices. Her international representation also demonstrates respect for section 41(1), encouraging cooperative governance and engagement.

However, her failure to address inefficiencies in the UIF and Compensation Fund undermines section 195(1)(b) and (f), which require effective, transparent and accountable public administration. By praising poor departmental performance, she fell short of section 92(2)'s requirement for ministerial accountability.



ENOCH GODONGWANA - MINISTER OF FINANCE (ANC)

GRADE: 65/100 - MIXED (TECHNICALLY STEADY, POLITICALLY MISHANDLED VAT FIASCO)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Enoch Godongwana, who holds a Master of Science in Financial Economics from the University of London, entered the GNU cabinet with credibility as a pragmatic technocrat. His background in both organised labour and provincial finance gave him gravitas. Yet 2025 exposed his blind spots - particularly the mishandled Value Added Tax ("VAT") debacle that derailed fiscal planning.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Godongwana has kept debt broadly contained, with projections showing a peak around 77% of Gross Domestic Product ("GDP") and he resisted pressure to abandon inflation targeting. His Expenditure Review Committee identified billions in potential savings and Fitch Ratings affirmed South Africa's sovereign credit rating at "BB- Stable," citing Treasury's commitment to consolidation. He also launched a rules-based framework for drawing on Gold and Foreign Exchange Contingency Reserve Account ("GFECRA") gains, a controversial but disciplined step to reduce borrowing costs.



FAILURES



The real damage came from the VAT scandal. Attempting to raise VAT by one percentage point in two phases, Treasury stumbled legally and politically. The Western Cape High Court suspended the measure, citing procedural irregularities and Godongwana was forced into a humiliating retreat. The fiasco opened a R75 billion revenue hole, requiring a third budget revision and an unpopular fuel levy hike. Coalition partners accused him of punishing consumers, while critics noted that lavish allocations to non-essential items like VIP protection were barely touched.

ENOCH GODONGWANA - MINISTER OF FINANCE (ANC)

GRADE: 65/100 - MIXED (TECHNICALLY STEADY, POLITICALLY MISHANDLED VAT FIASCO)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



To be more effective, Godongwana must shift from cautious accounting to structural boldness by cutting waste visibly, enforcing performance contracts on state entities and channelling resources into sectors that directly expand growth and employment. For now, his grade slips into the **mid 60s** showing steady hands on debt, but politically tone-deaf and too timid in pruning fat from the state.

The Minister's commitment to debt stabilisation and transparent fiscal frameworks aligns with section 215(1) of the Constitution, which requires national budgets to promote transparency, accountability and effective financial management. His fiscal restraint and use of GFECRA proceeds within defined rules also demonstrate adherence to section 195(1)(b) and (f) - ensuring efficient, economic and accountable administration.

However, the VAT controversy marked a serious constitutional misstep. The Western Cape High Court's suspension of the increase for procedural irregularities highlighted a breach of section 195(1)(e) which requires public participation in policy formulation, as well as requiring responsiveness to public needs. By neglecting adequate consultation and failing to ensure due legislative process, Treasury also undermined the section 1(d) founding value of accountability.



Constitutionally, Godongwana's stewardship embodies technical stability but limited democratic sensitivity.

DAVID MASONDO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE (ANC)

GRADE: 59/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (TECHNOCRAT WITHOUT BITE)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



David Masondo, with a PhD in Political Economy from New York University and a long record in the ANC's economic policy structures, is the archetypal technocrat. He has the academic grounding and policy sophistication to make a difference, but his track record as Deputy Minister of Finance has been more about quiet process than visible outcomes.

ACHIEVEMENTS



His achievements are not trivial. He has overseen the development of the Public Procurement Act of 2024, a long-overdue reform intended to curb tender corruption and unify procurement rules. He also chairs elements of the Presidential State-Owned Enterprises Council, helping design turnaround frameworks for Transnet and Eskom. At the international level, he helped secure loans from the World Bank for renewable energy and skills projects, while representing South Africa in G20 finance deputies' discussions on climate finance. In addition, his chairmanship of the Public Investment Corporation, custodian of civil service pensions, has brought stability after years of governance scandals.



FAILURES



Yet these wins are undermined by the pace of change. Procurement reform is still waiting on regulations, meaning the old loopholes persist. Transnet and other state-owned enterprises continue to slide, despite endless "turnaround" talk. The state bank initiative remains stuck in concept. Meanwhile, Treasury continues to pump billions into underperforming entities without a clear, results-based framework.

DAVID MASONDO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE (ANC)

GRADE: 59/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (TECHNOCRAT WITHOUT BITE)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



The department need to be tying every bailout rand to measurable delivery, publishing procurement compliance dashboards and demanding transparent outcomes from the Public Investment Corporation. Until then, we grade him at **59/100**.

His leadership in developing the **Public Procurement Act of 2024** aligns with section 217(1) of the Constitution, which requires that public procurement be fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective. His work on the Public Investment Corporation also supports section 195(1)(b) and (f), promoting accountable and efficient public administration.

However, the absence of implementation frameworks and measurable results weakens compliance with section 195(1)(d) on transparency and section 92(2), which demands that members of the executive be accountable to Parliament for performance.



ASHOR SARUPEN - DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE (DA)

GRADE: 71/100 - GOOD (WATCHDOG WITH IMPACT, BUT DELIVERY GAP REMAINS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Ashor Sarupen, armed with degrees in business and strategy from the University of the Witwatersrand and the Gordon Institute of Business Science, has made his mark as the DA's sharp-eyed fiscal hawk inside Treasury. His academic grounding in strategy and finance complements his reputation for forensic scrutiny of public spending and he has channelled that into concrete initiatives.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Sarupen has leaned into Treasury's hard-nosed credibility agenda: spending reviews, transparency and conditional funding. In his 8 July 2025 Budget Vote speech, he pushed performance-based grants that crowd-in private finance, stricter accountability for transfers and disaster-risk financing tools. This signal shifts toward value for money. The Presidency and Treasury also announced a joint committee to identify wasteful, inefficient and underperforming programmes and Sarupen has publicly aligned with this drive. Independent reporting to Parliament indicates spending reviews could phase out billions from low-impact programmes over time. This is evidence that the knife is at least being sharpened.



FAILURES



Still, the gap between identification and execution remains. Much of the flagged waste is tied up in contracts or politically sensitive programmes, meaning the actual baseline hasn't fallen nearly as fast as the headlines suggest. Treasury's 2025 budget still had to raise a fuel levy and shuffle priorities to fill revenue gaps, with limited evidence that savings have yet been redirected into infrastructure or job creation. His combative style (like slamming cadre deployment or questioning public job schemes) has reinforced his watchdog role but sometimes inflamed coalition tensions.

ASHOR SARUPEN - DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE (DA)

GRADE: 71/100 - GOOD (WATCHDOG WITH IMPACT, BUT DELIVERY GAP REMAINS)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

B-

Sarupen earns a **71/100**. He has injected discipline and transparency into Treasury and pushed through visible reforms, but his ultimate test is execution and turning identified billions into reallocated, growth-driving expenditure.

His focus on performance-based budgeting, spending reviews and transparency directly advances section 215(1) of the Constitution, which requires that national budgets promote transparency, accountability and the effective financial management of the economy. His advocacy for conditional grants and fiscal discipline also gives effect to section 195(1)(b) and (f), which demand efficient, accountable and development-oriented public administration.

However, the slow translation of identified savings into tangible service delivery outcomes weakens compliance with section 195(1)(d), as this lack of timely execution can be said to undermine the constitutional requirement of fair service delivery. His combative stance on governance reform aligns with the section 1(d) founding value of accountability, though it sometimes strains cooperative governance under section 41(1)(h), which requires cooperation based on mutual trust between spheres of government.



DION GEORGE - MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES & ENVIRONMENT (DA)

GRADE: 76/100 - GOOD (EVIDENCE-LED CONSERVATIONIST WITH CLEAR WINS, BUT EXECUTION FRICTION AND AN EARLY EXIT DILUTE THE SCORE)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



(B)

Dr Dion Travers George moved from a long stint as the Democratic Alliance's finance lead into the green portfolio when appointed minister on 3 July 2024. Official bios list a BA (Wits), BA (Hons) (UNISA), MBA (Wits) and advanced municipal governance certification; several profiles also credit him with a Doctor of Business Leadership (UNISA), aligning with his "Dr" honorific.

ACHIEVEMENTS

George's headline win was brokering a science-backed agreement to protect endangered African penguins, formalised through new fishing restrictions near key colonies. He also advanced enforcement against wildlife crime, with record abalone seizures under his watch. Internationally, he used South Africa's G20 presidency to secure consensus on biodiversity and plastics reduction, while domestically he pushed the Climate Change Act of 2024 over the line after years of stalling.

George's 2025/26 Budget Vote was frank about constraints: DFFE received R9,08 billion (just 0,35% of the national appropriation) representing a real 1,4% cut vs the prior year. He committed nearly half of the medium-term envelope (about R14,5 billion) to delivery-line "goods and services" (notably the Working for Water/Fire/Waste programmes and forestry and waste strategies) and over R5,5 billion in transfers to entities (SANParks, SANBI, iSimangaliso, SA Weather Service).



DION GEORGE - MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES & ENVIRONMENT (DA)

GRADE: **76/100** - GOOD (EVIDENCE-LED CONSERVATIONIST WITH CLEAR WINS, BUT EXECUTION FRICTION AND AN EARLY EXIT DILUTE THE SCORE)

(B)

FAILURES

Yet the portfolio remains fraught. The Karpowership authorisation fight exposed both political and regulatory tensions: George won plaudits for demanding rigorous environmental assessments, but delays frustrated energy players and risked painting him as a blocker of investment. Courts are also tightening oversight, as seen in the annulment of Eskom's Richards Bay gas plant approval, raising the bar for DFFE processes.

Most significantly, George's performance assessment must be "watered down" by the fact that his term ended abruptly in a GNU mini-reshuffle: on 12 November 2025, President Cyril Ramaphosa removed him from the portfolio and appointed Willem (Willie) Aucamp in his place, following a DA-initiated change to its executive line-up. Media reporting linked the DA's move to internal conduct/management concerns, including allegations of staff mistreatment and failures to comply with party and cabinet expectations - claims that remain disputed in the public domain but nonetheless damaged administrative continuity and political capital.



George brings data-driven pragmatism and an investor-literate lens to an under-funded department. The penguin deal is a genuine biodiversity success; the budget stance is candid and more disciplined; and international positioning is deft. But legal headwinds and resource constraints still blunt impact. At **76/100**, he is one of the stronger GNU performers who is respected, reform-minded, but still tested by the grind of execution.

DION GEORGE - MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES & ENVIRONMENT (DA)

GRADE: 76/100 - GOOD (EVIDENCE-LED CONSERVATIONIST WITH CLEAR WINS, BUT EXECUTION FRICTION AND AN EARLY EXIT DILUTE THE SCORE)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT 

(B)

Dion George generally aligned with constitutional obligations under sections 24(b) and 195, advancing environmental protection, transparent budgeting and evidence-based administration. His enforcement actions and insistence on rigorous impact assessments reflect compliance with the state's duty in section 7(2) to protect rights and prevent ecological harm. However, the circumstances surrounding his November 2025 removal - allegations of staff mistreatment and concerns about internal management - raise potential tensions with the ethical standards required by section 96(1)-(2), which demand integrity and prohibit conduct compromising the dignity of the office. Overall, he substantially met constitutional duties, though governance concerns diluted his record.



NAREND SINGH - DEPUTY MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES & ENVIRONMENT (IFP)

GRADE: 70/100 - FAIR (EXPERIENCED BRIDGE-BUILDER; DECENT DELIVERY, MODEST AMBITION)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Narend Singh is a long-serving Inkatha Freedom Party parliamentarian and former KwaZulu-Natal MEC. His academic profile blends commerce and public policy: Bachelor of Commerce (University of Durban-Westville), Post-Graduate Diploma in Economic Principles (University of London) and a Master's in Public Policy/Management (University of London), with a later post-grad diploma in Public Policy & African Studies (University of Johannesburg).

ACHIEVEMENTS



Singh has been most effective on nuts-and-bolts implementation and outreach. In his 27 June 2025 Budget Vote address, he put hard numbers to the Environmental Programmes portfolio: 70 366 work opportunities (Expanded Public Works Programme), 58 wetlands rehabilitated, 496 000+ hectares of alien plants cleared and 1 777 wildfires suppressed by Working on Fire. He also confirmed R2,869 billion for Environmental Programmes in 2025/26 and that roughly 32% of the department's medium-term envelope flows to this delivery line. Importantly, Singh announced a shift to in-house delivery to cut intermediaries and "save the department millions annually". He has also driven convening power, like hosting the Southern African Elephant Indaba in August 2025 to coordinate responses to escalating human-elephant conflict.

B-



FAILURES



The problem is that Singh's record is largely supportive and heavy on inputs rather than outcomes. Clearing hectares of alien vegetation or issuing forestry permits is useful, but without tracking cost-effectiveness and long-term sustainability, they risk becoming temporary gestures rather than structural reforms. Singh is also risk-averse, avoiding firm opposition to controversial projects like coal mine expansions. His dual role as IFP Chief Whip leaves limited bandwidth, slowing his responsiveness.

NAREND SINGH - DEPUTY MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES & ENVIRONMENT (IFP)

**GRADE: 70/100 - FAIR (EXPERIENCED BRIDGE-BUILDER;
DECENT DELIVERY, MODEST AMBITION)**

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

B-

Singh is an experienced, steady deputy who adds value through outreach, programme focus and an overdue push for in-house execution and tougher compliance. With sharper measurement, transparent consequences and verified savings that visibly bolster frontline capacity, he could lift this from solid to strong performance. For now: **70/100**.

His leadership in environmental programmes aligns directly with section 24(b) of the Constitution, which obliges the state to protect the environment for present and future generations through sustainable use of natural resources. By expanding public works, rehabilitating wetlands and promoting in-house delivery, he also upholds section 195(1)(b) and (f), which call for efficient, accountable and development-oriented public administration.

However, his reluctance to challenge environmentally risky projects and the absence of clear outcome metrics weaken adherence to section 195(1)(e), demanding that people's needs indeed be responded to.



BERNICE SWARTS - DEPUTY MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES & ENVIRONMENT (ANC)

GRADE: 64/100 - FAIR (INCLUSIVE INTENTIONS, LIMITED SCALE, WEAK ON EFFICIENCY)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Bernice Swarts, a former Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure and now Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, holds qualifications in social sciences and public administration. She entered Cabinet in 2024 with a strong political grounding but without deep sectoral expertise in environmental policy.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Her contribution has focused on inclusivity and empowerment. Swarts championed a Women in Wildlife Economy programme that trained 100 rural women in ecotourism and guiding and she promoted the Waste Picker Integration Plan, giving informal recyclers uniforms, registration and access to facilities.

FAILURES

Swarts has concentrated on “last-mile” delivery and inclusion. In her Budget Vote 2025/26 remarks she announced a national e-waste collection pilot (already launched in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West) with around 30 tonnes collected from rural municipalities, leveraging the Extended Producer Responsibility regulations to turn take-back vouchers into behaviour change. However, the needle has not moved to where it should be and the failure on the Department’s part is not translating enough promise into reality.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

The **66/100** reflects meaningful community work and some promising operational pledges. Her empowerment of women and informal workers through the Women in Wildlife Economy and Waste Picker Integration Plan gives effect to section 9(2), which allows for measures to advance substantive equality and section 24(b), which obliges the state to secure sustainable development and environmental protection. Her focus on community inclusion and e-waste collection also supports section 195(1)(e), promoting a people-centred and responsive public service.

AARON MOTSOLEDI - MINISTER OF HEALTH (ANC)

GRADE: 50/100 - POOR (EXPERIENCED OPERATOR, BUT DOUBLING-DOWN ON A RISKY NHI MODEL AND UNEVEN DELIVERY IS BAD FOR SA)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

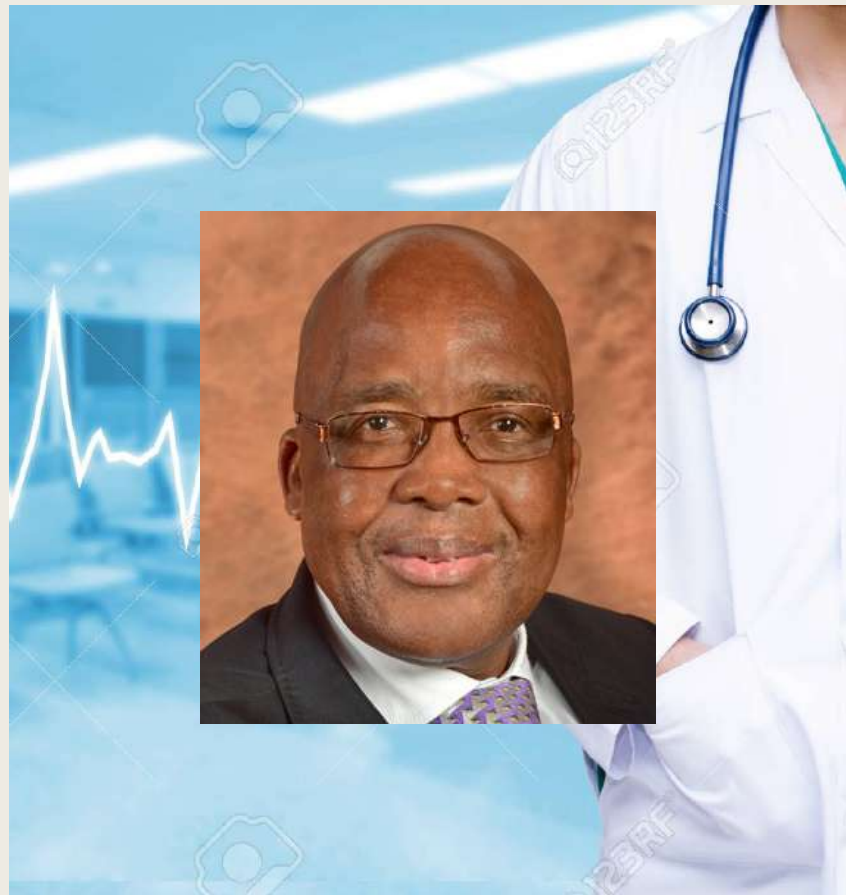


Dr Pakishe Aaron Motsoaledi is a medical doctor (MBChB, University of Natal) and a veteran administrator who previously served as Health Minister (2009-2019) and returned to the portfolio on 3 July 2024 after a stint at Home Affairs. His long tenure gives him institutional memory and political clout.

ACHIEVEMENTS



In 2025 he tabled the Health Budget Vote and positioned three priorities: laying a foundation for improving the public system in preparation for NHI, tackling priority diseases and reforms in the private sector. The department's core allocation for 2025/26 is roughly R64,2-R64,8 billion, with an additional R6,7 billion from Treasury to reverse years of austerity - money largely directed at infrastructure backlogs and staffing pressures.



FAILURES



He has highlighted the ballooning burden of medico-legal claims and begun tightening case management and mediation - yet these still cost over R1,1 billion since April 2024 and the department's own annual report flags late payments and contingent liabilities.

Now, the centrepiece of his agenda - the NHI Act signed in May 2024 - faces multiple court challenges from funders and civil society over affordability, constitutionality and practicality. This uncertainty clouds planning and risks crowding out practical, incremental improvements.

AARON MOTSOLEDI - MINISTER OF HEALTH (ANC)

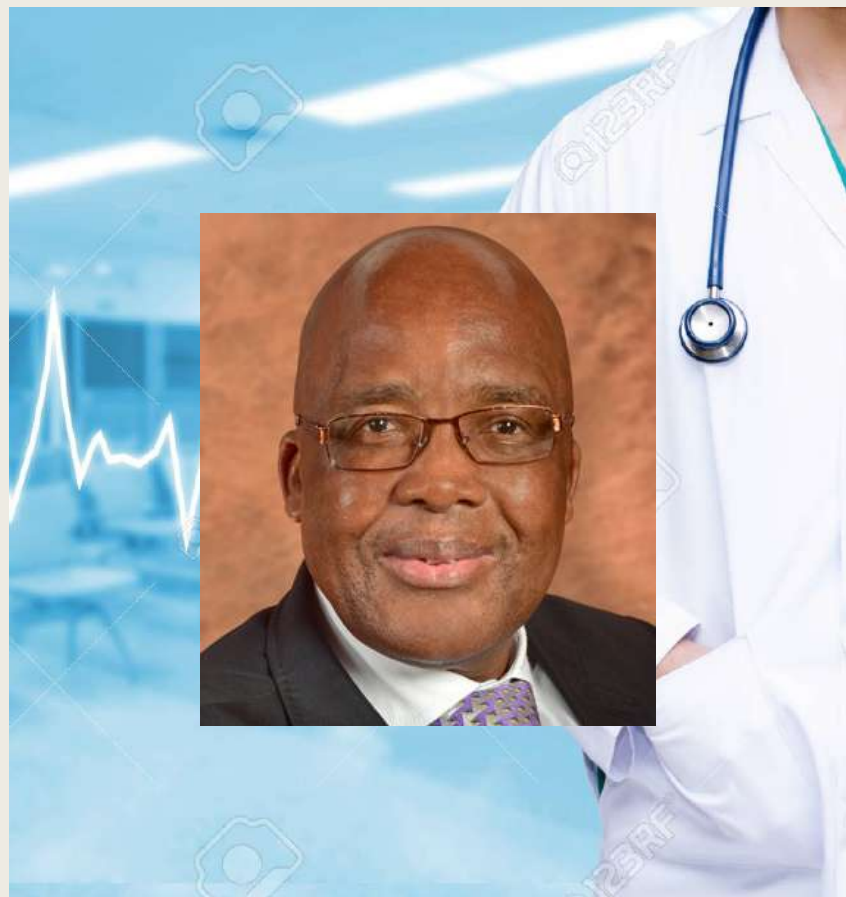
GRADE: 50/100 - POOR (EXPERIENCED OPERATOR, BUT DOUBLING-DOWN ON A RISKY NHI MODEL AND UNEVEN DELIVERY IS BAD FOR SA)



On staffing, progress is limited relative to need. Budget 2025 made room for only about 800 unemployed doctors alongside 9 300 other health workers, while vacancy rates and losses of clinicians remain high, thus leaving persistent service gaps at facility level. Announcements of new posts have not fully closed these deficits.

On disease control, measles outbreaks continued into 2025 and this was an indicator that routine immunisation coverage and catch-up efforts are still uneven.

While the top-up for infrastructure is welcome, spending quality remains a concern: the department's 2023/24 report records late supplier payments (including medico-legal invoices) and material capital commitments. The are symptoms of execution strain. Without stronger provincial delivery oversight, capital and HR allocations risk diluting into delays and litigation rather than measurable patient outcomes, like shorter queues, stocked pharmacies and functioning equipment.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Dr Aaron Motsoaledi brings some momentum on infrastructure and HR relief. But pursuing an NHI funding model that is contested, fiscally opaque and litigation-heavy, while core basics like staffing, maintenance, procurement discipline still lag, lowers the score. A course-correction toward transparent, outcomes-based reforms would lift performance. Until then, the risk is a high-stakes structural bet that diverts focus and resources from fix-able delivery failures. How will South Africa pay for NHI? For now, we grade him **50/100**.

AARON MOTSOLEDI - MINISTER OF HEALTH (ANC)

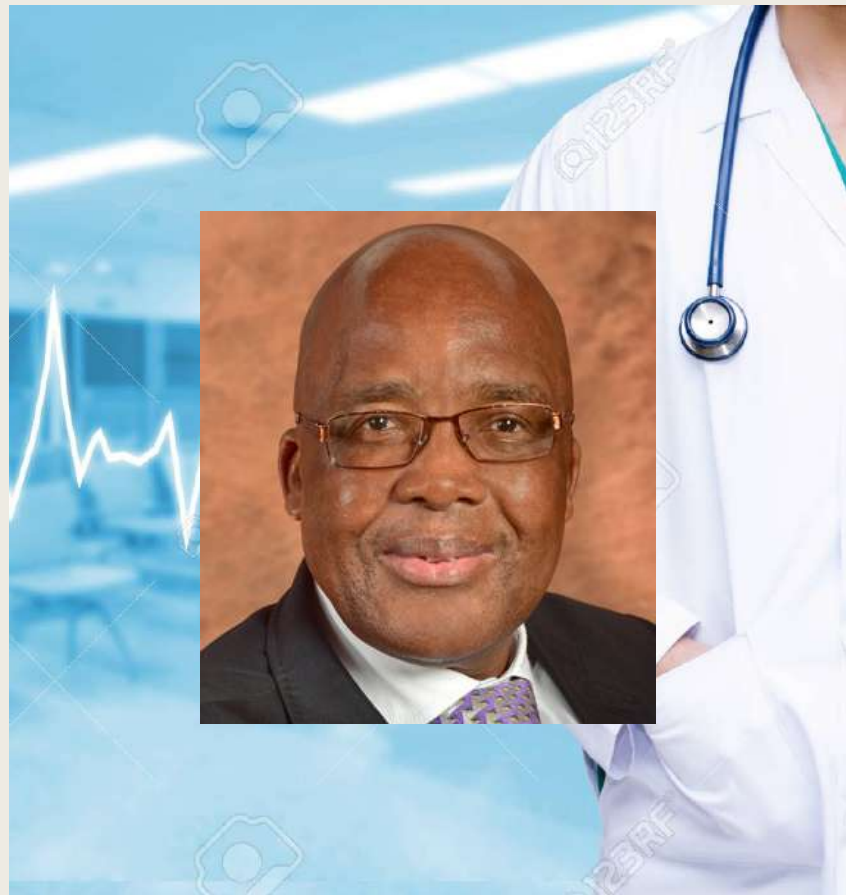
GRADE: 50/100 - POOR (EXPERIENCED OPERATOR, BUT DOUBLING-DOWN ON A RISKY NHI MODEL AND UNEVEN DELIVERY IS BAD FOR SA)



Dr Aaron Motsoaledi's constitutional alignment as Minister of Health reflects experience tempered by significant legal and governance risks. His push for the National Health Insurance framework stems from section 27(1)(a) of the Constitution, which guarantees everyone the right to access healthcare services and section 27(2), which obliges the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve this right progressively. In principle, the NHI's intent aligns with this constitutional duty - universal access and equity.

However, its fiscal opacity and the numerous court challenges it faces raise major concerns under section 195(1)(f) (accountability), section 215(1) (transparency in budgeting) and potentially section 41(1)(c) (cooperative governance between national and provincial health systems). Persistent service failures - staff shortages, procurement lapses and weak infrastructure oversight - also suggest poor adherence to section 195(1)(b), which demands efficient and effective resource use.

The ongoing medico-legal claims crisis further undermines section 195(1)(d) as settlements erode funds meant for service delivery. Constitutionally, Motsoaledi's intentions are rights-driven but procedurally direly fragile.



JOE PHAAHLA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH (ANC)

GRADE: 48/100 - UNDERSTATED OPERATOR, BUT TIED TO AN UNAFFORDABLE NHI PUSH

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr Mathume Joseph “Joe” Phaahla is a medical doctor (MBChB, University of Natal/KwaZulu-Natal) and veteran public servant who served as Health Minister (2021-2024) before returning as Deputy Minister on 30 June 2024.

ACHIEVEMENTS



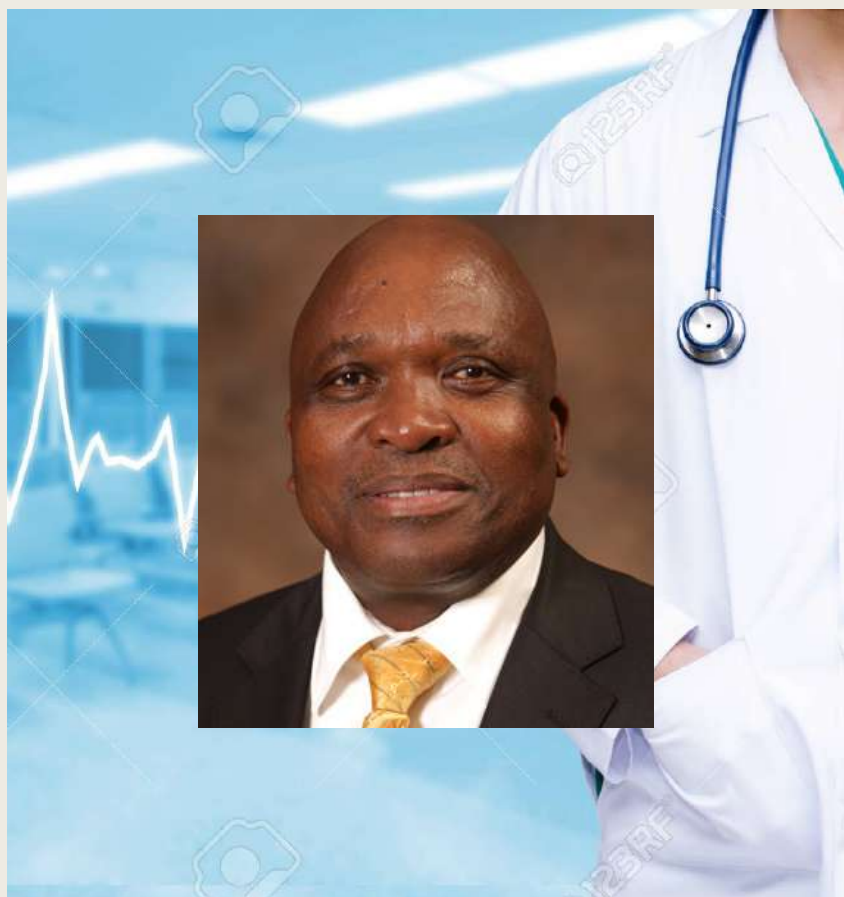
In his 2025/26 Budget Vote remarks, Phaahla re-committed the department to implementing the NHI Act “despite court challenges,” and highlighted operational programmes like cervical-cancer prevention (HPV vaccination and expanded screening), malaria control and a stepped-up non-communicable diseases campaign. He also flagged that only about 5% of the health budget goes to mental health - an imbalance he says requires reform.

FAILURES



The core strategic bet - full-steam NHI - remains fiscally and legally contested. Multiple challenges have been lodged from funders, civil society and opposition, with credible concerns about constitutionality, centralisation and the tax burden.

Health spending is rising over the MTEF (with estimates from R277bn in 2024/25 to R329bn by 2027/28) alongside tax hikes to fund pressures. Yet, basics still underperform, like medicine stock-outs, staff vacancies, uneven maintenance. Ring-fencing more for highly visible primary-care outcomes, enforcing provincial accountability and accelerating transparent procurement reforms would yield better returns than building a mega-payer while execution capacity is thin.



JOE PHAAHLA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH (ANC)

GRADE: **48/100** - UNDERSTATED OPERATOR, BUT TIED TO AN UNAFFORDABLE NHI PUSH

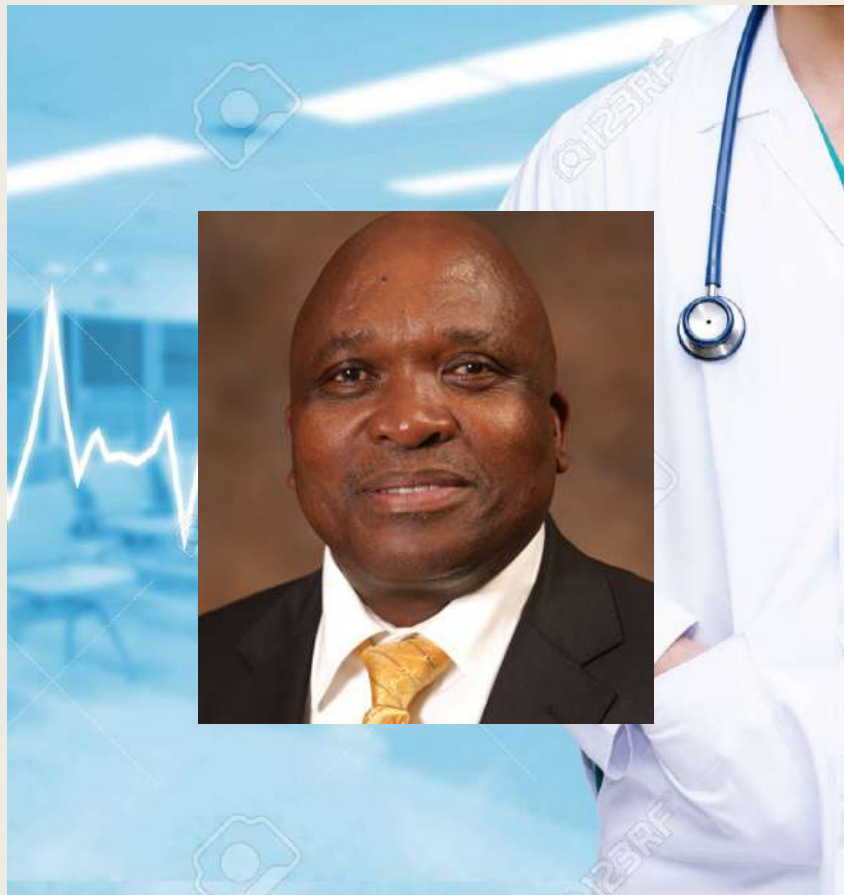
CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



As Minister, Phaahla shepherded the NHI Bill through Parliament; as Deputy, he remains its chief internal champion. But pushing a single-buyer scheme while provinces wrestle with medico-legal liabilities, HR bottlenecks and infrastructure backlogs risks spreading resources thinner.

Steady and experienced, but anchored to a financing model South Africa likely cannot afford right now. Until Phaahla pivots from system-rebuild rhetoric to hard, auditable delivery (and answers the basic question: who pays for NHI and with what revenue headroom?), his impact will lag the scale of our health crisis. For now, **48/100**.

His push on HPV vaccination, malaria control and NCDs advances section 27(1)(a) (access to healthcare) and respects the section 10 guarantee of dignity in care. Yet championing NHI “despite court challenges” strains the duties of section 195(1)(b), (d) and (f) - efficient, transparent and accountable administration - and, given the unresolved funding model, risks clashing with section 215(1)’s demand for transparent, sustainable budgeting. Persistent stock-outs, vacancies and maintenance failures weaken realisation of section 27(2) and expose weak cooperative governance with provinces under section 41(1)(c).



SISISI TOLASHE - MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (ANC)

GRADE: **48/100** - WEAK (GOOD INTENT, POOR EXECUTION AND TROUBLING JUDGMENT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Sisisi Tolashe, a seasoned ANC organiser and current President of the ANC Women's League, ascended to the Ministry of Social Development in July 2024 after serving as Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. Though politically experienced, her lack of a verified tertiary qualification highlights the ongoing trend of political appointments trumping technical expertise in key social portfolios.

ACHIEVEMENTS



On the numbers, 2025/26 appropriates roughly R294 billion to the department, of which R284 billion (96%) are direct transfers to about 27 million beneficiaries; SASSA's administration receives R24,7 billion over the MTEF, with additional allocations to councils and entities. That framing is clear and fiscally transparent.

Tolashe's early tenure showed promise. She championed the modernisation of the grant system, introducing biometric verification and a national audit that uncovered over 200 000 questionable grants - potentially saving the state more than R1 billion annually. Her efforts to rationalise the NPO sector led to the deregistration of thousands of dormant entities, improving accountability. She also advanced the Basic Income Support ("BIS") proposal as a long-term replacement for the COVID-19 relief grant, coupling it with work-linked pathways to encourage self-reliance.



SISISI TOLASHE - MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (ANC)

GRADE: **48/100** - WEAK (GOOD INTENT, POOR EXECUTION AND TROUBLING JUDGMENT)

FAILURES

However, delivery has been marred by poor governance and administrative chaos. The 2025 scandal involving her appointment of a 22-year-old as Chief of Staff - without requisite experience and allegedly connected to her adviser - exposed troubling patronage instincts and eroded public trust. Parallel to this, the Postbank debacle left hundreds of thousands of elderly beneficiaries stranded during grant payment delays, a crisis that underscored systemic weakness and managerial inertia.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

For Tolashe to succeed, she must shift from political loyalty to professional excellence by appointing competent managers, enforcing measurable outcomes and ensuring social spending yields long-term empowerment rather than dependency. Her execution has been uneven and credibility damaged - earning her a **48/100**.

Her proposed **Basic Income Support ("BIS") scheme** also gives expression to section 27(1)(c), which guarantees the right to social security. However, her patronage-linked appointment controversy and the Postbank crisis violate the same constitutional provisions. The mishandling of social grant payments directly impairs the section 27(2) obligation to take reasonable measures to realise socio-economic rights progressively, while poor managerial oversight conflicts with section 41(1)(c), which mandates effective, transparent, accountable and coherent cooperative and coordinated governance. Her ministry touches the lives of millions, yet her leadership has blurred the line between empowerment and inefficiency.



GANIEF HENDRICKS - DEPUTY MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (AL JAMA-AH)

GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (DISCREET FACILITATOR; NEEDS FIRMER GRIP ON PAYMENTS AND OUTCOMES)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Appointed on 3 July 2024, Ganief Hendricks brings uncommon breadth: Al Jama-ah party leader, ex-City of Cape Town councillor, former MWEB human-resources director and long-time civic organiser linked to Radio 786. He studied at the University of the Western Cape, earning a BA and an Honours in Industrial Psychology. These are useful for a portfolio that lives and dies by systems, staffing and service design.

ACHIEVEMENTS



As deputy, he has worked largely behind the scenes on delegated streams, like substance abuse, HIV/Aids, older persons, disability and families/parenting where incremental fixes matter more than headlines. His public remarks and stakeholder walkabouts show a consistent bias for practical access, focusing on things such as fewer queues, clearer communication, better ICT rails. That dovetails with the portfolio's 2025/26 plan to modernise grant administration and tighten integrity controls.



FAILURES



The weak flank remains payments. The Postbank/SASSA card migration and contracting uncertainty have repeatedly risked beneficiary anxiety. Extensions now allow both black and legacy gold cards to function during a 12-15-month changeover and a fresh determination has kicked the institutional stalemate to the Presidency. But, the optics are of drift rather than control. Here a deputy minister should be visibly setting deadlines, enforcing service-level penalties and communicating proactively to pensioners and caregivers.

GANIEF HENDRICKS - DEPUTY MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (AL JAMA-AH)

GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (DISCREET FACILITATOR; NEEDS FIRMER GRIP ON PAYMENTS AND OUTCOMES)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Hendricks' broad managerial experience, credibility in community networks and practical temperament make him well-suited to a complex welfare portfolio. Yet his subdued public presence and limited grip on SASSA's payment systems constrain his impact. To raise performance, he must take visible command of the Postbank transition, introduce transparent performance dashboards and drive pilot projects linking grants to real work and enterprise opportunities. Until he translates quiet diligence into visible delivery and measurable outcomes, he remains competent but not transformative - earning **60/100**.

His focus on service access, digital efficiency and integrity controls aligns with section 195(1)(b) and (f) of the Constitution, which require effective, accountable and development-oriented administration. His emphasis on support for vulnerable groups also upholds section 27(1)(c), guaranteeing the right to social security and section 10, affirming dignity for all beneficiaries.

However, recurring instability in SASSA and Postbank payment systems weakens adherence to section 195(1)(d), which demands timely service delivery and undermines the section 27(2) obligation to take reasonable measures to realise social rights progressively.



GAYTON MCKENZIE - MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS & CULTURE (PA)

GRADE: 62/100 - MODERATE, NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
(NOISY REFORMER WITH FLAIR, BUT GOVERNANCE STILL WEAK)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Gayton McKenzie's appointment in July 2024 brought a burst of momentum to a department previously seen as stagnant. A former inmate turned entrepreneur, author and politician, McKenzie rose from the Central Karoo mayorship to Cabinet without any verified post-matric qualification. Yet, his life story of grit and reinvention gives him credibility with ordinary South Africans, even as it exposes his lack of technical grounding in cultural or sporting administration.

ACHIEVEMENTS



He secured a R6,3 billion budget for 2025/26 - R1,2 billion for sport, R1,7 billion for arts and R2,7 billion for heritage - arguing that these sectors can drive social unity and growth if run efficiently. He has pushed visible initiatives such as R82 million for Video Assistant Referee ("VAR") technology in local football, upgrades to libraries and sports hubs and improved transparency around departmental spending. His enthusiasm for mega-events like a Formula One return and a 2036 Olympic bid has captured public imagination, while his attendance at international cultural forums and heritage repatriation talks projects confidence on the global stage.



GAYTON MCKENZIE - MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS & CULTURE (PA)

GRADE: **62/100** - MODERATE, NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
(*NOISY REFORMER WITH FLAIR, BUT GOVERNANCE STILL WEAK*)

FAILURES

However, McKenzie's strengths in communication and branding are offset by weak governance execution. He has inherited entities plagued by irregular expenditure (over R1,3 billion flagged by auditors) and entrenched mismanagement within sports federations such as SAFA and Athletics SA. His "quick-fix" instincts - whether promoting betting companies to fund sports or threatening to defund underperforming teams - betray a populist streak that can overshadow serious policy work. Critics warn that his partnerships with gambling firms normalise risky behaviour among low-income youth, while his focus on high-profile projects risks diverting funds from grassroots sports and rural arts infrastructure.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

To improve, McKenzie must replace noise with discipline. His trademark bluster - the public threats, social-media tirades and headline-grabbing challenges to critics - may entertain followers but undermines the credibility of his office. A minister's job is not to play politics or perform outrage; it is to deliver measurable results. If McKenzie channels his energy into execution rather than spectacle - turning slogans into systems and deadlines - he could transform Sport, Arts and Culture into a dynamic growth engine. Until then, the ministry remains louder than it is effective - a portfolio driven by noise more than numbers. **62/100**.



GAYTON MCKENZIE - MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS & CULTURE (PA)

GRADE: 62/100 - MODERATE, NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
(NOISY REFORMER WITH FLAIR, BUT GOVERNANCE STILL WEAK)



We see that Gayton McKenzie's constitutional record reflects a minister animated by purpose but constrained by governance discipline. His efforts to expand access to sport, culture and heritage align with section 30 and section 31 of the Constitution, which guarantee cultural participation and the protection of communities' cultural and linguistic rights. His focus on using sport and the arts to promote unity and inclusion also resonates with the section 9(2) imperative to advance substantive equality through positive measures. Furthermore, his push for transparency in departmental spending gives effect to section 195(1)(f), requiring an accountable administration.

However, persistent irregular expenditure and impulsive partnerships, such as with betting companies, undermine section 195(1)(b) and (d), which demand efficiency, transparency and ethical conduct, without bias. The lack of oversight over federations and heritage entities also weakens compliance with section 41(1)(c), which calls for cooperative, coordinated governance.

Thus, McKenzie embodies energy and inclusivity but risks substituting showmanship for systemic reform. His populist rhetoric may ignite enthusiasm, but it often clashes with the constitutional expectation of rational, accountable and equitable governance.



PEACE MABE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS & CULTURE (ANC)

GRADE: 59/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (STEADY BUT SUBDUED; MUST TURN ACTIVITY INTO ACHIEVEMENT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Bertha “Peace” Mabe, a long-serving ANC parliamentarian with a BA and Honours in Public Administration from the University of Pretoria, has the credentials and experience to strengthen the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture’s administrative backbone. Yet, since her appointment in July 2024, she has largely remained a background figure. She is present, diligent, but rarely decisive.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Mabe’s public role has focused on stakeholder engagement and representing South Africa in the G20 culture track (including ceremonial duties as SA assumed the culture agenda), signalling continuity while the minister courts big sponsorships and events.

There are green shoots. Internally, DSAC has pushed more transparent programme lines; externally, the portfolio has backed visible deliverables such as the R82 million allocation to kick-start VAR in local football - an initiative with near-term public impact if executed well. A proactive deputy could make sure the money buys working systems, trained officials and maintained venues rather than headlines.



PEACE MABE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF SPORT, ARTS & CULTURE (ANC)

GRADE: 59/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (STEADY BUT SUBDUED; MUST TURN ACTIVITY INTO ACHIEVEMENT)

FAILURES

But Mabe's imprint is still faint where it matters most: governance and results. DSAC entities continue to exhibit compliance weaknesses - the National Arts Council's latest annual report discloses irregular-expenditure and non-compliance notes - underscoring the need for tighter oversight from the political principals. NAC At the same time, funding tensions persist across the system (for example, pressure on SASCOC and federations amid shifting allocations), which demands firmer prioritisation toward grassroots facilities and athlete pipelines rather than conference-room engagements.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

To raise her impact, Mabe must seize ownership of defined deliverables - particularly grassroots sports and township arts. She should drive measurable outcomes: audited budgets, shorter grant turnaround times and a "50 Facilities in 50 Districts" plan. A firmer hand on procurement and entity governance would elevate her from a dependable assistant to an executive force. Until she trades quiet participation for visible performance, her tenure remains steady - but forgettable. **59/100.**

Her engagement in the G20 culture track and DSAC's internal transparency push align with section 195(1)(b) and (d) of the Constitution, which demand efficient use of resources and the provision of services in an impartial and fair manner. Her support for inclusive cultural programmes also echoes sections 30 and 31, which protect cultural participation and community heritage, while her attention to grassroots infrastructure speaks to the developmental values in section 195(1)(c). Yet her limited assertiveness in addressing irregular expenditure and weak oversight of DSAC entities undermines those same constitutional imperatives.



PATRICIA DE LILLE - MINISTER OF TOURISM (GOOD)

GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (CREDIBILITY RESTORED; EXECUTION STILL UNEVEN)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Patricia de Lille's appointment as Minister of Tourism in 2023 marked a deliberate effort to stabilise a sector still reeling from the pandemic and reputational damage. A trained chemical technologist with a diploma in Industrial Relations from Damelin, she built her career in the trade-union movement before becoming Cape Town's mayor and later a cabinet minister in Public Works and Infrastructure. This mix of technical grounding and administrative toughness has shaped her pragmatic, results-driven approach to Tourism. Tourism is a portfolio long plagued by mismanagement and inertia.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Under her stewardship, international arrivals climbed to 8,9 million in 2024, with domestic tourism expanding by nearly 15% in early 2025, injecting billions into local economies. She has pushed aggressively for streamlined visas through the new Electronic Travel Authorisation system, repositioning South Africa as a more open and investor-friendly destination. Her route-development strategy, coupled with the message that "tourism is economic policy," has restored confidence among airlines and investors alike. These are tangible wins in a department often criticised for red tape and grand speeches unbacked by delivery.



Yet De Lille's most defining moments have come from her intolerance for institutional decay. She scrapped the ill-fated Tottenham Hotspur sponsorship and later dissolved the SA Tourism Board for governance failures. This was wise in signalling that credibility matters more than convenience. However, the turbulence that followed those interventions underscored the difficulty of rebuilding a professional bureaucracy in an environment resistant to accountability.

PATRICIA DE LILLE - MINISTER OF TOURISM (GOOD)

GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (CREDIBILITY RESTORED; EXECUTION STILL UNEVEN)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



B-

For all her reforms, the sector still lags pre-Covid volumes and trails African peers. Safety fears, urban decay and slow project execution continue to blunt competitiveness. De Lille's instinct to intervene decisively is admirable, but the next step demands delivery discipline: turning pledges into functioning projects, investments into jobs and marketing into measurable market share. If she can pair her administrative courage with tighter performance management and faster execution, South African tourism could finally shift from recovery to sustained expansion. Her **70/100** reflects a minister who has largely restored trust, but must now translate that trust into growth.

She has been decisive and her decisive interventions - scrapping the Tottenham Hotspur deal and **dissolving a dysfunctional SA Tourism Board** - directly advanced section 195(1)(f) of the Constitution, which demands accountability in public administration. Her insistence on credible governance and fiscal prudence also reinforced section 217(1), ensuring that public procurement is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective.

By prioritising inclusive growth through visa reform, domestic route expansion and small enterprise development, De Lille upheld the section 22 right to freely choose one's trade or occupation and section 9(2)'s call for substantive equality through opportunity creation. Yet, persistent delays in project implementation and lingering safety concerns undermine section 195(1)(b) and (c), which require efficient, development-oriented service delivery.



MAKHOTSO "MAGGIE" SOTYU - DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM (ANC)

GRADE: 62/100 - FAIR (STEADY PERFORMER WITH LIMITED INITIATIVE)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr. Makhotso "Maggie" Soty is one of South Africa's longest-serving deputy ministers. She seems dependable, methodical and occasionally too cautious for the urgency her portfolio demands. With a PhD in Administration and a political career that began on the factory floor and grew through the union ranks, she embodies an older generation of civil servant that is experienced, loyal and steeped in process. Her technical grounding gives her a steady hand in administration, but in a ministry as dynamic as Tourism, steadiness alone no longer moves the needle.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Soty has played a stabilising role in a department recovering from governance scandals and market shocks. She has expanded the Tourism Monitors Programme, training over 1 200 new recruits to strengthen visitor safety and used her intergovernmental networks to align provincial tourism efforts under the District Development Model. Her community visits often yield small, visible wins from restoring neglected heritage sites to brokering public-private partnerships for local resorts, yet these successes rarely scale beyond their immediate surroundings.



FAILURES

Where she falls short is in turning operational maintenance into strategic momentum. Tourism's R2,4 billion annual budget demands sharper prioritisation, faster project turnaround and measurable returns. Sadly, these are areas where Soty's influence remains muted. The department's delayed infrastructure upgrades and underperforming transformation funds need a firmer, performance-driven push that rewards delivery and penalises drift.

MAKHOTSO "MAGGIE" SOTYU - DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM (ANC)

GRADE: **62/100** - FAIR (STEADY PERFORMER WITH LIMITED INITIATIVE)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



If Sotyru were more assertive by personally driving infrastructure recovery, pressing provinces for accountability and using data dashboards to track impact - she could transform from a quiet caretaker into a results-focused reformer. Her **62/100** reflects competence without dynamism.

Her focus on community tourism and heritage restoration also supports section 24(b) and section 30, which safeguard sustainable environments and cultural participation.

However, persistent infrastructure delays and the weak impact of transformation funds suggest lapses in fulfilling section 195(1)(f)'s call for accountability and section 217(1)'s demand for transparent, competitive, fair, equitable and cost-effective public spending in relation to procurement. Constitutionally, Sotyru embodies integrity, continuity and procedural diligence, but she lacks the bold enforcement needed to translate budgets into measurable social and economic uplift.



PARKS TAU - MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY & COMPETITION (ANC)

GRADE: 70/100 - FAIR/GOOD (STRATEGICALLY SOUND, BUT MATERIALLY UNDERPERFORMING)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Parks Tau, once Johannesburg's mayor and a policy intellectual within the ANC, assumed leadership of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition ("dtic") in July 2024 with the unenviable brief of restoring industrial momentum amid a sluggish 0,6% growth rate and collapsing investor confidence. Holding a Master's in Public Policy and Management from the University of London and an executive qualification from Regenesys, Tau approaches governance with technocratic precision and consultative caution. Yet the same measured temperament that gives coherence to his industrial vision also risks dulling the urgency demanded by South Africa's economic stagnation.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Tau's central framework of "diversification, decarbonisation and digitalisation" has merit. His New Energy Vehicle ("NEV") tax incentive scheme, commencing March 2026, could safeguard over 100 000 auto-sector jobs, while his Critical Minerals Strategy and support for the Boegoebaai Green Hydrogen SEZ position South Africa to capitalise on the clean-energy shift. His tenure has also seen R11 billion allocated to dtic in 2025/26, with roughly R5,2 billion channelled toward industrial incentives and a third to state finance institutions - signalling a preference for catalytic rather than consumptive spending.



FAILURES

However, execution remains patchy as only a handful of blended-finance projects have reached completion and manufacturing output remains erratic under the weight of Eskom outages and logistical bottlenecks.

PARKS TAU - MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY & COMPETITION (ANC)

GRADE: 70/100 - FAIR/GOOD (STRATEGICALLY SOUND, BUT MATERIALLY UNDERPERFORMING)

B-

Tau's gravest setback has been trade diplomacy. Despite relentless lobbying, South Africa's failure to secure an AGOA renewal under the Trump administration in late 2025 led to automatic tariffs on key exports, particularly autos, wine and citrus - a direct hit to 80 000 jobs. While geopolitical currents were beyond his full control (like the 30% US tariffs which affected a number of countries), the ministry's muted contingency planning exposed over-reliance on US preferences. Conversely, his proactive stance with the EU Clean Tech Partnership (securing €4,5 billion in commitments) and deepening engagement under AfCFTA show sound instincts for diversification, though the benefits will take years to materialise.

Domestically, Tau's weakness is speed. The "Ease of Doing Business" Omnibus Bill and procurement reforms remain drafts; industrial funding schemes lack transparent ROI data and dtic's own annual report lists underperformance in three of five incentive programmes. His collaborative style, while welcome after Patel's rigidity, too often produces dialogue without deadlines.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Tau is a strategic moderniser constrained by sluggish machinery. A sharper focus on investor bottlenecks and visible export diversification could elevate him. For now, **70/100** captures a minister of strong intellect and integrity, but one whose economy still waits to feel his impact.

PARKS TAU - MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY & COMPETITION (ANC)

GRADE: 70/100 - FAIR/GOOD (STRATEGICALLY SOUND, BUT MATERIALLY UNDERPERFORMING)

B-

His industrial diversification agenda resonates strongly with section 195(1)(b) and (c) of the Constitution, requiring efficient, development-oriented public administration and with section 22, which guarantees the right to freely choose a trade or occupation - a right dependent on enabling, competitive markets. His New Energy Vehicle incentives and green-industrial projects also advance the section 24(b) obligation to secure an environment that supports sustainable development, linking economic growth with ecological responsibility.

Yet constitutional delivery is not measured by policy rhetoric but by tangible outcomes. Persistent delays in the “Ease of Doing Business” reforms and incentive disbursements point to lapses in section 1(d) which require accountability, transparency and responsiveness. The failure to anticipate the fallout from AGOA’s lapse also undermines section 41(1)(h), which compels cooperative governance in mutual trust and good faith. His lack of foresight in managing international relations has had negative consequences of all spheres of government, as US tariffs, for instance, serve as a blow to all levels of government.

Overall, Tau’s record reflects a constitutionally grounded, intellectually coherent reformer whose policymaking adheres to the letter of constitutional governance but falls short of its spirit - efficiency and responsiveness.



ZUKO GODLIMPI - DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY & COMPETITION (ANC)

GRADE: 65/100 - FAIR (ENERGETIC AND PRESENT, BUT STILL CONVERTING POTENTIAL INTO PROOF)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



At 33, Zuko Godlimpi is among the youngest figures in the executive and his elevation to Deputy Minister in July 2024 put a first-term MP with a student-activist pedigree into one of the economy's most technical portfolios. With degrees in PPE (politics, philosophy and economics) from UNISA and honours from the University of Pretoria listed across public bios and early political grounding in the ANC Youth League, he embodies the GNU's bet on new blood, though youth and velocity are not the same thing as throughput.

ACHIEVEMENTS



His brief sits under Parks Tau in a department that is more banker and referee than spender: the 2025/26 dtic vote sits around R11 billion, with roughly 35% for incentive programmes and a significant share routed through financing entities, which means a deputy's leverage lies in unblocking, convening and driving execution rather than spraying cash (see Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition above) to his credit, Godlimpi has leaned into the public narrative of targeted, catalytic support and in his own Budget Vote remarks highlighted transformation-focused funding lines through the IDC for black industrialists, women- and youth-owned firms, setting expectations that the money must translate into production and jobs rather than promises.



On achievements, he has been visible on the Budget Vote circuit and as part of dtic's outward-facing diplomacy, including engagements tied to market access and investor outreach, while domestically amplifying the department's incentive posture and transformation pipelines; these are table-stakes contributions that matter in a vote where most rands are transfers and where signalling to firms and financiers can nudge deals to financial close.

ZUKO GODLIMPI - DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY & COMPETITION (ANC)

GRADE: 65/100 - FAIR (ENERGETIC AND PRESENT, BUT STILL CONVERTING POTENTIAL INTO PROOF)

FAILURES

The hard politics arrived early: the axing of co-deputy Andrew Whitfield in June 2025, after an unauthorised foreign trip, left Godlimpi carrying a larger load in a coalition-sensitive ministry at precisely the moment when trade diplomacy and investment confidence needed calm hands and while the removal was not of his making, the ensuing reshuffle inevitably slowed some inter-party workflows that deputies ordinarily split.

Where he falls short, for now, is turning that visibility into distinctive, deputy-led delivery with dates, numbers and names: South Africa's logistics and energy bottlenecks still erode the effectiveness of incentives, export performance wobbled into early 2025 and the lapse of AGOA in October 2025 - driven by US politics well beyond his control - nonetheless demanded sharper contingency playbooks for autos, citrus and other preference-exposed sectors; the fair critique is not that he failed to save AGOA, but that the public record shows few deputy-owned mitigations announced in parallel to soften the blow.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Godlimpi is quick on his feet, credible at the podium and increasingly trusted inside dtic's leadership spine, yet the step-change will come only when he claims a handful of measurable wins - and until those arrive, **65/100** fairly reflects a rising profile with more promise than proof.

ZUKO GODLIMPI - DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY & COMPETITION (ANC)

GRADE: 65/100 - FAIR (ENERGETIC AND PRESENT, BUT STILL CONVERTING POTENTIAL INTO PROOF)



Zuko Godlimpi's focus on black industrialists, youth-owned enterprises and inclusive trade policy gives practical expression to section 9(2) of the Constitution, which mandates measures to advance substantive equality and section 22, which guarantees the right to choose and pursue a trade or occupation. His engagement with industrial financing also supports section 195(1)(b) and (c) - promoting development-oriented, responsive administration.

However, the absence of clear delivery metrics and weak contingency planning during trade disruptions fall short of section 195(1)(d) and (f), which require accountability and transparency.



ANDREW WHITFIELD - FORMER DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY & COMPETITION (DA)

GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (PROMISING REFORMER UNDONE BY POOR JUDGMENT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Andrew Whitfield's brief tenure as Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition began with promise and ended in controversy. Appointed in July 2024, he brought to the GNU both administrative discipline and opposition credibility - a Rhodes University graduate with BA and BA (Hons) degrees in Political Science and prior experience as the DA's Shadow Minister of Police and Eastern Cape provincial leader. His appointment was meant to inject business-friendly pragmatism into dtic, complementing Parks Tau's technocratic style with an efficiency-minded, reform-driven approach.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Whitfield's early work showed competence and purpose. His July 2024 Budget Vote speech focused on reducing bureaucratic friction, reforming incentive schemes and introducing measurable performance criteria for industrial funding. He worked to strengthen the department's investment facilitation unit and to improve coordination between dtic and Operation Vulindlela on licensing reforms. Within a tight R11 billion departmental budget - much of which goes to entities like the IDC and NEF - Whitfield concentrated on optimising rather than expanding expenditure, emphasising ROI and transparency.



FAILURES



However, Whitfield's downfall came from a lapse in judgment rather than policy failure. His unauthorised overseas trip in mid-2025 violated executive protocol and embarrassed the GNU. The Presidency dismissed him swiftly, describing his conduct as "insubordination," while the DA accused Ramaphosa of political overreach. Regardless of motive, the episode derailed momentum on his red-tape cutting initiatives and strained coalition trust at a sensitive time.

ANDREW WHITFIELD - FORMER DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY & COMPETITION (DA) GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (PROMISING REFORMER UNDONE BY POOR JUDGMENT)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



To his credit, Whitfield's reform instincts were sound and his professionalism earned early respect. Yet his tenure illustrates that in a fragile coalition government, procedural discipline is as vital as policy skill. His **60/100** grade reflects a deputy who began as an effective reformer but ended as a cautionary tale. He stood as a capable performer who sabotaged his own promise through carelessness rather than incompetence.

Andrew Whitfield's tenure demonstrates how constitutional governance depends as much on accountability and propriety as on competence. His initial reform efforts - reducing red tape, promoting transparency and tightening performance criteria for industrial funding - aligned with section 195(1)(b) and (f) of the Constitution, which demand efficient, development-oriented administration and accountability in public service. His focus on measurable returns for public expenditure also gave effect to section 217(1), ensuring that state resources are used in a fair, transparent and cost-effective manner.

However, his unauthorised foreign trip breached the constitutional principles of collective responsibility and executive accountability under sections 92(2) and 96(2), which bind members of the Cabinet and their deputies to act in good faith, with propriety and adherence to executive protocols.

Note - Andrew Whitfield was replaced by Mrs Alexandra Abrahams (DA) as Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition on 12 November 2025



BARBARA CREECY - MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (ANC)

GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (STRATEGIC STABILISER BRINGING ORDER BUT NOT YET MOMENTUM)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Barbara Creecy entered the Transport portfolio in July 2024 as one of the government's most respected administrators - an honours graduate in Political Science from the University of the Witwatersrand, with a Master's in Public Policy and Management from the University of London. After stints as Gauteng Finance MEC and later Minister of Environment, she brought to Transport her trademark discipline: calm, data-driven and incorruptible. Yet in a department long synonymous with dysfunction, like the collapse of rail networks, decaying roads and SOEs on fiscal life support - even competence feels revolutionary.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Barbara Creecy entered the Transport portfolio in July 2024 as one of the government's most respected administrators - an honours graduate in Political Science from the University of the Witwatersrand, with a Master's in Public Policy and Management from the University of London. After stints as Gauteng Finance MEC and later Minister of Environment, she brought to Transport her trademark discipline: calm, data-driven and incorruptible. Yet in a department long synonymous with dysfunction, like the collapse of rail networks, decaying roads and SOEs on fiscal life support - even competence feels revolutionary.



FAILURES



Where Creecy falters is not in policy but in pace. Her departmental budget (2025/26) remains weighted toward maintenance and SOE transfers (R66 billion) rather than new infrastructure builds and while she has cleaned up governance, commuters still wait for trains that never come and freight operators still face clogged ports and vandalised lines. The e-toll saga drags on, provincial roads crumble and Transnet's dysfunction - nominally outside her line of control - still defines public perception of transport failure.

BARBARA CREECY - MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (ANC)

GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (STRATEGIC STABILISER BRINGING ORDER BUT NOT YET MOMENTUM)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



B-

To reach the next level, Creecy must create functioning metro rail line, private freight trains on schedule, a decisive RAF reform and a conclusive e-toll resolution. Competent, credible and cautious, she is methodical but deserves a **70**.

There has been slower fulfilment of the constitutional duty to ensure efficient, equitable public service delivery. Creecy's measurable performance targets and transparent oversight frameworks align well with section 195(1) of the Constitution, which requires public administration to be "development-oriented," "accountable," and "transparent." **Her decisive intervention** at the Road Accident Fund, aimed at curbing waste and litigation abuse, also gave effect to section 217(1), ensuring fair, cost-effective use of public funds in procurement. However, today the RAF still remains a shambles.

Yet the continued delays in e-toll resolution, slow progress on rail rehabilitation and incomplete delivery on commuter mobility compromise the realisation of section 195(1)(b) and (d) - efficient use of public resources and timely service provision - and section 237, which obliges timely performance of constitutional duties.



MKHULEKO HLENGWA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (IFP)

GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (VISIBLE REFORMER WHOSE ENERGY NOW NEEDS INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



B-

Mkhuleko Hlengwa, 35, stepped into the executive from Parliament's Standing Committee on Public Accounts, where he earned respect for his rigorous oversight and intolerance for waste. Armed with a political science background and a decade in the legislature, he entered Transport in July 2024 with a reformist's instinct and a watchdog's temperament. Now, that is a rare mix in a system still bleeding from corruption and inefficiency.

ACHIEVEMENTS

His first year has been defined by drive and visibility. He took joint command of the 2025 Easter road-safety campaign, coordinating law enforcement and public education efforts that coincided with one of the lowest Easter fatality figures on record. He also helped revive the long-stalled driver's licence card reform, forcing the DLCA to fast-track the new smart card system after years of bureaucratic drift. Inside the coalition, he has served as a useful bridge by translating Creecy's technocratic reforms into accessible political messaging and defusing potential IFP/ANC frictions.



FAILURES

Budgetary influence is limited as a Deputy Minister, yet he has moral authority but must now show managerial depth.

MKHULEKO HLENGWA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (IFP)

GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (VISIBLE REFORMER WHOSE ENERGY NOW NEEDS INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



B-

By pushing the rollout of the new driver's licence smart card and coordinating the 2025 Easter road-safety campaign, he contributed directly to fulfilling section 195(1)(b) - efficient, effective public resources being promoted - and section 11 of the Bill of Rights, which guarantees the right to life through safer roads.

However, Hlengwa's challenge now lies in institutionalising reform beyond campaigns, ensuring that delivery systems and entities perform sustainably.



PEMMY MAJODINA - MINISTER OF WATER & SANITATION (ANC)

GRADE: 46/100 - POOR (CRISIS AWARENESS WITHOUT OPERATIONAL TURNAROUND; COORDINATION OUTPACES DELIVERY)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Nokuzola “Pemmy” Majodina’s appointment as Minister of Water and Sanitation in July 2024 was political rather than technical - a move intended to stabilise a collapsing portfolio through political management rather than engineering reform. Holding a B.Ed and Honours from the National University of Lesotho, Majodina built her career in education and governance before rising to ANC Chief Whip, where her administrative discipline earned her credibility. Yet her lack of sector-specific expertise has been a handicap in translating crisis rhetoric into consistent delivery.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Majodina has acknowledged the water sector’s dysfunction openly (calling it South Africa’s “immediate crisis”) and launched high-profile initiatives to restore coordination and confidence. The March 2025 Water & Sanitation Indaba attempted to unite government, business and technical experts around a five-pillar framework focused on corruption control, maintenance and investment. Her somewhat assertive stance on municipal debt, pressing Treasury to withhold equitable-share transfers from chronic defaulters, marked a rare instance of fiscal discipline within intergovernmental relations. She also used South Africa’s G20 presidency to host the Africa Water Investment Summit, helping secure US\$10-12 billion in continental investment pledges - potentially a lifeline for projects like the Lesotho Highlands Phase II.



PEMMY MAJODINA - MINISTER OF WATER & SANITATION (ANC)

GRADE: 46/100 - POOR (CRISIS AWARENESS WITHOUT OPERATIONAL TURNAROUND; COORDINATION OUTPACES DELIVERY)

FAILURES



Yet the results remain thin. The 2023 Blue Drop audit found that 277 water systems were in a critical state (just before her tenure) - an indictment that persists under her tenure. The Department's own 2023/24 Annual Report exposed under-expenditure on the Water Services Infrastructure Grant, despite widespread infrastructure decay. Simultaneously, irregular expenditure ballooned to over R10 billion across the department and the Water Trading Entity, while debtor collection days soared to 473. This is evidence of weak financial controls and execution paralysis.

On the ground, little has changed for households enduring daily water outages and sewage spills. The Vaal River continues to suffer contamination and major metros (like the City of Johannesburg) report intermittent supply due to failing pipes and pumps. Majodina's efforts at coordination and debt recovery have not yet translated into reliable service delivery or improved public health outcomes.



PEMMY MAJODINA - MINISTER OF WATER & SANITATION (ANC)

GRADE: 46/100 - POOR (CRISIS AWARENESS WITHOUT OPERATIONAL TURNAROUND; COORDINATION OUTPACES DELIVERY)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Majodina's tenure reflects a worrying disconnect between constitutional obligation and practical governance. Section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution guarantees every person access to sufficient water, while section 27(2) requires the state to take reasonable measures to realise that right. Under Majodina, those measures have been anything but reasonable. Chronic under-expenditure on infrastructure grants, rampant irregular expenditure exceeding R10 billion and persistent water outages across major metros point to an outright failure to fulfil the state's most basic constitutional duty. These are not teething problems - they are breaches of accountability, responsiveness and openness as set out in section 1(d) of the Constitution.

Her tenure also raises red flags under section 41(1)(c), which enshrines the principles of cooperative government. While she publicly chastises municipalities over debt, her own department's financial mismanagement and execution paralysis undermine that moral authority. The invocation of high-level indabas and investment summits cannot mask the fact that South Africans still open dry taps, live beside sewage spills and endure contaminated rivers - a clear affront to the environmental right in section 24.

In constitutional terms, Majodina's leadership has been performative rather than transformative.



DAVID MAHLOBO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER & SANITATION (ANC)

GRADE: 50/100 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (LOYAL FUNCTIONARY WITH POCKETS OF COMPETENCE, BUT LACKING URGENCY AND VISION)



BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



David Mahlobo, a biochemist by training and former Minister of State Security, has served as Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation since 2019. His blend of scientific background and intelligence experience positioned him to add analytical depth and operational discipline to a ministry beset by corruption and infrastructure decay. In practice, however, his tenure has been defined more by quiet administration than by measurable transformation.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Mahlobo has played a stabilising role in transboundary water diplomacy, particularly with Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, where he helped defuse tensions over shared river pollution and cross-border resource management. He also oversaw the merger of Umgeni and Mhlathuze Water Boards in KwaZulu-Natal - one of the few structural consolidations in the sector to proceed smoothly. Leveraging his security background, Mahlobo initiated intelligence coordination against water theft syndicates, leading to isolated arrests and improved inter-agency communication.



FAILURES



Yet, after more than four years in office, Mahlobo's impact remains shallow. National non-revenue water still sits near 40% and the collapse of entities like Sedibeng Water occurred under his watch. The War on Leaks youth employment initiative - an ideal project for his portfolio - was allowed to wither and he failed to champion a successor. On sanitation, chronic crises such as the Vaal River pollution (see Minister of Water and Sanitation above) persist with little visible leadership.

DAVID MAHLOBO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER & SANITATION (ANC)

GRADE: **50/100** - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (LOYAL FUNCTIONARY WITH POCKETS OF COMPETENCE, BUT LACKING URGENCY AND VISION)



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Mahlobo appears reactive, not reformist - content managing rather than modernising. To justify his post, he must take ownership of delivery metrics, revive municipal maintenance capacity and visibly champion results. Until then, he remains an uninspiring deputy earning **50/100** for reliability without renewal.

Mahlobo's constitutional performance is marked by inertia in the face of urgent duty. Section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution guarantees access to sufficient water, while section 27(2) obliges the state to take reasonable measures to realise that right. His passive stewardship amid collapsing infrastructure, high non-revenue water and recurring pollution crises shows a dereliction of that obligation. Under section 195(1), public administration must be accountable, development-oriented and efficient - standards Mahlobo has not met. His silence during the decay of entities like Sedibeng Water and the neglect of the War on Leaks programme reflect bureaucratic complacency rather than constitutional responsiveness.

Though his efforts in regional diplomacy and anti-theft coordination align nominally with section 41(1)(h)'s call for cooperative governance which call for friendly relations between the various spheres of government, these minor gains cannot offset the systemic failures under his watch.



SINDISIWE "SINDISWA" CHIKUNGA - MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (ANC)

GRADE: 44/100 - POOR (BIG PROMISES, SMALL LEVERS; COMPLIANT BUDGETS, LITTLE MEASURABLE CHANGE)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Sindisiwe Chikunga, a long-serving ANC parliamentarian and former Minister of Transport, assumed the Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities ("WYPD") portfolio on 3 July 2024. A trained nurse/midwife with a BA, BA (Hons) and MA in Curationis (nursing science) from UNISA and the University of Pretoria, she is experienced but not renowned for bold policy innovation. Her appointment to a politically soft but socially vital ministry has so far yielded more frameworks than frontline results.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Chikunga has provided organisational clarity through a 2024-2029 Strategic Plan that sets five priorities: advancing women's economic empowerment, strengthening youth leadership, enforcing disability rights, transforming the public sector toward inclusivity and ensuring all budgets are responsive to these demographics.

She has shepherded several pending bills - the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality ("WEGE") Bill, Youth Development Bill and Persons with Disabilities Bill - and tied them to the Public Procurement Act to embed gender, youth and disability targets across state contracts. Her ministry's 2025/26 Budget Vote totals R1,36 billion, with a striking 82,4% transferred to the NYDA (about R1 billion) and Commission for Gender Equality (about R97,5 million), leaving just R239,6 million (17,6%) for departmental operations.



SINDISIWE “SINDISWA” CHIKUNGA - MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (ANC)

GRADE: 44/100 - POOR (BIG PROMISES, SMALL LEVERS; COMPLIANT BUDGETS, LITTLE MEASURABLE CHANGE)

FAILURES

Nearly all her achievements are process, not outcome. The ministry’s pass-through funding structure leaves little scope for monitoring or correction and its clean audit conceals a lack of demonstrable value-for-money. Gender-responsive budgeting remains largely aspirational; no published scorecards prove that funds reach women or youth as intended. The GBVF Council exists only on paper, disability employment targets remain unmet and youth unemployment persists near historic highs. The NYDA and CGE - absorbing most of the vote - continue to underperform without firm accountability or impact auditing.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Until Chikunga’s bills become enforceable law, procurement targets carry sanctions and transfers buy measurable outcomes - not glossy audits - this remains a portfolio of promises. **44/100** is a fair reflection of structure without substance.

Her tenure exposes a gulf between constitutional mandate and measurable delivery. Section 9(2) of **the Constitution** demands the state take “legislative and other measures” to promote substantive equality, while section 195(1) insists that public administration be accountable, development-oriented and effective. Yet under Chikunga, the Ministry for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has become more symbolic than structural - producing plans, summits and draft bills without demonstrable advancement in the rights it is meant to protect.



ISAAC “SELLO” SEITLHOLO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER & SANITATION (DA)

GRADE: 49/100 - POOR-TO-FAIR (DYNAMIC ADVOCATE WITH HEART FOR THE GRASSROOTS, BUT LIGHT ON DELIVERY AND STRUCTURAL REFORM)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Isaac “Sello” Seithloho represents the Democratic Alliance’s contribution to the GNU in the water and sanitation portfolio. Born in the North West Province, he holds a BA in Development and Management (Politics, Law and Public Management), a BA Honours in Public Management and completed Master’s studies in Public Management and Governance at North-West University. A former university lecturer turned MP, Seithloho brings a blend of academic grounding, policy literacy and local familiarity to one of South Africa’s most crisis-ridden portfolios.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Seithloho’s strengths lie in visibility and empathy. He has visited countless small towns in North West, Free State and the Eastern Cape, often amplifying local grievances ignored by provincial and municipal structures. He has also tightened oversight on the Bucket Eradication Programme, exposing contractors delivering non-functional toilets in places like QwaQwa and compelled remedial action.



FAILURES



However, Seithloho’s performance remains more symbolic than structural. The borehole programme, though well-intentioned, is minuscule against a backdrop of collapsing municipal infrastructure and non-revenue water losses exceeding 40% (see Minister of Water and Sanitation above). There’s little evidence of durable, system-level reforms or of him converting his outspokenness into sustainable frameworks. Within the ANC-dominated DWS bureaucracy, his outsider status has limited influence and his vocal activism occasionally borders on political theatre rather than policy traction.

ISAAC “SELLO” SEITLHOLO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER & SANITATION (DA)

GRADE: **49/100** - POOR-TO-FAIR (DYNAMIC ADVOCATE WITH HEART FOR THE GRASSROOTS, BUT LIGHT ON DELIVERY AND STRUCTURAL REFORM)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Seitlholo’s energy and authenticity are undeniable, but impact demands institutional results, not just community engagement. To rise above **49/100**, he must champion a full, audited turnaround in at least one municipality - demonstrating that clean water can return where it had long vanished. Until then, he remains a spirited reformer whose passion outruns his proof.

Seitlholo’s constitutional performance is spirited but substantively hollow. Section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution guarantees access to sufficient water and section 27(2) obliges the state to take “reasonable legislative and other measures” to realise that right. While Seitlholo’s grassroots activism and oversight visits embody responsiveness in spirit, they fall short of the constitutional test of reasonableness and effectiveness. His failure to drive systemic reform or secure measurable improvements in supply means that, in practice, the constitutional right to water remains unfulfilled under his watch.

Section 195(1) further demands efficiency, accountability and developmental orientation in public administration - principles undermined when oversight exposes problems without ensuring permanent correction. His exposure of corruption in the Bucket Eradication Programme was laudable, but without institutional follow-through, it registers as moral theatre rather than governance reform.



MMAPASEKA "STEVE" LETSIKE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (ANC)

GRADE: 45/100 - POOR-FAIR (INSPIRING VOICE, SHALLOW DELIVERY, BUREAUCRATIC DRAG)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Appointed in March 2023, Mmapaseka "Steve" Letsike (she/they) is a veteran LGBTQI+ and HIV/AIDS activist and co-chair of SANAC's civil society forum, holding extensive advocacy experience but limited administrative expertise. His transition from activism to the bureaucracy of the DWYPD has been marked by enthusiasm but uneven execution.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Letsike's achievements lie in broadening the department's inclusivity lens - notably the National LGBTQI+ Inclusion Framework of 2025 and a series of Youth Conversations that spotlighted real barriers to youth economic participation.

FAILURES



Yet the results remain mostly symbolic. The Inclusion Framework lacks enforcement mechanisms; the Youth Conversations produced dialogue, not delivery and internal administrative coordination shows lapses. Letsike's activist energy hasn't yet translated into measurable institutional reform, while the department's transfer-heavy budget limits his operational control.



MMAPASEKA "STEVE" LETSIKE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (ANC)

GRADE: 45/100 - POOR-FAIR (INSPIRING VOICE, SHALLOW DELIVERY, BUREAUCRATIC DRAG)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Letsike's constitutional record reflects the limits of rhetoric without reform. Section 9(2) of the Constitution requires the state to take concrete measures to advance substantive equality, while section 195(1) demands a broadly accountable, results-driven administration. Under Letsike, these imperatives remain unmet. His flagship LGBTQI+ Inclusion Framework is constitutionally sound in principle but toothless in practice - lacking binding obligations, enforcement timelines, or measurable outcomes. The Youth Conversations, though symbolically inclusive, produced no policy traction or budgetary reprioritisation, falling short of the transformative duty as far as socio-economic rights are concerned.

For now, he deserves a **45/100**.



MZWANELE NYHONTSO - MINISTER OF LAND REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (PAC) - GRADE: 58/100 - *PATCHY (AMBITION OUTPACING DELIVERY)*

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Mzwanele Nyhontso, PAC president and the first opposition figure to hold this portfolio, entered the GNU cabinet on 3 July 2024 with a mandate to separate land from agriculture again and drive long-stalled restitution and redistribution. Public records confirm his appointment but do not list verified academic qualifications. That lack of transparent credentials fuels doubts about technocratic depth in a complex, litigation-heavy portfolio.

ACHIEVEMENTS



On budgets and priorities, his 2025/26 allocation totals R9,82 billion, with R6,168 billion (around 63%) for land reform and restitution. Within this, R1,073 billion goes to redistribution/tenure, and R559 million is earmarked to acquire and allocate 44 000 hectares - clear signals that he wants money to reach actual land transfers. He also flagged clearing payment “system delays” to claimants and stabilising dysfunctional Communal Property Associations (“CPAs”). These are the right problems to tackle.

On policy, two moves stand out. First, he advanced work on an Equitable Access to Land Bill - potentially a useful instrument to rationalise access pathways if it is drafted tightly and enforced. Second, in a notable shift from hard-line PAC orthodoxy, he walked back talk of scrapping section 25, framing a more pragmatic approach - politically mature, but opening him to criticism from activists who expected faster, bolder expropriation.

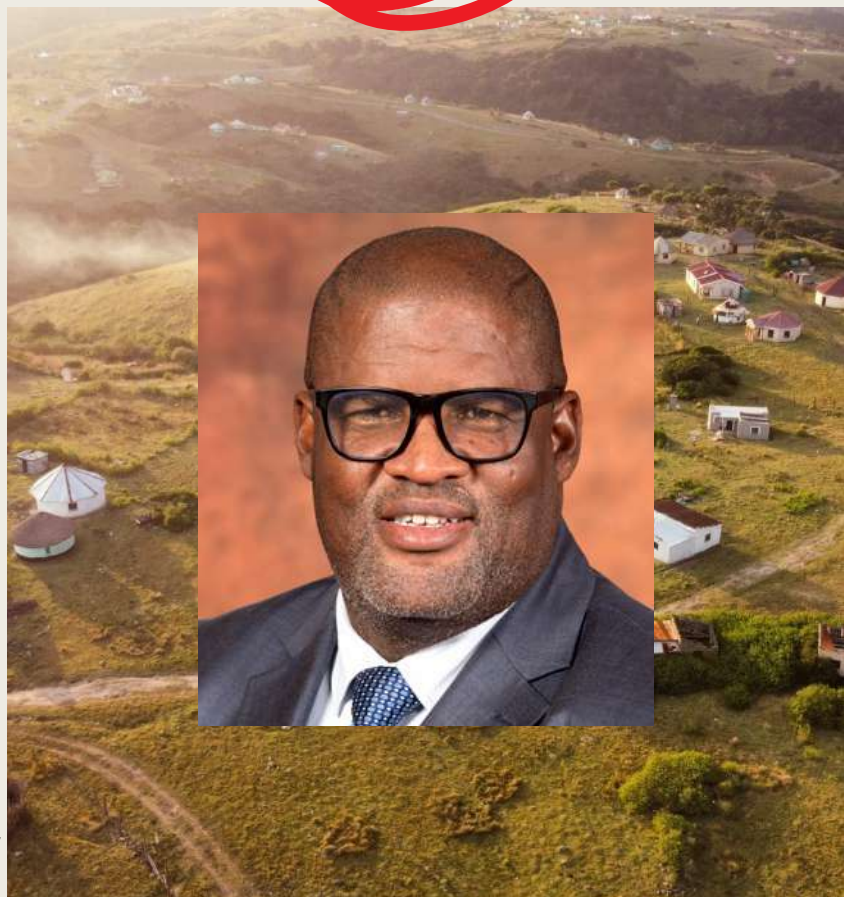


MZWANELE NYHONTSO - MINISTER OF LAND REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (PAC) - GRADE: 58/100 - *PATCHY (AMBITION OUTPACING DELIVERY)*

FAILURES

Delivery, however, lags spending plans. Parliament's committee found R2,168 billion (about 13% of the adjusted allocation) remained unspent by 31 Dec 2024 - "unacceptable" underspending that directly compromises restitution, redistribution and rural development. Nyhontso owns part of that execution gap: he inherited systemic weaknesses but also led the department through that period. His subsequent speeches concede bottlenecks and promise fixes, yet measurable outputs have not matched the rhetoric.

Nyhontso's strongest interventions are political signalling and agenda-setting and the budget mix does prioritise core mandates rather than admin bloat. But execution remains the Achilles heel. The 44 000 hectares target and R559 million line-item will mean little without faster valuation, conveyancing and post-settlement support; likewise, backlog compensation must actually reach claimants. Even his supporters now concede that "land reform is still falling short."



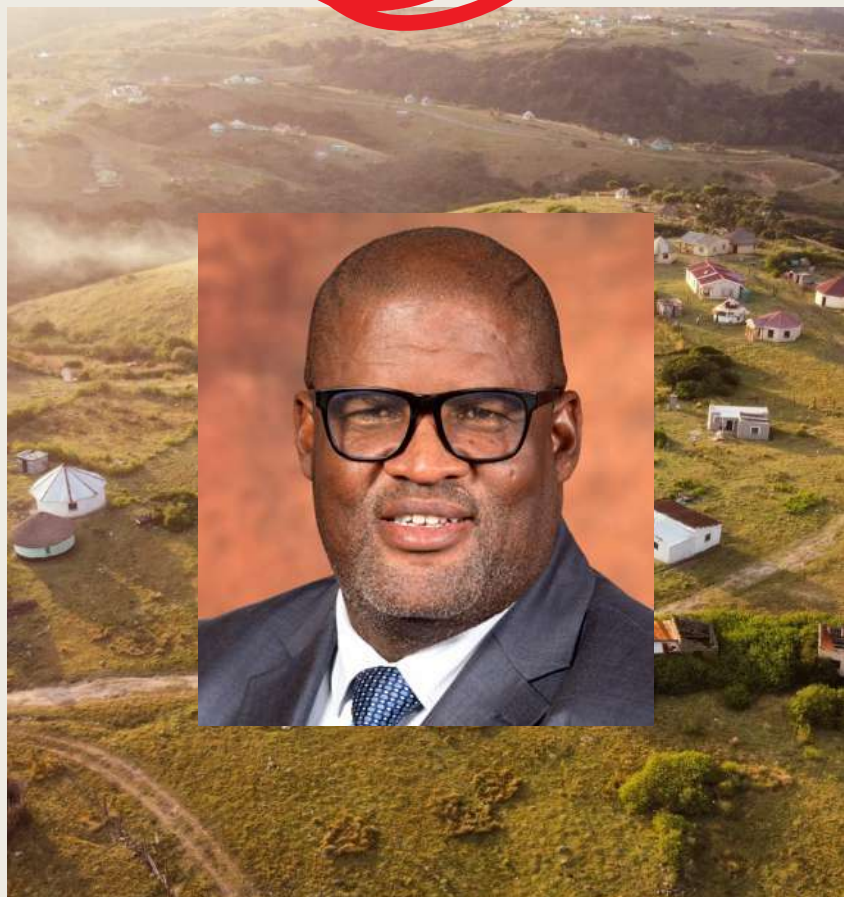
CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

He is an active, visible minister who has put sensible priorities and numbers on paper and shown pragmatism on constitutional politics. But chronic underspending and thin evidence of outcomes keep him in the upper-50s. Grade **58/100** - credible plans, incomplete delivery.

MZWANELE NYHONTSO - MINISTER OF LAND REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (PAC) - GRADE: 58/100 - *PATCHY (AMBITION OUTPACING DELIVERY)*

Nyhontso's tenure exposes the gap between constitutional obligation and political theatre. Section 25(5) of **the Constitution** compels the state to "foster conditions which enable citizens to gain access to land on an equitable basis." Yet under his watch, billions meant for restitution and redistribution sit idle and claimants continue to wait years for justice. Chronic underspending and bureaucratic paralysis render his reformist rhetoric constitutionally hollow. In failing to ensure efficient and accountable administration, he has violated both the spirit and substance of section 195(1), which demands that public administration be development-oriented and resource-efficient.

His decision to dilute the PAC's radical stance on expropriation may show political restraint, but it has not produced measurable constitutional progress. The persistent dysfunction of Communal Property Associations, unresolved claims and unspent budgets point to a department unable to meet even the baseline of section 33's requirement for reasonable and fair administrative action.



CHUPU STANLEY MATHABATHA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF LAND REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (ANC) - GRADE: 47/100 - MIXED (LOW VISIBILITY, LEGACY DOUBTS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

Chupu “Stan” Mathabatha, former Limpopo Premier (2013-2024), was appointed Deputy Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development in July 2024. He holds a BA from the University of the Western Cape, an MDev from the University of Limpopo, and completed an Executive Management Development Programme at Harvard. On paper, he is academically equipped and politically seasoned. In practice, however, his record remains tarnished and uninspiring.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since assuming office, Mathabatha has played a subdued, largely administrative role under Minister Mzwanele Nyhontso

FAILURES

The department's R9,82 billion 2025/26 budget was correctly directed toward core mandates - land restitution, redistribution and tenure reform - yet implementation fell short. Parliament flagged a R2,16 billion underspend by year-end, an indictment of weak execution and oversight. As Deputy Minister, Mathabatha is expected to drive efficiency and accountability, particularly at provincial and CPA (Communal Property Association) levels, but evidence of such leadership is lacking.



His legacy as Limpopo Premier continues to shadow him. Trade unions and civic bodies accused him of being “soft on corruption,” citing procurement scandals involving PPE contracts and inflated land deals. Although never criminally charged, his failure to enforce accountability in Limpopo undermines his credibility in a portfolio that demands clean governance and precision.

CHUPU STANLEY MATHABATHA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF LAND REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (ANC) - GRADE: 47/100 - MIXED (LOW VISIBILITY, LEGACY DOUBTS)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

In short, Mathabatha's experience has not translated into results. He is visible in ceremonies, absent in reform. With unspent billions and little measurable impact, his performance earns a cautious **47/100** - a symbol of continuity rather than change.

Section 25(5) of the Constitution obliges the state to take active measures to enable equitable access to land - yet under his watch, billions meant for restitution and redistribution have gone unspent. That failure represents not mere inefficiency but a breach of the state's positive duty to advance land justice. Section 195(1) demands that public administration be accountable, developmental and efficient; instead, Mathabatha has presided over underspending, poor oversight and a department adrift in bureaucracy.

His silence on the collapse of Communal Property Associations and the absence of visible provincial enforcement reflect disregard for section 33's standard of lawful, reasonable and fair administrative action. While his clean speeches and ceremonial visibility satisfy optics, they betray substance.



NOBUHLE PAMELA NKABANE - MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION & TRAINING (ANC) - GRADE: 30/100 - DISCREDITED (*DISMISSED AFTER SETA SCANDAL*)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr Nobuhle Nkabane served as Minister of Higher Education & Training from 3 July 2024 until her dismissal on 21 July 2025. She is extensively credentialed with a BA (UNISA), BAdmin (Hons), MAdmin and a Doctorate in Administration (UKZN), plus further executive and labour-law qualifications (UCT, Stellenbosch, UWC). On paper, she brought academic heft to a complex portfolio, but in practice, ethical lapses and weak control of a vast spend undid her tenure.



ACHIEVEMENTS



Her 2025/26 Budget Vote set out a large R142,4 billion allocation for the post-school sector, with rising university subsidies and an emphasis on TVET expansion. She touted NSFAS support to around 811 000 students and announced a newly appointed NSFAS Board to professionalise the scheme. These priorities were directionally sound in a sector facing rising demand and fiscal constraints.



FAILURES



But credibility collapsed around the SETA chairs saga. Media and parliamentary scrutiny showed appointments skewed toward ANC-linked figures; when pressed in committee, Nkabane stonewalled, prompting the President to demand a formal report on both the appointments and her conduct (the “gum-chewing” hearing that went viral). The Hawks then confirmed a probe into alleged fraud and “lying to Parliament” under the Powers and Privileges Act of 2004.

The political centre of gravity shifted fast. Opposition parties (DA, EFF, MK) rejected her R142 bn budget on grounds of mistrust and governance failure - arguing the department could not be entrusted with that scale of funding under her leadership. The standoff threatened passage of key appropriations and strained the GNU.

NOBUHLE PAMELA NKABANE - MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION & TRAINING (ANC) - GRADE: 30/100 - DISCREDITED (DISMISSED AFTER SETA SCANDAL)

On 21 July 2025, President Ramaphosa removed Nkabane. Reputable outlets framed the move as essential to unlock coalition support for the national budget. In short: ambitious spending plans, negligible reforms delivered and a minister whose personal credibility became a fiscal risk. Buti Manamela replaced her.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Thus, despite strong formal qualifications and a correctly weighted budget, Nkabane's tenure was dominated by poor judgment and accountability failures. With the department's legitimacy compromised, Parliament balked at entrusting R142 bn to a minister under ethical clouds - culminating in her dismissal. Grade **30/100** reflects a brief, reputationally damaging period in which governance lapses overshadowed any policy intentions.

Nkabane's brief tenure stands as a textbook case of constitutional failure dressed in academic credentials. Section 195(1) of the Constitution demands a broadly accountable, transparent and ethical administration; instead, her SETA appointments scandal shredded those very principles. By allegedly misleading Parliament - an offence that strikes at the heart of section 55(2)'s oversight mandate and the Powers and Privileges Act (see above) - she undermined both executive integrity and legislative trust.

Section 195(1)(c) further requires public administration to be development-oriented, yet the higher-education sector stagnated under her leadership. Billions were budgeted, but governance collapsed into factional patronage and personal misconduct. Section 96(2) expressly forbids Cabinet members from acting in ways inconsistent with their office's integrity and her dismissal by the President reflects a constitutional necessity, not political preference.

Nkabane's downfall is thus not only political - it is constitutional. She turned a R142-billion department into a cautionary tale of arrogance, ethical decay and institutional betrayal, eroding the public's faith in the very accountability the Constitution demands.



BUTI MANAMELA - MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION & TRAINING (ANC) GRADE: 64/100 - FAIR (TACKLING SYSTEMIC STUDENT-AID AND SKILLS CHALLENGES)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Appointed on 21 July 2025 after the previous minister was dismissed amid misconduct charges, Buti Manamela (a Wits-educated policymaker with a Master's in Public Policy) set out to confront long-standing problems in post-school education.



ACHIEVEMENTS



In his first weeks, he moved decisively on student funding and skills development. He vowed to stabilise the troubled NSFAS student-aid scheme by designing a sustainable funding model. Simultaneously, he named administrators to three corrupt or non-performing Sector Education and Training Authorities ("SETAs"), signalling a crackdown on governance failures. Manamela also announced new youth-focused initiatives (e.g. Skills-to-Work, Career Choices and Adult Literacy programmes) to improve the link between education and employment.



FAILURES



However, the SETA appointments have since drawn intense scrutiny. On 20 August 2025 DHET confirmed administrators were appointed to Services SETA, LGSETA and CETA under section 15(1) of the Skills Development Act of 1998. Parliament's House Chairperson Cedric Frolick then intervened to ensure Manamela appears before the Higher Education Portfolio Committee on 19 September 2025 to account for the choices. Furthermore, there are reported allegations that an appointee to one of the SETAs had not been informed of his appointment before it was announced - raising questions of procedural irregularity and that Manamela asked the Public Service Commission to probe concerns about the picks.

BUTI MANAMELA - MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION & TRAINING (ANC) GRADE: 64/100 - FAIR (TACKLING SYSTEMIC STUDENT-AID AND SKILLS CHALLENGES)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

It is still early to judge outcomes: as of late 2025, NSFAS remains under reform and measurable improvements in aid disbursement are pending. Manamela himself noted that only 9 of 21 SETAs have clean audits, illustrating how much work remains. He has avoided scandals and worked collegially with coalition partners, but no major new legislation has yet emerged from his office.

Given the oversight summons and procedural-integrity questions around the SETA administrators, we score him at 64/100 - credit for attacking root problems early, tempered by governance concerns that now demand clear, corrective follow-through.

Section 29(1)(b) of the Constitution guarantees everyone the right to further education, which the state must make “progressively available and accessible.” His immediate focus on repairing NSFAS and cleaning up the SETAs reflects an attempt to give effect to this right in tangible terms. The invocation of section 15(1) of the Skills Development Act of 1998 to place failing SETAs under administration aligns with section 195(1)’s demand for a broadly accountable, efficient and corruption-free public administration.

Yet the apparent procedural lapses surrounding some of those appointments raise serious constitutional questions under section 33, which requires lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair administrative action. Allegations that one appointee was unaware of his own appointment undermine the integrity of executive process and risk replicating the opacity he pledged to correct. Parliament’s intervention under section 55(2) re-emphasises that ministerial power is constitutionally constrained by parliamentary oversight and transparency.



MIMMY GONDWE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION (DA) GRADE: 68/100 - FAIR (ACTIVE OUTREACH, OUTCOMES STILL LIMITED)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr Mimmy Gondwe, an experienced DA MP with multiple law degrees, has focused on outreach and student support as Deputy Minister. She conducted “state of readiness” visits to TVET colleges and universities, promoting vocational education as a future jobs pipeline.



ACHIEVEMENTS



On these tours she pressed institutions to fix student housing and support services - for example, at Cape Peninsula University she insisted the campus resolve residence and facilities issues raised by student leaders. In public forums, Gondwe has championed improvements in youth skills (emphasising robotics and AI training in TVETs). She has also highlighted NSFAS problems: during a Free State visit she bluntly told officials “NSFAS needs to get its act together” so that student allowances are paid on time. Such frankness earned praise from learners, although the systemic NSFAS delays remain.



FAILURES



Gondwe’s record is clean and she is often visible in Parliament and the media. However, there is little evidence yet of major outcomes directly attributable to her. Learner enrolment at TVETs or employment outcomes from her initiatives have not surged. No significant new laws or budgets are linked to her brief and much of the heavy lifting (e.g. NSFAS reform) is led by the Minister.

MIMMY GONDWE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION (DA) GRADE: 68/100 - FAIR (ACTIVE OUTREACH, OUTCOMES STILL LIMITED)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



In sum, Gondwe has been diligent in engagement and oversight, which is reflected in her moderate score. We assign her **68/100** - recognising her proactive on-the-ground work and advocacy for students, but noting that measurable improvements in student services and funding remain to be seen.

Gondwe's performance aligns partially with the Constitution's developmental and accountability imperatives but falls short on measurable impact. Section 29(1)(b) guarantees the right to further education, which the state must make "progressively available and accessible." Her visible oversight visits to universities and TVET colleges demonstrate an active attempt to give effect to that duty, particularly through advocacy for student housing, timely NSFAS payments and improved support structures.

However, section 195(1) of the Constitution requires that public administration be, as can be interpreted, results-driven, transparent and efficient. While Gondwe's engagement reflects responsiveness, there is limited evidence of systemic improvement in student funding or institutional performance. Her interventions remain largely advisory rather than transformative, with no major legislative or policy outcomes to her name.



LEON SCHREIBER - MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (DA)

GRADE: 80/100 - GOOD (MODERNISER DRIVING EFFICIENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr Leon Schreiber, a former academic with a PhD in Political Science, has aggressively pursued transformation of Home Affairs. He touts a “light speed” turnaround of a historically inefficient department.



ACHIEVEMENTS



Notable achievements include a new electronic travel authorisation (“eTA”) system for tourists, which he says brought 27 000 additional visitors in just five months. His department issued over 3,5 million smart ID cards in 2024/25 (well above its 2,5m target) and opened new citizen-service channels: branch offices in shopping malls and mobile clinics. Schreiber also acted on corruption: he reports firing 38 staff for misconduct and deporting over 51 000 illegal migrants in 2024/25. Such results suggest real efficiency gains in a key service area.



FAILURES



While Schreiber has engaged Parliament regularly and avoided major controversy, one challenge is that backlogs (e.g. asylum cases and passport queues) are enormous and his reforms have only begun to shrink them. Importantly, on 11 September 2025 the National Assembly passed the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2024, closing loopholes and strengthening enforcement while protecting rights - setting clear rules for detention and deportation under magistrates’ oversight and ensuring children are handled under child-protection laws with detention only as a last resort.

LEON SCHREIBER - MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (DA)

GRADE: 80/100 - GOOD (MODERNISER DRIVING EFFICIENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

B+

This gives his modernisation drive a firmer legal foundation going forward. Overall, his strong push for digitisation and delivery - backed by concrete statistics like record ID issuance - earns him a solid **80/100**, reflecting markedly improved service delivery against historic benchmarks, with room to maintain momentum and address remaining backlogs.

Schreiber's tenure reflects a notable constitutional realignment of Home Affairs from dysfunction toward efficiency and accessibility. His digitisation drive and modernised service channels give practical expression to section 195(1) of the Constitution, which requires public administration to be accountable, development-oriented and responsive to the needs of the people. By dramatically increasing ID issuance, expanding service points and enforcing internal discipline, he has begun to restore the constitutional principle of equality before the law - particularly section 9(1), which guarantees equal protection and benefit of the law.



The passage of the Immigration Amendment Bill of 2024 further aligns his work with section 12(1)'s protections not to be deprived of freedom arbitrarily or without just cause. Yet, persistent asylum and passport backlogs remain a blemish under section 33, which guarantees lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair administrative action.

Schreiber's deportation drive and anti-corruption actions must continue to balance enforcement with constitutional restraint under section 10's right to dignity. Nonetheless, his ministry demonstrates measurable progress toward rebuilding trust in one of South Africa's most citizen-facing departments.

NJABULO NZUZA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (ANC) GRADE: 75/100 - GOOD (EXPANDED ACCESS AND MOBILE SERVICE DELIVERY)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Mr Njabulo Nzuza, a veteran ANC MP with a BCom in Economics, has supplemented the department's modernisation efforts. His focus has been on "bringing Home Affairs @ Home" - deploying mobile offices and partnering with banks to decentralise services.

ACHIEVEMENTS



In 2024/25 his office reports issuing a record 3 597 856 Smart ID cards (against a 2,5m target), thanks in part to new bank-based application centres. It also rolled out Online Birth Registration at clinics and pharmacies, registering over 868 000 births via a simplified system. Nzuza presided over 10 149 mobile outreach visits in 2024 (far above targets) - including 7 870 visits to schools for registrations. His speeches emphasise these convenience measures (new mall branches, kiosks and mobile vans) as ways to reach rural and vulnerable communities. These concrete numbers show progress in access. Nzuza has also strengthened public communication - for example, by publicly detailing branch backlogs and urging provinces to act.



FAILURES



Nonetheless, many challenges persist, for instance, passport renewals remain slow. Since he mainly shares duties with the Minister, his own independent initiatives are limited.

NJABULO NZUZA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (ANC) GRADE: 75/100 - GOOD (EXPANDED ACCESS AND MOBILE SERVICE DELIVERY)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

B

We rate him **75/100** - crediting him with tangible service gains like mass ID issuance and outreach and strong stakeholder engagement, while acknowledging systemic workload remains high.

By improving the reach of Home Affairs to rural areas and hospitals, he has advanced section 9(1)'s guarantee of equal protection of the law and section 10's protection of dignity - especially for citizens long excluded by geography or bureaucracy.

However, lingering passport and permit delays still test the constitutional standard of reasonable and efficient administration under section 33. While Nzuza's initiatives have broadened access, they have not yet eliminated procedural backlogs or ensured uniform service quality across provinces.



MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI - AS MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (ANC) GRADE: 40/100 - POOR (STRUGGLES ON DELIVERY, UNDER CLOUD OF SPENDING SCANDAL)

**Disclaimer: On 3 December 2024, President Cyril Ramaphosa moved Mmamoloko Kubayi from Human Settlements to Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development and Thembi Simelane was appointed Minister of Human Settlements.*

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Kubayi's qualifications include a BA (University of Johannesburg/Vista University), a Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management (Damelin College) and a Master's in Public & Development Management (Wits School of Governance). She also completed the Programme for Leadership Development at Harvard Business School and is pursuing a PhD at the University of Johannesburg.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Minister Kubayi inherited a massive housing backlog and faced budget cuts in mid-2024. In her Budget Vote she announced a review of housing policy (including updating the Housing Act of 1997) and pledged new housing projects, for instance, 20 925 houses to be funded.



FAILURES



However, by late 2025 few new houses had been delivered beyond small pilot projects. Several provinces under-spent their maintenance funds and thousands of informal settlements remained unresolved. Independent analysts noted that delays on basic needs (like sanitation and roofs) were still common, suggesting underperformance in execution.

MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI - AS MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (ANC) GRADE: 40/100 - POOR (STRUGGLES ON DELIVERY, UNDER CLOUD OF SPENDING SCANDAL)



Compounding these delivery issues are governance questions. In 2025 opposition parties alleged that Kubayi's office spent R16 million on travel for her and her team - far above norms - though the minister disputed those figures. An exposé highlighted extravagant per diems (e.g. R198k for one night in Beijing) during her trips. These controversies have damaged confidence in her stewardship. On policy, she correctly prioritised reform (reviewing the Human Settlements white paper and housing code), but these plans were still in progress with no immediate impact.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

In sum, Kubayi has neither delivered sharp improvements nor avoided ethics questions. Her score is pulled down by persistent delivery gaps and the spending scandal, leaving her with a **40/100**. The low rating reflects that large housing needs remain unmet and that the ministry's efforts were overshadowed by allegations of fiscal mismanagement.



Kubayi's tenure represents a serious breach of constitutional stewardship. Section 26(1) of the Constitution guarantees the right to adequate housing, while section 26(2) obliges the state to take "reasonable legislative and other measures" to progressively realise that right. Yet under Kubayi, delivery stagnated, with housing backlogs widening and maintenance budgets left unspent. This constitutes a clear failure to fulfil the state's positive obligation under section 26.

Her alleged R16 million in travel spending and inflated per diems offend section 195(1)'s principles of accountability, transparency and efficient use of public resources. At a time when citizens still lived without roofs or sanitation, such excess reflected moral and constitutional blindness. The continued absence of measurable outcomes despite vast allocations also raises red flags under section 217, which demands fairness and cost-effectiveness in public expenditure as regards procurement.

TANDI MAHAMBEHLALA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (ANC) GRADE: 70/100 - FAIR (ACTIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND FOCUS ON VULNERABLE GROUPS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Deputy Minister Tandi Mahambehlala (an experienced public administrator with advanced diplomas from UWC) worked alongside her minister on housing delivery.



ACHIEVEMENTS



She frequently took to the field, handing over homes, title deeds and benefits. For example, in speeches she highlighted handing out roofs and deeds to seniors, disabled, female-headed and veteran households. Under her watch the department awarded roughly R4,1 billion in construction contracts to women, youth and people with disabilities in 2024/25 - a clear effort to support empowerment in housing. She also promoted the First Home Finance initiative, targeting about 140 000 first-time homebuyers over 2024-29. These tangible outputs (houses built and financial packages extended) and her emphasis on inclusive procurement indicate solid activity.



FAILURES



At the same time, the underlying housing deficit has not shrunk substantially. Mahambehlala repeatedly acknowledged funding constraints and urged private-sector partnerships to close the gap. Much of her work was implementation of policy rather than new legislation. No new major housing law was passed (reviews remain in draft form), so her impact is judged on on-the-ground progress.

TANDI MAHAMBEHLALA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (ANC) GRADE: 70/100 - FAIR (ACTIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND FOCUS ON VULNERABLE GROUPS)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



B-

Overall, Deputy Minister Mahambehlala earns **70/100**. She scores well for boots-on-the-ground delivery (promoting affordable housing schemes and reaching vulnerable beneficiaries), though the broader housing targets she inherited will take longer to meet.

Mahambehlala's performance reflects a grounded, if limited, fulfilment of constitutional obligations under section 26(1) and (2) of the Constitution, which guarantee access to adequate housing and require the state to take reasonable measures to achieve it. Her outreach to seniors, veterans and persons with disabilities demonstrates tangible adherence to section 9(2)'s call for substantive equality - directing resources toward those historically disadvantaged. The R4,1 billion in contracts awarded to women, youth and disabled persons also advances section 195(1)(c)'s requirement that public administration be development-oriented.

Yet, despite visible fieldwork and inclusive procurement, the overall housing backlog remains largely unchanged. The absence of new legislation or systemic reform reflects a shortfall in meeting the "progressive realisation" standard embedded in section 26(2).



RONALD LAMOLA - MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & COOPERATION (ANC) GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (CONSISTENT GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT, BENEFITS UNCLEAR)

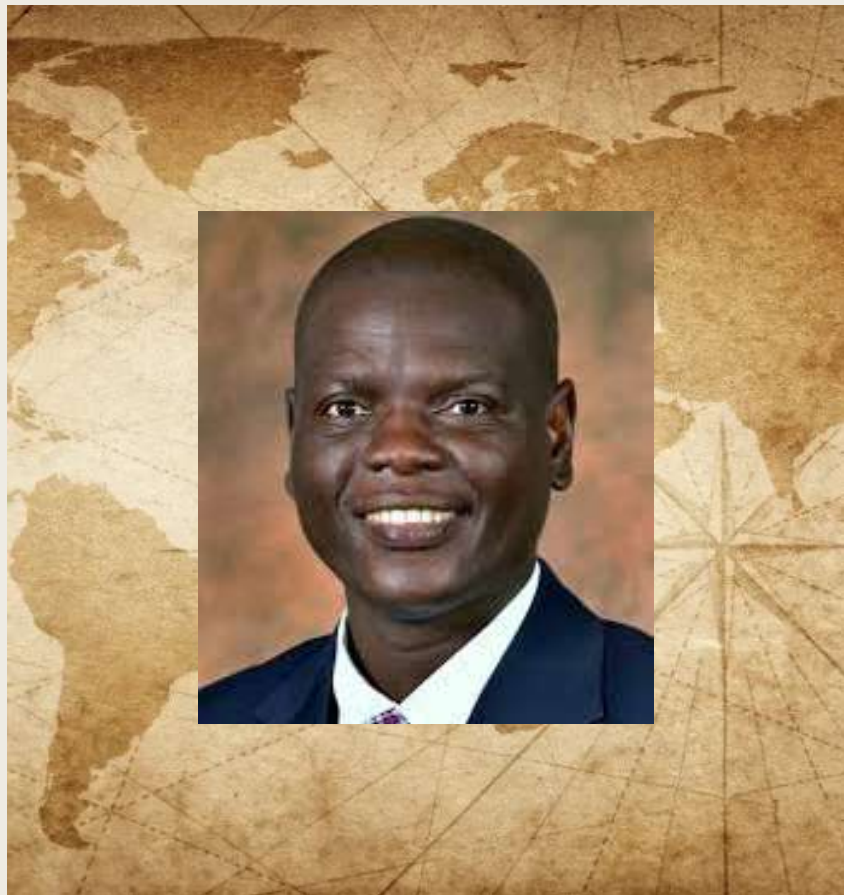
BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Minister Ronald Lamola, formerly Justice Minister, holds an LLB from the University of Venda, a Practical Legal Training certificate (UNISA), postgraduate certificates in corporate law (UNISA) and in banking law & financial markets and an LLM in Corporate Law from the University of Pretoria. He has also completed further postgraduate study in telecoms policy at Wits Enterprise.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Lamola has steered South Africa's foreign policy under the added pressure of South Africa's 2024/25 G20 Presidency. He is a vocal proponent of South Africa's so-called "non-alignment" stance - balancing relations without allegiance - which he argues keeps diplomatic channels open. In practice, Lamola has emphasised both global South solidarity, like co-leading the "Hague Group" on Gaza at the UN and pragmatic outreach. A major focus has been addressing trade frictions: in mid-2025 Lamola co-led a framework trade deal with the US to avert tariffs, submitting a proposal to bolster mutual investment and market access. This multilateral negotiation effort earns points for economic diplomacy. He also raised South Africa's profile by preparing to host the G20 (agenda-setting for 2025) and by maintaining high-level contacts with key partners, like China and Africa, through summitry.



FAILURES

A tougher, more polarised world has tested SA's "non-alignment." Under the current US administration, senior officials openly snubbed G20 engagements in Johannesburg and applied pressure over SA's ICJ stance - highlighting the costs of SA's legal-first approach even as Lamola insists on staying the course. Whether this is genuine non-alignment or selective alignment around particular causes is now contested and the economic risk (specifically our AGOA exposure) remains real.

RONALD LAMOLA - MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & COOPERATION (ANC) GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (CONSISTENT GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT, BENEFITS UNCLEAR)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

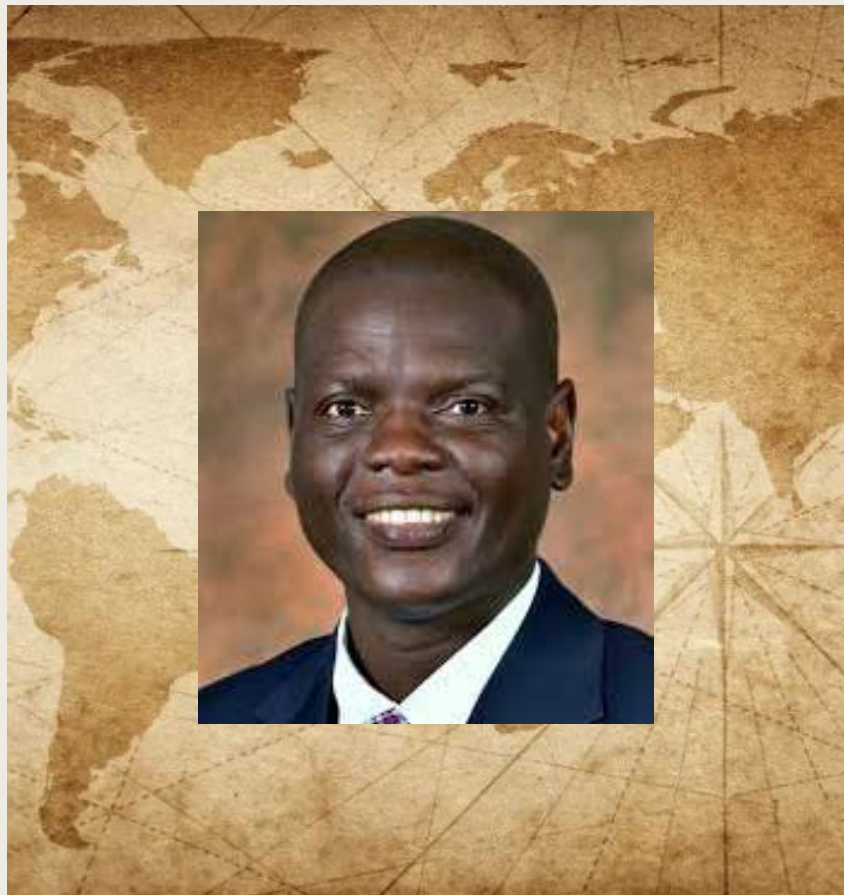


Results have been modest. There were no breakthrough treaties or aid flows to cite yet. Some critics argue SA's non-aligned policy has not yielded economic dividends or that there has been a complete abandonment of "non-alignment" altogether.

Lamola has been diligent and raised SA's voice on global issues like Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Palestine and African unity, but the tangible benefits in terms of new trade deals and development assistance have not materialised yet. His careful management of foreign tensions and coordination of the US trade issue give him credit, but until outcomes emerge, we score him a **60/100** - reflecting solid engagement with limited immediate payoff.

Lamola's foreign policy posture aligns partially with South Africa's constitutional principles but lacks tangible domestic payoff. His leadership in the ICJ Gaza proceedings and insistence on a rules-based global order reflect fidelity to these principles, using international law as a moral compass for diplomacy.

However, section 195(1)(c) also demands that governance be "development-oriented," and here Lamola's record weakens. His so-called non-alignment stance, though principled, has yet to yield clear economic or trade benefits, leaving South Africa vulnerable to tariff threats and declining investor confidence. The absence of measurable gains from G20 and US trade engagements undermines the constitutional expectation that foreign policy should serve domestic prosperity. Constitutionally, Lamola has been articulate and lawful - but not yet effective, with South Africa's moral influence outpacing material results.



ALVIN BOTES - DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & COOPERATION (ANC) GRADE: 55/100 - AVERAGE (ACTIVE DIPLOMACY ON HUMANITARIAN AND BILATERAL ISSUES)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Deputy Minister Alvin Botes has taken on diplomatic tasks alongside Minister Lamola. He holds a Bachelor of Technology (Business Administration), National Diploma in Management and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Public & Development Management (all from CPUT) and is currently reading for a Master's in Management at Wits

ACHIEVEMENTS

Notably, in July 2025 he co-chaired the 18th South Africa-Cuba Joint Commission on Cooperation, reaffirming bilateral projects in health, education and trade. He also hosted a high-level meeting on international humanitarian law for African envoys (the “Global Initiative” event) in August 2025, underscoring South Africa’s leadership on conflict protection issues. These efforts align with SA’s foreign priorities of South-South cooperation and support for international law.



FAILURES

However, these were protocol-driven engagements with little evidence of concrete deliverables. The Cuba JCM and the IHL gathering produced statements of intent rather than new, time-bound agreements, funding commitments, or implementation timelines and no treaties or MOUs attributable to Botes have been publicly tabled. DIRCO’s own joint note with the ICRC after the IHL event called for stronger political commitment but did not announce enforceable mechanisms or benchmarks.

ALVIN BOTES - DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & COOPERATION (ANC) GRADE: 55/100 - AVERAGE (ACTIVE DIPLOMACY ON HUMANITARIAN AND BILATERAL ISSUES)



Compounding this, DIRCO had to issue a mid-August “clarification” on who sets foreign policy after the remarks made by an SANDF General in Iran, signalling internal defensiveness on messaging at a time when crisp, proactive diplomacy is needed - an area where a deputy could add real value.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

In short, Botes’s portfolio shows high activity, low impact: frequent appearances and co-chair roles, but no identifiable, standalone wins like new market access, consular breakthroughs or policy instruments that materially advance South Africa’s interests. We therefore score him at **55/100** - acknowledging steady participation and clean conduct, but noting thin, discrete outcomes in a period that demands more than ceremony.

While his promotion of international humanitarian law aligns nominally with section 7(2)’s duty to respect and promote human rights, the lack of follow-through and tangible mechanisms renders it symbolic at best. His silence during DIRCO’s recent communication blunders further reflects weak accountability and constitutional passivity.

South Africa’s foreign policy should be towards advancing national interests and international peace, yet his engagements have been largely ceremonial - producing communiqués without commitments and summits without substance. The absence of enforceable agreements or measurable benefits from the Cuba Joint Commission or humanitarian law conference points to a failure to meet section 195(1)(b)’s requirement for efficient, economic and effective use of resources - in this case, human resources.



THANDI MORAKA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & COOPERATION (ANC)

GRADE: 40/100 - MEDIOCRE (UNDISTINGUISHED TENURE SO FAR)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Deputy Minister Thandi Moraka was appointed in July 2024. Her official public biographies do not list any formal academic qualifications as of 18 September 2025.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Her public profile since then has been low and we find little reporting of her specific initiatives in foreign affairs. For background, Moraka is a former Limpopo ANC Youth League leader and ex-MEC, but **no relevant diplomatic achievements are noted**.

FAILURES



She is part of the IR ministry leadership team but has not distinguished herself in committee reports or media.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



With no known projects or controversies of her own, her performance must be judged as average. In the absence of reported successes or failures, we give her **40/100** - essentially a baseline rating pending any future evidence of impact.

While she has avoided scandal - a minimal adherence to section 96(2)'s ethical obligations - mere absence of wrongdoing does not fulfil the constitutional duty to serve effectively. The Department of International Relations faces global challenges demanding agility, advocacy and delivery; Moraka's silence has left that space unoccupied.



THEMBISILE "THEMBI" SIMELANE-NKADIMENG - FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE & CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ANC)

GRADE: **30/100** - VERY POOR (AXED AFTER FIVE MONTHS, UNDER A VBS CLOUD, WITH NO LEGISLATIVE WINS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



She is not unqualified on paper. Her academic credentials include a BA (1994), Higher Education Diploma (1995) and BA Honours (1997) from the University of the North (now Limpopo), a BPhil in Policy Studies (2001) from Stellenbosch and a Wits Business School Management Advanced Programme (2009). Yet her career trajectory has been shaped more by ANC patronage than performance - from mayor of Polokwane to Limpopo MEC to ministerial portfolios she could not master.

ACHIEVEMENTS



None to note.

FAILURES



Simelane-Nkadimeng's time at the helm of Justice was brief, bruising and ultimately humiliating. Appointed on 3 July 2024, she was removed just five months later on 3 December 2024 and shunted to Human Settlements. President Ramaphosa's late-night reshuffle was no promotion - it was an unmistakable sign that her tenure had collapsed under the weight of failure and scandal. Reports at the time were blunt: she had been fired from Justice, with Mmamoloko Kubayi parachuted in to steady a ministry in disarray.

At Justice, her five-month record was barren. No legislative victories bear her name. The flagship Judicial Matters Amendment Act of 2023, which scrapped criminal defamation, was signed into law before she took office. The next omnibus amendment bill only entered Parliament after she was gone. Promised reforms on case backlogs and magistracy vacancies went nowhere, while the long-stalled Lower Courts Bill of 2022 gathered dust. Courts remained paralysed by delay and the minister who vowed to restore public confidence left without a single tangible improvement to show.



THEMBISILE “THEMBI” SIMELANE-NKADIMENG - FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE & CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ANC)

GRADE: 30/100 - VERY POOR (AXED AFTER FIVE MONTHS, UNDER A VBS CLOUD, WITH NO LEGISLATIVE WINS)



Worse still, her tenure was overshadowed by the stench of the VBS Mutual Bank scandal. As mayor, Polokwane had deposited R349 million into VBS in flagrant violation of municipal finance law. Investigations later showed she had herself taken a R575 600 “loan” in 2016 from a company tied to the scandal. In September 2024, the Hawks raided Polokwane Municipality, seizing documents linked to her loan. By October, the Presidency admitted it was still “considering” the matter, even as Simelane-Nkadimeng insisted she had informed the President before her appointment. The optics were devastating: a Minister of Justice herself entangled in allegations of financial impropriety.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Her exit was inevitable. On 3 December 2024, Ramaphosa announced she would be “shifted to Human Settlements to ensure effectiveness.” Few were fooled. Media and civil society read it for what it was: damage control. She was axed and sidelined before her credibility crisis could inflict deeper harm on an already struggling justice system.

In short, Simelane-Nkadimeng’s tenure was one of the shortest and weakest in the ministry’s democratic history: no reforms, no wins and reputational baggage that left her compromised from day one. She departs Justice with nothing to her name but failure and scandal. We score her **30/100** - reflecting a disastrous five months that deepened rather than relieved the crisis in South Africa’s justice system.

THEMBISILE “THEMBI” SIMELANE-NKADIMENG - FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE & CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ANC)

GRADE: 30/100 - VERY POOR (AXED AFTER FIVE MONTHS, UNDER A VBS CLOUD, WITH NO LEGISLATIVE WINS)



Simelane-Nkadimeng’s five-month tenure was a constitutional embarrassment. Section 195(1) of **the Constitution** broadly demands accountable, transparent and competent public administration - yet under her leadership, the Department of Justice sank deeper into paralysis. No legislative progress was made, no reforms were implemented and no visible effort was taken to uphold section 165(4)’s imperative that the executive assist and protect the courts to ensure their independence and effectiveness. Instead, case backlogs widened and lower-court vacancies remained untouched.

Her association with the VBS Mutual Bank scandal placed her in direct conflict with section 96(2)(b), which forbids Cabinet members from acting in ways that expose them to conflicts of interest or undermine public trust. The fact that the country’s chief custodian of justice stood tainted by allegations of financial misconduct was not just ironic - it was corrosive to constitutional integrity.

Simelane-Nkadimeng’s tenure epitomised constitutional regression: no delivery, no accountability and no credibility.



ANDRIES NEL - DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE & CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ANC) GRADE: 51/100 - FAIR (PRO-ACTIVE LAW REFORM AND DIGITAL UPGRADES)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Deputy Minister Andries Nel, a veteran of the Justice Department, has focused on modernising the legal framework and courtroom processes. Nel holds a Bachelor of Civil Law (BLC) from the University of Pretoria and began his career as a human-rights lawyer with Lawyers for Human Rights before entering Parliament in 1994.

ACHIEVEMENTS



In speeches he has highlighted an ambitious legislative agenda: for example, drafting a Whistle-Blowers Protection Bill, an updated Extradition Bill and an international criminal cooperation law. He has co-chaired efforts to rewrite the outdated Criminal Procedure Act of 1977 and to create a new Lower Courts Bill (in partnership with Chief Justice Maya). Nel also emphasises technology: the department has launched an Integrated Justice System ("IJS") that links police, courts and prisons electronically and new e-justice rules for online case management. These initiatives demonstrate proactive attention to governance and crime-fighting efficiency.



FAILURES



In terms of outcomes, implementation is still underway. No new laws have yet passed through Parliament (the bills are in draft form) and court backlogs are yet to drop. On the positive side, Nel has been transparent in reporting AG findings and budget use, showing solid oversight. There are no integrity issues in his record.

ANDRIES NEL - DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE & CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ANC) GRADE: 51/100 - FAIR (PRO-ACTIVE LAW REFORM AND DIGITAL UPGRADES)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Overall, Nel's measured progress on reform projects earns him a **51/100**. He scores well on planning and stakeholder engagement, especially on digital systems, but must still deliver tangible safety and justice improvements to reach a higher rating.

The Integrated Justice System and proposed Whistle-Blowers Protection and Extradition Bills advance section 165(4)'s obligation for the executive to assist and protect the courts in maintaining their independence and effectiveness.

However, section 34 guarantees the right of every person to have disputes resolved in a fair public hearing and here progress remains limited. Court backlogs persist and the reforms, while promising, are still largely on paper. His emphasis on consultation and clean administration demonstrates adherence to constitutional ethics under section 96, yet the absence of enacted results tempers the achievement.



GWEDE MANTASHE - MINISTER OF MINERAL & PETROLEUM RESOURCES (ANC)

GRADE: 35/100 - VERY POOR (LICENSING PARALYSIS, MEDDLESOME LAWMAKING, INVESTOR FLIGHT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Veteran ANC heavyweight Gwede Mantashe entered the GNU cabinet in June 2024 with his wings clipped. Energy was stripped from his empire, leaving him with the narrower “Mineral & Petroleum Resources” brief. Far from a promotion, this was read as a containment strategy after years of policy drift and bruising standoffs with investors.

On paper, Mantashe is well qualified. He holds a BCom (UNISA, 1997), BCom (Hons) (UNISA, 2002), a Master’s in Industrial Sociology (Wits, 2008) and an MBA (MANCOSA, 2021). Yet the academic pedigree has not translated into regulatory certainty or sector growth. Instead, his tenure has become synonymous with delay, distrust and heavy-handed interference.



ACHIEVEMENTS



Legislatively, his record is crowded. The Upstream Petroleum Resources Development Act 23 of 2024, assented to in October 2024, was billed as a reset for the sector by carving petroleum out of the MPRDA.

FAILURES



Industry practitioners immediately flagged excessive ministerial discretion, transitional chaos and headaches for licensing. By mid-2025 the law was still awaiting proclamation. Hot on its heels came a 2025 MPRDA amendment package, touted as modernisation but widely condemned by analysts and mining insiders as a legislation disaster in the making. Rather than certainty, the amendments add red tape, tighten ownership scrutiny and expand beneficiation requirements - exactly the mix that spooks investors.

GWEDA MANTASHE - MINISTER OF MINERAL & PETROLEUM RESOURCES (ANC)

GRADE: 35/100 - VERY POOR (LICENSING PARALYSIS, MEDDLESOME LAWMAKING, INVESTOR FLIGHT)



Delivery has been worse. The long-promised national mining cadastre, meant to replace the opaque and dysfunctional SAMRAD system, was delayed again in 2025. Mantashe himself admitted in his July budget vote that the rollout was slipping once more. After years of promises, the “cadastre delay” has become the defining shorthand for his inability to unblock the licensing logjam strangling the sector.

Investor sentiment has cratered. The Fraser Institute’s 2024 global survey, published in July 2025, recorded a collapse of more than 20 points in South Africa’s Policy Perception Index and a plunge to 70th out of 82 jurisdictions. The survey explicitly cited uncertainty, political interference and poor geological data - all direct consequences of policy drift under his stewardship

Even his so-called “wins” look anaemic. Government trumpeted a R200 million Junior Mining Exploration Fund, doubled to R400 million with IDC backing, as proof of support for junior miners. In reality, it is a drop in the ocean against a multibillion-rand exploration drought - tokenism, not transformation.

And the reputational baggage remains heavy. The Zondo Commission recommended that Mantashe be investigated over Bosasa-funded home security upgrades, which he denies. His combative posture toward critics and his reflexive instinct to tighten state control add to the credibility drag that follows him.



GWEDDE MANTASHE - MINISTER OF MINERAL & PETROLEUM RESOURCES (ANC)

GRADE: **35/100** - VERY POOR (LICENSING PARALYSIS, MEDDLESOME LAWMAKING, INVESTOR FLIGHT)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Mantashe presides over a sector in decline: laws that scare off capital, a licensing regime still paralysed and global investors voting with their feet. He talks about certainty but delivers delay and discretion. His grade of **35/100** reflects a tenure marked by policy noise, weak execution and a deepening trust deficit rather than tangible improvements to South Africa's minerals economy.

Mantashe's record reflects a sustained failure to uphold the constitutional standards of accountable, transparent and effective governance. Section 195(1) of the Constitution requires public administration to be "development-oriented" and "responsive to the needs of the people." Yet his tenure has been defined by licensing paralysis, red tape and regulatory confusion - conditions that have suffocated investment and employment in a sector central to South Africa's economy.

By centralising excessive discretion in the Minister's hands, Mantashe has entrenched opacity rather than constitutional accountability. Section 217's requirement for fair and transparent public procurement is equally undermined by the absence of a functioning mining cadastre, leaving exploration rights vulnerable to manipulation and patronage.



JUDITH NEMADZINGA-TSHABALALA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINERAL & PETROLEUM REESOURCES (ANC) GRADE: 40/100 - *MEDIOCRE (LOW VISIBILITY ROLE)*

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



She holds an Advanced Diploma in Public Administration (University of the Western Cape) and has completed multiple leadership, project-management and municipal-governance programmes through Wits Business School, the University of Johannesburg, Vista University and the National School of Government. She has served as an ANC MP since 2019 (and previously 2011-2014).

Deputy Minister Judith Nemadzinga-Tshabalala served briefly in the Minerals & Petroleum portfolio (3 July-3 Dec 2024) before being moved to Employment & Labour.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Across that short stint, there is little public record of independent initiatives or policy wins attributable to her name in the mining and petroleum sphere; her appearances were largely ceremonial or supportive of the minister's programme, without clear, standalone outcomes. In the absence of demonstrable successes - or misconduct - we assess baseline performance and limited impact.



FAILURES



She is part of the minister's team but has not shown notable initiative (nor public missteps), leaving her performance undistinguished thus far.

JUDITH NEMADZINGA-TSHABALALA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINERAL & PETROLEUM REESOURCES (ANC) GRADE: 40/100 - *MEDIOCRE (LOW VISIBILITY ROLE)*

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



In the absence of evidence of either success or misconduct, we rate her **40/100** - essentially below average.

In a department plagued by licensing paralysis and governance decay, her silence amounts to complicity. By failing to exercise proactive oversight or drive administrative reform, she neglects the constitutional duty under section 195(1)(b) to promote “efficient, economic and effective use of resources.”

Her absence from key policy debates also undermines section 33’s requirement for lawful, reasonable and responsive administration, as the ministry continued to delay permits and investment approvals without visible intervention from her office.



MAROPENE RAMOKGOPA - MINISTER IN PRESIDENCY (PLANNING, MONITORING & EVALUATION) (ANC) GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (STRENGTHENING STATE PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



B-

Minister Maropene Ramokgopa, a career diplomat, holds multiple management qualifications and was completing an MPA as of 2025. In her role she has overseen development of the government's new planning framework.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Her department got formal approval for the 2024-2029 Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) in early 2025 and immediately began implementation. The MTDP - aligned to the National Development Plan - set clear priorities (growth, poverty reduction, capable state) and Ramokgopa has led broad consultations with labour, business and civil society to drive it. She emphasises outcome-based monitoring across all departments and has convened a risk-management task team to track key targets. Under her watch, the DPME also continues to evaluate major programs (e.g. infrastructure rollouts, social grants) and publish performance reports to hold the state accountable.

These concrete planning milestones - finalising the MTDP and beginning its nationwide roll-out - are significant. Ramokgopa's leadership in coordinating planning (including high-level meetings with the JSE, banks and NEDLAC partners) shows engagement.



FAILURES



At the same time, the work is largely preparatory; actual improvement in citizen outcomes will come with time.

MAROPENE RAMOKGOPA - MINISTER IN PRESIDENCY (PLANNING, MONITORING & EVALUATION) (ANC) GRADE: 70/100 - GOOD (STRENGTHENING STATE PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



B-

No specific legislative reform is associated with DPME, as it operates through policy rather than law. Overall, we score her **70/100**. This reflects strong progress on strategic planning (setting up the MTDP) and oversight (outcome tracking), albeit recognising that these steps are early-stage and the tangible impact on living standards will take longer to manifest.

Section 195(1) demands a public administration that is development-oriented, accountable and transparent (amongst other requirements) and her leadership in finalising and implementing the 2024-2029 Medium-Term Development Plan (“MTDP”) gives practical effect to that duty. By institutionalising measurable targets and launching risk-management frameworks, she has strengthened the executive’s compliance with section 41(1), which requires cooperative governance and coordination across spheres of government.

Her emphasis on evidence-based monitoring and publication of departmental performance aligns with section 195(1)(g)’s requirement for providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information. However, section 237 reminds all officials that constitutional obligations “must be performed diligently and without delay.” In that respect, her record remains incomplete - the MTDP’s success still depends on execution by others.



SEISO MOHAI - DEPUTY MINISTER IN PRESIDENCY (PLANNING, MONITORING & EVALUATION) (ANC) GRADE: 45/100 - FAIR (EXPERIENCED OVERSIGHT, FUTURE IMPACT UNCERTAIN)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Deputy Minister Seiso Mohai, a long-time legislator, brings some technical credentials to fore (MSc in Technology and Management). In the planning portfolio, he supports Ramokgopa's agenda. He has a parliamentary background in finance and oversight, though we find no headline initiatives bearing his name.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Presumably he helps manage the DPME's projects on government monitoring and data systems.

FAILURES

Given the available information, his role seems to be one of steady support rather than breakthrough innovation.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

We therefore assign Mohai **45/100** - reflecting that he is likely working on his administrative duties (and has no scandal attached) but without independent achievements reported so far. Like his minister, his ultimate impact depends on how well the new planning reforms translate into results down the line. While his background in finance and oversight suggests familiarity with section 92's principles of collective executive accountability, there is no visible evidence of him driving innovation or measurable reform within the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.



SENZO MCHUNU - MINISTER OF POLICE (ANC)

GRADE: 30/100 - VERY POOR (SUSPENDED OVER ALLEGED SYNDICATE COLLUSION; CRIME CRISIS UNABATED, NO GANG PLAN)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Mchunu's time at the helm of the police was brief, bruising and ended in outright disgrace. On 13 July 2025, President Ramaphosa suspended him and announced a judicial commission of inquiry after explosive allegations that he had colluded with a criminal syndicate and interfered in sensitive investigations. That same evening, constitutional lawyer Firoz Cachalia was appointed acting Police Minister - an unmistakable signal that Mchunu had lost the President's trust and that his position had become untenable. Reports were blunt: he had been sidelined in a bid to stabilise a ministry collapsing under scandal.

He is not unqualified on paper. A former teacher, Mchunu holds a BA in Education and International Relations from the University of South Africa and also studied at the University of Zululand. Yet, as with so many ANC stalwarts, academic credentials offered no protection from the political and ethical implosion that followed.



ACHIEVEMENTS



None to note.

FAILURES



The detonator was the Mkhwanazi bombshell. KwaZulu-Natal Police Commissioner Lt-Gen Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi accused Mchunu of disbanding a specialised political-killings unit to shield corrupt networks, citing digital evidence and claiming that over 100 case files had been pulled and shelved. That a serving provincial commissioner publicly levelled such charges against his minister was unprecedented. Though Mchunu denied them, the allegations struck at the heart of his legitimacy: a Police Minister accused of subverting justice itself.

SENZO MCHUNU - MINISTER OF POLICE (ANC)

GRADE: **30/100** - VERY POOR (SUSPENDED OVER ALLEGED SYNDICATE COLLUSION; CRIME CRISIS UNABATED, NO GANG PLAN)



Even before the scandal broke, the core crisis remained unsolved. South Africa's violent crime figures are staggering - tens of thousands of serious-crime incidents reported annually, with the murder toll averaging dozens every day. While one quarterly report showed murder down by a marginal 5,8%, there was no sustained turnaround in murder, rape, or aggravated robbery under his watch.

Nowhere was the vacuum of leadership more visible than on the Cape Flats. In Mitchells Plain, gangs continued to terrorise communities, yet there was no national anti-gang strategy. After Mchunu's suspension, Cachalia himself admitted the absence of a plan and promised to table one in Parliament. For residents enduring daily gunfire, this was confirmation that the minister had left them abandoned.

The political fallout was swift. Opposition parties, led by the DA, filed criminal complaints against Mchunu and the Presidency scrambled to justify the suspension as necessary for the inquiry. The optics were devastating: a Police Minister under suspicion of protecting criminals rather than fighting them, replaced overnight by an outsider to restore credibility.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Mchunu's tenure will be remembered not for policy but for scandal. Whatever modest initiatives he launched were obliterated by the allegations of collusion, the suspension and the crime crisis that raged unchecked during his watch. He leaves the police service in deeper disarray than he found it. We score him **30/100** - reflecting a disastrous collapse defined by integrity failure, soaring violent crime and the absence of any credible plan to restore public safety.

SENZO MCHUNU - MINISTER OF POLICE (ANC)

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Mchunu's tenure will be remembered not for policy but for scandal. Whatever modest initiatives he launched were obliterated by the allegations of collusion, the suspension and the crime crisis that raged unchecked during his watch. He leaves the police service in deeper disarray than he found it. We score him **30/100** - reflecting a disastrous collapse defined by integrity failure, soaring violent crime and the absence of any credible plan to restore public safety.

Mchunu's tenure stands as a profound betrayal of constitutional duty and public trust. Section 205(3) of the Constitution mandates the police to "prevent, combat and investigate crime, maintain public order and protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic." Under his leadership, these obligations were not only neglected but allegedly subverted. His suspension over claims of collusion with criminal syndicates and interference in investigations represents a potential violation of section 96(2)(b), which prohibits Cabinet members from engaging in conduct that compromises their integrity or exposes them to conflicts of interest.

Section 195(1) further broadly demands accountability, transparency and ethical governance - principles trampled by Mchunu's scandal and the vacuum it left. His failure to produce a national anti-gang strategy, while violent crime surged, shows a collapse of constitutional responsiveness to the right to life and security of the person under section 12(1). Constitutionally, his tenure was catastrophic: a minister entrusted to uphold justice instead mired in allegations of shielding lawlessness, leaving South Africans less safe and the state's moral authority in tatters.



POLLY BOSHIELO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 - BELOW-PAR (VISIBLE BLITZES, THIN OUTCOMES; BYPASSED IN CRISIS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Polly Boshielo entered the Police Ministry in July 2024 with a strong résumé from Limpopo politics - former Speaker of the Legislature, MEC for Education and MEC for Transport, Safety & Liaison - and in April 2025 she added academic heft by completing a Doctor of Administration at the University of Limpopo. On paper, she is one of the more qualified deputies in cabinet. Yet her tenure in the Police Ministry has been defined more by visibility than by measurable impact.



ACHIEVEMENTS



Her most high-profile association has been with Operation Shanela, the weekly “high-density” blitzes yielding thousands of arrests through raids, roadblocks and tracing operations. While these figures sound impressive - sometimes more than 15,000 arrests in a single week - the real test is whether they translate into durable reductions in violent crime. Here the evidence is thin. Conviction rates remain stagnant, detective shortages remain severe and crime statistics still show South Africa losing dozens of lives to murder every single day.



Boshielo has been vocal on gender-based violence and the need for IPID accountability and she has urged parents not to shield delinquent youth. She has also toured stations across the country, sometimes unannounced, to check on morale and resources.

POLLY BOSHIELO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 - BELOW-PAR (VISIBLE BLITZES, THIN OUTCOMES; BYPASSED IN CRISIS)

FAILURES

These gestures, however, have not yet added up to a coherent plan to tackle the systemic crises in policing. Crucially, when Minister Senzo Mchunu was suspended in July 2025, the Presidency did not turn to either of his deputies to provide stability. Instead, it parachuted in Firoz Cachalia as acting minister - an unambiguous sign of limited confidence in Boshielo's ability to lead during crisis.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Thus, Boshielo has shown energy and a willingness to engage communities, but she has not demonstrated the kind of structural or policy leadership needed in a ministry in crisis. Operation Shanela provides headlines but not certainty and her bypassing during the suspension saga was telling. We score her **55/100**, reflecting a deputy who is visible and credentialed, but still struggling to translate activity into authority or lasting results.



Section 205(3) of the Constitution obliges the police to prevent, combat and investigate crime and to protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic. Her support for Operation Shanela and vocal advocacy against gender-based violence show alignment with these duties in spirit, but the persistent stagnation in conviction rates and unrelenting violent-crime levels reveal a failure to meet them in substance.

Section 195(1) further demands effective, accountable and development-oriented public administration. While Boshielo's unannounced station visits and public outreach demonstrate responsiveness, they have not yielded measurable improvements in policing outcomes or community safety. Her exclusion from leadership during the ministerial suspension crisis underscores limited executive confidence and weak constitutional authority in practice.

CASSEL MATHALE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 - BELOW-PAR (POLICY-CENTRIC STABILISER, NEEDS OUTCOME FOCUS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Deputy Minister Cassel Mathale played a behind-the-scenes but important role, leaning on his experience as a former provincial premier to strengthen police policy and oversight. Cassel Mathale holds a BA in Social Sciences from the University of the Western Cape, with matric from Phangasasa High School in Tzaneen.

ACHIEVEMENTS



As Deputy Minister, Mathale has been most visible in policy and legislative reform rather than frontline crime-fighting. He has consistently highlighted the work of the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service ("CSPS"), which in May 2025 secured Cabinet approval for the National Policing Policy ("NPP"). The NPP sets out to address chronic station understaffing, upgrade infrastructure standards and embed ethical policing norms. Mathale has also announced that the Secretariat will introduce two important bills - the SAPS Amendment Bill and the Firearms Control Amendment Bill - to modernise the legal framework for policing. While these are significant groundwork steps, they remain at the drafting and parliamentary stages, meaning citizens are yet to feel their impact.



In Parliament, Mathale has been a steady hand in debates and committee hearings, often emphasising governance shortfalls such as the vacant police posts across government. He has also been a key liaison point during moments of turbulence - such as the suspension of Minister Senzo Mchunu - where he worked alongside colleagues to ensure operational continuity.

CASSEL MATHALE - DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (ANC)

GRADE: 55/100 - BELOW-PAR (POLICY-CENTRIC STABILISER, NEEDS OUTCOME FOCUS)

FAILURES

However, the shortcomings are clear. Crime levels remain unacceptably high, with murders, rapes and robberies showing no sustained decline. Communities plagued by gangs, such as in Mitchells Plain, still await a credible national strategy. Mathale's influence has been strongest on paper and process, but has yet to be matched by visible results in safer streets or faster response times.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

We could say that Cassel Mathale has brought policy stability and legislative focus to the Police Ministry, but his tenure has been marked more by plans than outcomes. The foundations he has laid may prove useful if carried through, but for now, South Africans experience little relief from the daily toll of violent crime. We score him **55/100**, recognising competent work in governance and reform design, tempered by the absence of tangible improvements on the ground.

Yet, the persistence of violent crime and the absence of measurable safety improvements reveal a gap between constitutional intent and execution. Section 12(1), which guarantees freedom and security of the person, remains unrealised for millions living under the daily threat of violence. While Mathale has stabilised policy direction and ensured administrative continuity, his tenure lacks the urgency and outcomes demanded by the citizens.



KHUMBUDZO NTSHAVHENI - MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (ANC) GRADE: 70/100 - FAIR (COALITION NAVIGATOR WITH STRATEGIC STRIDES)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



As Minister in the Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni has worn many hats - Cabinet spokesperson, policy coordinator and coalition mediator. Armed with an MBA and experience as a former communications minister, she helped operationalise the new Government of National Unity in July 2024.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Notable achievements include overseeing the release of a National Security Strategy 2024 - 2028 (to refocus intelligence efforts) and brokering partnerships like a UK technical assistance pact to improve infrastructure delivery. Ntshavheni's political acumen was tested during a February 2025 budget crisis: a split in the GNU over a VAT hike forced an unprecedented budget speech delay. She emerged at a press conference clarifying that ANC ministers themselves objected to the VAT increase, not just the DA, striving to portray consensus. Her deft communication helped quell market panic and "reflect the reality of coalition politics".

B-



Throughout, she has maintained Cabinet unity – for example, defusing tensions after a DA deputy minister's firing by urging dialogue. On the policy front, Ntshavheni coordinates the President's priority programs. By late 2025, she reported progress on an anti-red tape bill aimed at investor confidence and secured Cabinet's approval of a youth employment accord.

KHUMBUDZO NTSHAVHENI - MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (ANC) GRADE: 70/100 - FAIR (COALITION NAVIGATOR WITH STRATEGIC STRIDES)

FAILURES

Areas of shortfall centre on tangible outcomes: while she excels in process (meetings, strategies), issues like government communication lapses and slow follow-through persist. An editorial even warned she risked appearing “out of touch” if service delivery didn’t improve.



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Overall, Ntshavheni scores **70** - a nod to her steady handling of coalition turbulence and strategic planning, but with room to drive more concrete improvements in government efficiency that citizens can feel.

Section 41(1) of **the Constitution** requires all spheres of government to cooperate and avoid conflict and her mediation during the VAT crisis and coalition rifts gave visible effect to that principle - preserving Cabinet stability when the GNU risked fracture. Similarly, her leadership in developing the National Security Strategy and youth employment accord aligns with section 195(1)’s call for accountable, development-oriented administration.

Yet, section 237 reminds that constitutional obligations “must be performed diligently and without delay,” and it is here that Ntshavheni’s record falters. While her coordination and communication uphold procedural order, the sluggish pace of delivery and lingering inefficiencies betray the Constitution’s demand for responsiveness. Constitutionally, she stands as a capable stabiliser and planner - someone who upholds cooperative governance and institutional order - but who has yet to convert political balance and strategic frameworks into measurable public benefit or administrative transformation.



NONCEBA MHLAULI - DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (ANC) GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (ENGAGED COMMUNICATOR, AWAITING MEASURABLE IMPACT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Nonceba Mhlauli, a former Presidency spokesperson and youthful ANC activist, has approached her deputy role with enthusiasm. She holds a Master's in African Studies and Politics from Rhodes University and leverages her communications background to bring government closer to communities.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Mhlauli has been highly visible in outreach - hosting G20 University Dialogues and “Youth in Governance” town halls to involve young people in policy discussions. She frequently represents the Presidency at public forums, stressing that transparency and feedback are key to a “capable state”. Internally, she assists Minister Ntshavheni by monitoring the progress of Cabinet decisions and ensuring reports from departments are submitted on time. For instance, she helped set up a new dashboard to track delivery on State of the Nation Address commitments, a tool praised by the President's office. Despite this diligence, Mhlauli's independent impact is modest so far.



FAILURES



Her efforts to improve government communication (such as more user-friendly updates on social media) are laudable but have not yet significantly shifted public perceptions. Likewise, while she champions initiatives like increasing women in STEM and start-up funding for youth, those are long-term goals whose outcomes remain to be seen. A noteworthy contribution has been her collaboration with Stats SA and the Planning Ministry on a data-driven “national developmental indicators” project, reflecting her keen interest in evidence-based policy.

NONCEBA MHLAULI - DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (ANC) GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (ENGAGED COMMUNICATOR, AWAITING MEASURABLE IMPACT)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

Ultimately, her score of **60** reflects an unspectacular start. Mhlauli is an articulate advocate and organiser - no small assets in a complex coalition - but she will need to translate forums and dialogues into concrete policy changes or service improvements to climb into a higher performance tier.

Her coordination of departmental reporting and dashboard monitoring gives practical effect to section 92(2), which holds Cabinet collectively accountable to Parliament.

However, section 237's requirement that constitutional obligations be performed "diligently and without delay" underscores her current shortcoming: enthusiasm has yet to yield measurable transformation in service delivery or institutional performance. While her collaboration on national indicators and evidence-based policy aligns with transparency and oversight goals, outcomes are still aspirational.



KENNETH MOROLONG - DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (ANC) GRADE: 50/100 - BELOW-PAR (STEADY ADMINISTRATOR, LIMITED DISTINCT IMPRINT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Itiseng “Kenny” Morolong has kept a low profile as Deputy Minister in the Presidency, focusing on his assigned duties without notable controversy or fanfare. A former youth leader from North West, Morolong is responsible for oversight of Statistics South Africa and evidence-based planning.

ACHIEVEMENTS



In this capacity, he ensured that the delayed 2022 census results were finally published accurately. Morolong also quietly supports the Minister and the President on cabinet matters - for example, coordinating the Cabinet’s bimonthly monitoring reports and following up on ministers’ implementation of audit recommendations. His background in the Finance Committee has made him an advocate for prudence: colleagues note he often reminds the GNU partners of fiscal constraints during policy discussions. However, Morolong has not launched initiatives of his own. He performs a largely administrative and liaison role, described by insiders as “reliable and even-keeled.” When he does step into the spotlight, it’s typically to show empathy - such as visiting the family of a missing journalist in May 2025 to assure them of government’s commitment to press safety (a gesture that earned positive coverage).



FAILURES



Still, measurable achievements or reforms directly attributable to Morolong are hard to pinpoint.

KENNETH MOROLONG - DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (ANC) GRADE: 50/100 - *BELOW-PAR* *(STEADY ADMINISTRATOR, LIMITED DISTINCT IMPRINT)*

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

His score of **50** reflects competent service to the Presidency team and the absence of any missteps, while also acknowledging the lack of a distinctive impact. As the GNU enters its next phase, Morolong could add more value by driving a specific presidency project (for instance, a Stats SA modernisation or a new social cohesion program). Until then, he remains a dependable, if unsung, cog in the executive.

His oversight of Statistics South Africa and insistence on accurate census publication uphold section 195(1)(g)'s demand for providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information, while his diligence in monitoring Cabinet implementation supports section 92(2)'s principle of collective executive accountability.

Yet, section 237's injunction that constitutional duties be performed "diligently and without delay" exposes the limits of his contribution. His role has been competent but passive - facilitating administration without shaping policy or driving measurable reform. In a Presidency charged with coordinating national priorities, mere steadiness is insufficient.



MZAMO BUTHELEZI - MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION

(IFP)

GRADE: 68/100 - FAIR (*ENERGETIC REFORMER LAYING GROUNDWORK*)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi entered the GNU cabinet in July 2024 with the unenviable task of reforming South Africa's bloated and underperforming civil service. Holding a National Diploma in Marketing and Business Management (Vryheid) and political stature as IFP deputy president and traditional leader, he has approached the portfolio with energy and integrity, determined to impose merit and discipline on a system crippled by patronage, inefficiency and over 100 000 vacant posts.

ACHIEVEMENTS



His central project has been professionalisation of the public service. Building on a Cabinet framework approved in 2022, Buthelezi drove the rollout of a new HR directive requiring merit-based recruitment, competency checks and the Nyukela pre-entry exam for senior posts. Crucially, even political advisers must now complete this process within 60 days - closing a long-abused loophole for patronage hires.



He has also advanced the long-promised lifestyle audit regime. In Gauteng, senior officials have already been dismissed after irregularities were exposed and hundreds more probes are under way. Buthelezi deserves credit for ensuring audits are not just a box-ticking exercise but a mechanism with teeth.

MZAMO BUTHELEZI - MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION

(IFP)

GRADE: 68/100 - FAIR (*ENERGETIC REFORMER LAYING GROUNDWORK*)



On legislation, he has overseen a significant reform package. The Public Service Amendment Bills of 2024, passed by the National Assembly, tightened accountability, while the Public Service Commission Bill, passed in March 2025, bolstered the PSC's independence. However, critics warn that the Bill is unconstitutional in extending the Commission's mandate to municipalities, undermining local autonomy and opposition-controlled councils.

FAILURES

Labour relations posed an immediate test. Unions demanded increases of up to 12% while Treasury offered 3%. Buthelezi steered negotiations toward a 5,5% multi-year deal, avoiding crippling strikes but straining the fiscus further - a pragmatic win, though one that pushes fiscal risks forward. Digital modernisation is another stated priority. He has aligned his department with Operation Vulindlela's roadmap, issuing new digital standards and piloting replacements for old legacy systems. Yet progress remains embryonic, with citizens seeing little benefit so far.



MZAMO BUTHELEZI - MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION

(IFP)

GRADE: 68/100 - FAIR (*ENERGETIC REFORMER LAYING GROUNDWORK*)



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

That gap between reform and reality is his weakness. The July 2025 productivity audit exposed waste and under-capacity, but redeployments remain pending. In short, Buthelezi has attacked systemic rot with seriousness - professionalisation, audits, legislation and digital reforms are all in motion. Yet frontline service delivery lags. His grade of **68/100** reflects some credible groundwork, but unless reforms begin to deliver tangible outcomes, the promise risks fading into more paperwork than progress.

His push for merit-based recruitment, mandatory competency exams and lifestyle audits shows a genuine attempt to realise constitutional principles and curb the patronage culture that has long corroded the state. Likewise, his legislative reforms to strengthen the Public Service Commission align with section 196's vision of an independent body ensuring fairness and efficiency in the public service.

Section 237 reminds public officials that constitutional obligations must be performed "diligently and without delay." Here, his reforms remain mostly structural and slow to translate into better service delivery for citizens, leaving the lived reality of inefficiency largely unchanged.



PINKY KEKANA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION (ANC)

GRADE: 58/100 - COULD PERFORM BETTER (HUMAN-CENTRED BUT LIMITED IMPACT)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Pinky Kekana, a former deputy minister in communications and the presidency and a trained teacher with a BA in Education, has emphasised staff welfare and training in her role.

ACHIEVEMENTS



She has complemented Minister Buthelezi's reforms, yet her initiatives remain modest in impact.

FAILURES



Recruitment bottlenecks, disciplinary delays and widespread vacancies persist. New projects, such as a performance management partnership with unions, are too recent to measure. While she has avoided controversy and shown diligence, her record so far reflects activity without outcomes.



PINKY KEKANA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION (ANC)

GRADE: **58/100** - COULD PERFORM BETTER (*HUMAN-CENTRED BUT LIMITED IMPACT*)



CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT

At **52/100**, Kekana's tenure "could perform better": her human-centred approach is commendable, but until training translates into productivity and wellness into improved service delivery, she will remain stuck in the middle tier.

Her focus on staff welfare and training aligns with the human-centred spirit of section 10, which protects the inherent dignity of every person, but the continued backlog in recruitment, sluggish disciplinary processes and unfilled vacancies point to a breach of section 195(1)(b)'s call for "efficient, economic and effective use of resources."

While her partnership with unions on performance management could eventually strengthen accountability, it has yet to yield measurable gains in productivity or service delivery. By failing to convert internal wellness into external impact, Kekana falls short of the constitutional standard of responsiveness and performance demanded of senior officials



DEAN MACPHERSON - MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE

(DA)

GRADE: 80/100 - GOOD (MODERNISER DRIVING AN INFRASTRUCTURE TURNAROUND)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Macpherson has no tertiary degree - he is a career politician with only a matric qualification .

ACHIEVEMENTS

Dean Macpherson has brought a sharp sense of urgency to a department long synonymous with inertia and mismanagement. In his first year he moved quickly to build partnerships that could unblock South Africa's infrastructure pipeline. A flagship agreement with the UK government in July 2025 embedded technical experts in the Infrastructure Delivery Unit, while Infrastructure South Africa ("ISA") opened a second project preparation window and signed a facility with Afreximbank to improve the bankability of major builds . At the Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium (SIDSSA) 2025, Macpherson unveiled a refreshed "Construction Book" with around R268 billion in advanced projects, backed by ring-fenced preparation funds - an upgrade on the floundering pipelines of years past .

B+



He has also confronted one of the sector's most corrosive threats: extortion. In Durban, November 2024, he co-hosted a summit with the Police Minister, declaring the so-called "construction mafia" Public Enemy No. 1. The Hawks and industry stakeholders were mobilised and DPWI now reports that stoppages linked to extortion have fallen noticeably.

DEAN MACPHERSON - MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE

(DA)

GRADE: 80/100 - GOOD (MODERNISER DRIVING AN INFRASTRUCTURE TURNAROUND)

B+

Inside his department, Macpherson is pushing asset modernisation. He has begun unlocking revenue-generating use of state property, issued RFPs for under-used buildings and transferred dormant sites to serve as GBV shelters. He also rolled out the “Adopt-a-Municipality” programme to help distressed municipalities unblock local projects .

FAILURES

Legislation has been central to his tenure. The Expropriation Act of 2024, assented to in January 2025, replaced the 1975 law . Both the DA and the FW de Klerk Foundation have opposed the Act on principle, viewing it as a threat to property rights. Yet as Minister, its implementation sits squarely in Macpherson’s portfolio—a political tension he cannot escape. Alongside this, he has announced three reform bills: an Infrastructure Development Amendment Bill to give Infrastructure South Africa clear legal authority as a single entry point; a revised Council for the Built Environment Bill to tighten oversight; and an amendment to professionalise property management .

Challenges remain sobering. Many projects are still “in pipeline” rather than breaking ground. Non-payment by client departments - R4,3 billion currently, nearly R10 billion historically - continues to undermine DPWI’s ability to maintain facilities and pay contractors . His asset-leveraging and disposal drive has rattled centralisers in the ANC, though the fiscal logic is unavoidable.



DEAN MACPHERSON - MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE

(DA)

GRADE: **80/100** - GOOD (MODERNISER DRIVING AN INFRASTRUCTURE TURNAROUND)

B+

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



His grade of **80/100** reflects momentum and seriousness: project preparation is tighter, criminal threats are being confronted and state assets are starting to work harder. To climb higher, however, he must convert pipelines into bricks and mortar that citizens can see, use and trust.

Macpherson's tenure demonstrates tangible progress toward the constitutional principles of accountability, efficiency and responsiveness in public administration. Section 195(1) demands that public resources be used effectively and that development be driven through transparent, results-oriented governance - values reflected in his infrastructure turnaround, asset modernisation and aggressive stance against construction-site extortion. His unblocking of Infrastructure South Africa and the revitalised "Construction Book" also give effect to section 217's requirement for fair and cost-effective public procurement, signalling a shift toward integrity and delivery over bureaucracy.

However, section 237 of the Constitution - requiring that obligations be performed "diligently and without delay" - remains an unfinished test. Too many projects remain in the pipeline and the Expropriation Act under his portfolio poses complex constitutional tensions under section 25's protection of property rights. Constitutionally, Macpherson stands as a reformer who has reintroduced discipline and energy into a stagnant portfolio, but whose credibility will ultimately depend on visible, citizen-facing delivery rather than administrative blueprints alone.



SIHLE ZIKALALA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE (ANC)

GRADE: 65/100 - COULD PERFORM BETTER (CONSTRAINED DEPUTY, LIMITED INFLUENCE)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Sihle Zikalala, former KwaZulu-Natal premier and one-time Public Works minister, brings experience and political weight to his role as deputy. Since July 2024 he has focused on the Expanded Public Works Programme ("EPWP"), embarking on a "Siyahlola" listening tour across provinces to assess projects on the ground. He has also emphasised inclusivity, backing policies that reserve portions of small maintenance contracts for women and youth contractors.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Sihle Zikalala holds a BA in Communication Science (UNISA), aBAAdmin Honours in Public Administration, cum laude (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017) and a Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2019).



FAILURES



Yet his influence is clearly curtailed under DA minister Dean Macpherson. Signature ANC projects he once championed, have been quietly shelved in the GNU. His current role is more facilitative than directive - smoothing coordination with provincial leaders and assuring ANC constituencies that the infrastructure agenda is balanced. This bridge-building is valuable politically but limits his ability to drive systemic change.

SIHLE ZIKALALA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE (ANC)

GRADE: 65/100 - COULD PERFORM BETTER (CONSTRAINED DEPUTY, LIMITED INFLUENCE)



The EPWP remains his main platform, but critics note its limitations: while it provides short-term employment, the programme continues to underdeliver on skills development and long-term career pathways. Zikalala has also floated ideas to mentor emerging contractors, yet these remain at concept stage. Meanwhile, South Africa's infrastructure backlog and contractor capacity challenges remain vast and largely untouched by his portfolio.

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



To his credit, Zikalala has maintained a clean record, avoided controversy and shown dedication. He works tirelessly across party lines, but much of his effort translates into incremental adjustments rather than structural impact. His grade of **65/100** reflects this constrained reality: a capable facilitator whose experience adds value, but whose ability to deliver transformation is limited by both political dynamics and the narrow scope of his current responsibilities.

His management of the Expanded Public Works Programme ("EPWP") and on-site oversight tours show an effort to honour these values by promoting inclusivity and accountability in infrastructure delivery. His advocacy for youth and women contractors also advances section 9(2)'s commitment to substantive equality.

Yet, section 237's injunction that constitutional obligations be performed "diligently and without delay" exposes his weaknesses. The EPWP remains largely a stopgap rather than a vehicle for sustainable empowerment, with persistent skills and capacity shortfalls. While his bridge-building across coalition lines upholds section 41's cooperative governance principles, his lack of decisive authority curtails real reform.



BLADE NZIMANDE - MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION (ANC)

GRADE: 62/100 - COULD PERFORM BETTER (ANNOUNCEMENTS OUTPACE OUTCOMES)



Dr Blade Nzimande, one of the ANC's most seasoned intellectuals, came into the Science, Technology and Innovation portfolio with strong academic credentials: a BA from the University of Zululand, an Honours and Master's in Industrial Psychology and a PhD in Sociology from the University of Natal. His tenure has been marked by high-profile announcements and some genuine milestones, but a persistent gap remains between rhetoric and measurable results.

Among his headline achievements is the launch of the Nuclear Medicine Research Infrastructure ("NuMeRI") at Steve Biko Hospital, backed by R720 million in state funding. This facility, the first of its kind on the continent, promises cutting-edge cancer and TB diagnostics and the potential to expand local drug development capacity. Nzimande has also unveiled a Vaccine Innovation and Manufacturing Strategy, positioning South Africa to better respond to pandemics and strengthen indigenous vaccine research. On the energy front, he has advanced the Hydrogen Society Roadmap and "Platinum Valley" pilots, intended to seed a future hydrogen economy and green jobs.



Yet while the portfolio looks impressive on paper, the system-wide outcomes are weak. South Africa's R&D intensity remains stuck at around 0,62% of GDP, far below the 1,5% target set for 2030. Private-sector R&D investment remains anaemic and the innovation ecosystem still lacks vibrancy - few startups, limited commercialisation and stagnant tech job growth. Nzimande has acknowledged these shortcomings and convened working groups to address the funding gap, but tangible movement remains elusive.

BLADE NZIMANDE - MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION (ANC)

GRADE: 62/100 - COULD PERFORM BETTER (ANNOUNCEMENTS OUTPACE OUTCOMES)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



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ACHIEVEMENTS

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FAILURES

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BLADE NZIMANDE - MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION (ANC)

GRADE: 62/100 - COULD PERFORM BETTER (ANNOUNCEMENTS OUTPACE OUTCOMES)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Much of what he promotes - hydrogen, vaccines and advanced research centres - are long-horizon bets. They may eventually reshape the Science and Technology landscape, but for now, spillovers into entrepreneurship, provincial innovation hubs and job creation are minimal. The risk is that South Africa builds showcase facilities without breaking systemic bottlenecks in financing, skills and technology transfer.

Nzimande has avoided scandal and maintained steady alignment with the 2019 White Paper and Decadal Plan. But a ministry of this strategic importance cannot afford to be defined by slow burns and policy pronouncements alone. His **62/100** reflects a minister with vision and marquee projects, but one failing to convert infrastructure into a thriving innovation culture that delivers results citizens can feel.

Despite billions in announcements and ribbon-cuttings, R&D intensity languishes below 1% of GDP, private-sector participation is minimal and innovation hubs are dormant. These failures amount to a breach of section 237's demand that constitutional duties be carried out diligently and without delay.

While he champions the language of progress - hydrogen, vaccines and high-tech infrastructure - his ministry delivers paperwork, not progress. Section 195(1)(b) further obliges efficient use of resources, yet showcase projects like NuMeRI risk becoming monuments to misaligned priorities rather than engines of economic renewal. Constitutionally, Nzimande's record is one of drift: vision without velocity, leadership without results.



NOMALUNGELO GINA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION (ANC) GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (ACTIVE SCIENCE ADVOCATE, MINOR PORTFOLIO CONTRIBUTIONS)

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS



Dr Nomalungelo Gina has been an enthusiastic deputy minister, often serving as the public face of science promotion. A former educator and trade committee MP with the PhD in Public Administration, Gina officially launched multiple locally developed innovations to assist vulnerable groups - for example, unveiling a suite of South African-made assistive devices for persons with disabilities (including a low-cost smart cane for the visually impaired and a local language speech app for the mute). She has strongly championed inclusivity in STEM: at a Women in Science event, Gina emphasised the government's commitment to increasing women's participation in research, backing it with scholarship funds and internships. Internationally, she represented SA at BRICS's Innovation Challenge, delivering a keynote urging member countries to share technologies to solve common social problems.



FAILURES



While diligent, her independent impact is somewhat limited. Core policy and big-ticket projects are driven by Minister Nzimande, with Gina assisting.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Gina's hands-on approach is also seen in community outreach – she often visits science centres and rural schools to ignite interest in math and science, echoing that science must bridge the gap between the lab and the people.

NOMALUNGELO GINA - DEPUTY MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION (ANC) GRADE: 60/100 - FAIR (ACTIVE SCIENCE ADVOCATE, MINOR PORTFOLIO CONTRIBUTIONS)

CONSTITUTIONAL VERDICT



Gina's score of **60** reflects appreciation for her passionate science advocacy and community engagement, while noting that her role is largely supportive. No scandals or missteps mar her record. To increase her effectiveness, Gina could spearhead a signature project (for instance, a "mobile science lab" program she's proposed) to truly stamp her mark on grassroots innovation.

Her visible outreach and inclusivity campaigns in STEM education echo section 9(2)'s call for substantive equality, yet these efforts remain largely symbolic without systemic expansion of opportunities for women, youth, or persons with disabilities in research institutions.

Section 237 further obliges that constitutional duties be performed "diligently and without delay," but Gina's tenure has produced enthusiasm rather than enduring reform. Launching devices and delivering speeches cannot substitute for policy traction or institutional change in South Africa's stagnant innovation ecosystem. While she has avoided scandal and maintained professional integrity, her work lacks the strategic weight and measurable progress required of constitutional office-bearers.



CONCLUSION

This report set out to answer a straightforward constitutional question: are the President, Deputy President, Ministers and Deputy Ministers giving real effect to the promise of our Constitution, or merely talking about it? The answer is mixed. No one in this Cabinet reached an “outstanding” A+ level. Only one - the Minister of Electricity & Energy, Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, with 85/100 - enters the A band for very good performance. Most members of the executive sit in the “fair” and “average” range in the 60s, a smaller group achieve “good” scores in the 70s and a worrying number fall into the 50s and 40s, where constitutional duties are only partially, or poorly, fulfilled.

The most powerful offices are not the best performers. President Cyril Ramaphosa scores 60/100 - a bare pass that reflects some progress in stabilising institutions and building a Government of National Unity, but also persistent inertia and limited impact on core socio-economic rights. Deputy President Paul Mashatile records 50/100, signalling weak public credibility and modest evidence of leadership on cross-cutting priorities. John Steenhuisen, leader of the second-largest party and now Minister of Agriculture, also sits at 60/100: visible, vocal, but with results still lagging behind commitments. **These three scores capture the central lesson of this report: position and party label do not guarantee performance.**

At the same time, there are genuine bright spots. Energy, Home Affairs, Public Works & Infrastructure and parts of Forestry, Fisheries & Environment show what can be achieved when clear leadership, operational focus and constitutional discipline come together. There are deputy ministers in various parties who, often with limited formal power, are driving regulatory clean-ups, improving access to services or strengthening oversight. Across the board, there is more candour about failure than in the peak state-capture years. Ministers are more willing to admit that municipalities are collapsing, audits are weak and learning outcomes are poor. That honesty is not enough, but it is a necessary foundation for repair.

This assessment is not a political scorecard dressed up as research. It is the product of several months of detailed work using only public, verifiable information, peer-reviewed within the team and applied uniformly across all parties. Ministers and deputies from the ANC, DA, IFP, FF+, PAC, GOOD, PA, UDM and others were measured against the same constitutional yardstick: leadership and vision, execution and impact, integrity and accountability, use of public resources and advancement of rights. Context was taken seriously. New appointees were not blamed for the past, but judged on how they used their first months. Those in office longer were expected to show real movement on outcomes, not just plans.

The result is a Cabinet report card that is candid but not cynical. It recognises that this is a relatively new and constrained administration, operating in a country facing deep economic and institutional strain. Yet it also insists that constitutional standards cannot be lowered simply because the task is hard. Sections 7(2), 92 and 195 of the Constitution remain clear: public power must be exercised accountably, efficiently and in a way that advances the rights and dignity of all.

CONCLUSION

The choice now lies with those in office and with the public they serve. For the executive, this report should be used as a management tool: to reward and emulate the few good and very good performers, to support those who are trying but stuck in the “fair” band and to confront, without delay, the persistent failure in critical portfolios like policing, water, higher education and the protection of women, youth and persons with disabilities. For Parliament, civil society, the media and citizens, it offers an evidence-based basis for sharper oversight and more focused engagement.

If this report is read in that spirit - as a clear mirror held up to power, rooted in the Constitution and open to contestation - it can help shift the centre of government performance from “fair” to “good” and from “good” to “excellent”. That is not wishful thinking; it is a practical constitutional goal. Whether next year’s assessment looks better will depend on what is done with these findings now.

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