















MESSAGE FROM THE **ACTING CEO** OF **SANRAL**

Welcome to this first edition of *Operation Vala Zonke/ Kwala Kaofela*, which we bring to you to announce, celebrate and support the launch of the national campaign of the same name. The campaign aims to stamp out the scourge of potholes across our country.

As custodian of the national road network, and given the magnitude of the pothole problem, the South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd (SANRAL) has been mandated by the President and the Minister of Transport to lead this campaign as the implementing agency. We will work closely with the provinces and municipalities to make sure that it is a success. This is an important campaign that will have a positive impact on our country and our economy.

As part of the campaign, SANRAL has launched two related apps: the SANRAL Road Authority app and the SANRAL public Pothole app. The first is for authorities to record existing potholes, assign maintenance teams and track the repairs. The second will enable you to report potholes on any road in South Africa. It includes geomapping so that the maintenance team will know exactly where the potholes are. Your reports will automatically be forwarded to the maintenance team, and feedback will come back to you through the public Pothole app.

South Africa's road infrastructure is a vital asset for us all. I encourage you to make use of the SANRAL Pothole app – which you may download free from Google Play Store or the Apple App Store – and to use your power to make a difference.

It is still early days, but we are seeing steady progress on the reporting of potholes, and the actions taken to resolve them. You can follow the activities of the campaign on social media, including Facebook and Instagram, using #ValaZonke and #KwalaKaofela, or the Twitter account https://twitter.com/ValaZonke or website https://valazonke.co.za/

By reporting potholes, you will help us to pinpoint them and to deal with them, smoothing the way for a brighter and safer future for us all, one pothole at a time.

Enjoy the read.

Lehlohonolo Memeza

Acting CEO, SANRAL





MESSAGE FROM THE **MINISTER** OF **TRANSPORT**

On Monday 8 August 2022 I officially launched Operation Vala Zonke on site at the R57 in Sasolburg, Vanderbijlpark. This labour-intensive programme aims to address potholes across the country, with SANRAL leading it and working together with national and provincial role-players to ensure that the programme is implemented effectively.

The Department of Transport is supporting District Municipalities with Road Infrastructure Planning through the Rural Road Asset Management Systems Grant (RRAMSG), as provided for in the Division of Revenue Act.

The roll-out of this programme will see the implementation of an integrated, rigorous and comprehensive plan that will drive interventions to ensure that the department improves the overall condition index of roads at local and provincial authorities.

This campaign will change the face of our municipal and provincial roads from pothole-riddled to an acceptable state of repair. It will also create jobs and improve the country's road infrastructure.

The programme will be replicated across the country with premiers and MECs leading the campaign, and the intervention will be closely monitored and assessed over the next six months.

Bad roads, caused mainly by potholes, are one of the major hindrances to economic growth. Our national policy on road infrastructure is anchored on the National Development Plan, which enjoins us to invest in a strong network of economic infrastructure designed to support the country's medium- and long-term objectives if we are to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth by 2030.

Government's infrastructure development plan is an important building block in revitalising South Africa's





economy and job creation. This will, in turn, exponentially improve our efforts to ensure sustainable livelihoods for many of our people.

We are therefore collectively enjoined to ensure that the state of repair of our road network is in an acceptable condition across the country and all spheres of government.

Cabinet has endorsed this campaign, which brings our collective capacity together to tackle potholes in our municipalities and provinces.

In the main, our national roads remain pothole-free, partly because of SANRAL's proactive approach to fixing potholes. SANRAL has a policy of fixing any reported potholes within 48 hours. While national roads are overwhelmingly in a pristine condition, we recognise that provincial and municipal roads require a decisive strategy and active support to augment capacity gaps.

Fixing the potholes is an enormous task that will take time. I urge you to help us by downloading the Pothole reporting app, where you can upload pictures and provide a real-time location of the affected road on an interactive map.

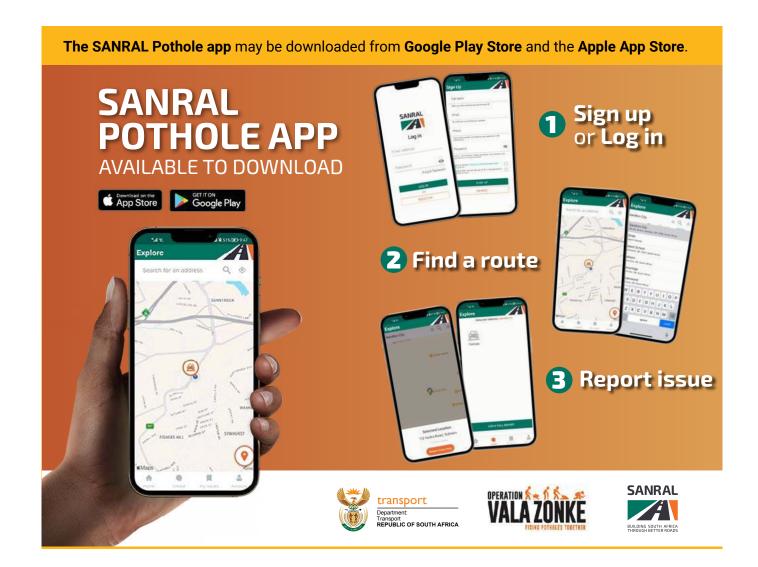
The app will also provide status updates on issues raised, using a pothole ticketing system.

The information then gets assigned to the relevant authority, depending on where the road is, and the maintenance depot responsible for that road attends to fixing the pothole.

Help us to make this campaign a resounding success, which will benefit us all.

Fikile Mbalula

Minister of Transport





There is a fundamental relationship between mobility, a country's socio-economic standing, and the well-being of its citizens. Improving transport and its infrastructure bolsters economic opportunities and essential services, addresses the needs of road users, and generates forward momentum for our ideal of a better life for all our people.

Conversely, when our mobility is disrupted, the impact is immediate, and this becomes a trigger for citizens' discontent. The multitude of potholes that have come to characterise large parts of our road network have become such a trigger – and understandably so.

Potholes are like a canary in the coal mine – a warning signal about the dire state of our roads infrastructure. When left unattended, they have a profound effect on safety and mental well-being – as well as far-reaching economic consequences.

In South Africa, road transport is vital as it accounts for:

and

93%
of all freight
of all passenger movements.







Our economic development and our society's upliftment depend on maintenance of the 750,000km road network of national, provincial and municipal roads. Our road network is a key drawcard for foreign investors, who require the reliable and safe transportation of goods across the country and into the sub-region. While certain portions of the road network are world-class and meet the highest international standards, this is far from being the case across the board.

Repairing potholes to improve the quality of our road network has therefore become critical. While this is a pervasive challenge, we are encouraged by a number of laudable initiatives already underway in a number of provinces that are beginning to make a difference.

Research indicates that the ability and ease with which citizens can report potholes plays an important part in how they feel about the governance of their neighbourhood. These reporting capabilities, which create a feedback loop, increase the effectiveness and efficiency of those responsible for the repairs.

This is evident in Johannesburg, where the Pothole Patrol app has enabled drivers to report potholes using geolocation data. It was created in a partnership between Dialdirect, Discovery Insure and the City of Johannesburg, and has had significant success. These approaches to citizen activism have been in operation worldwide over the past 20 years.

Potholes will never be wholly eradicated, as they are a symptom of ageing road surfaces, exacerbated by poor maintenance. Like elsewhere, the road network belongs to all South Africans, and by working together through feedback loops and partnerships formed between public and private sector entities, we can drastically reduce the number of potholes.

Potholes are not unique to South Africa. In the UK, during 2021/22 the road authorities filled 1.7 million potholes – one every 19 seconds – spending more than £107 million (R2.15 billion). Potholes will never be wholly eradicated, as they are a symptom of ageing road surfaces, exacerbated by poor maintenance. Like elsewhere, the road network belongs to all South Africans, and by working together through feedback loops and partnerships formed between public and private sector entities, we can drastically reduce the number of potholes.

We have just launched the National Pothole Campaign, Operation Vala Zonke, a programme to fix and prevent potholes on the country's roads. This campaign will be led by SANRAL, fostering collaboration across all spheres of government and co-ordinating the pooling of expertise and resources to fill all potholes. We aim to create well-engineered, regularly maintained road surfaces using quality materials, while pursuing more robust maintenance strategies.

As part of this, SANRAL has launched two related apps: the SANRAL Road Authority app and the SANRAL public Pothole app. The first is for authorities to record existing potholes, assign maintenance teams and track the repairs. The second will enable the public to report potholes on any road in South Africa. These reports will then automatically be forwarded to the maintenance team as configured with SANRAL Road Authority. Feedback will come back through the public Pothole app.

As custodian of the national road network, and given the magnitude of the pothole problem, SANRAL will provide leadership as coordinator of the National Pothole Campaign, and has been mandated to work with provincial and local governments. The provincial and local roads



authorities will maintain their jurisdictions and pothole repair programmes already committed to in the current financial year.

We recognise that preventative maintenance is vital in successfully dealing with the pothole problem, and that delaying maintenance is a very costly exercise. South Africa's road infrastructure is a precious asset, and we must take responsibility for preserving and expanding it in response to urban growth and the country's socioeconomic development needs. The road network is a key determinant in our government's capacity to deliver essential services to the people.

As small as each pothole may seem on an individual basis, this initiative is a very important part of government's drive to deliver infrastructure while reigniting the economy, as laid out by the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission Technical Task Team, and will help the rollout of South Africa's Infrastructure Investment Plan and National Infrastructure Plan 2050. As government, we are determined to continue maintaining South Africa's road infrastructure assets, a key tenet of our strategy that underpins the National Pothole Campaign.

As government, we are under no illusion about the importance of actively pursuing the repair and maintenance of our infrastructure because, if ignored or dismissed, the long-term consequences are financially disastrous and socially catastrophic.









Operation Vala Zonke, the national Department of Transport's pothole repair campaign spearheaded by the South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL), is quickly gaining momentum as reports pour in daily on SANRAL's Pothole app.

As repairs get underway in various municipalities around the country, we turn our investigative eye to the irksome pothole itself - that much-cursed South African malady that President Cyril Ramaphosa declared war on earlier this year.

Like everything made for the outdoors, roads are worn down by use and eroded by weather. Constantly used, often by heavy vehicles, roads take enormous strain and, if not adequately maintained, potholes appear.

What causes potholes?

Potholes are formed by high or very low **temperatures** causing cracks in the asphalt (tar). These cracks get wider over time and rainwater seeps in, eroding the underlying layers of crushed rock and gravel.

Passing **traffic stresses** the road surface further, until it loses strength and collapses, making a hole that gets bigger and bigger.

Key to preventing potholes is **regular road resurfacing** with motor graders. This process ensures that there is a gradual slope away from the road on either side so that water runs off into a ditch or roadway drainage system.

On rural roads, the weakest spot is where the asphalt meets the verge. If the traffic on these roads is heavy, certain parts of the asphalt, such as the inside of a corner where drivers like to overtake, will break down. This will result in a pothole that spreads from the inside of the curve.

While poor maintenance is often cited as the main cause of potholes, the damage caused to roads by **heavy vehicles** is a major contributing factor.

Tackling the pothole pandemic in SA is not a simple matter of slapping on a hot tar band-aid and steering away from the problem. The commitment from national government and SANRAL has to be supported by the public. **Reporting potholes via the SANRAL Pothole app** will ensure that Operation Vala Zonke delivers on its promise to fix potholes on all SA roads.





The process of repairing potholes

The process of fixing a pothole is down to an exact science:

The pothole is cleaned out. Dirt and debris in the pothole are removed. Having pieces of broken tar mixed in with the new tar can weaken the repair.



The pothole is reshaped. Straight edges are cut around the pothole and old asphalt is removed.



Primer and new asphalt. The pothole is primed, and new asphalt is used for the repair. The asphalt is compacted after being applied, to minimise water penetration and increase its resistance. The compaction also creates a bond between the old and new asphalt.



Clean-up. Any debris left around the repair is removed. Most pothole repairs can be driven on immediately.



The cost of fixing a single pothole is



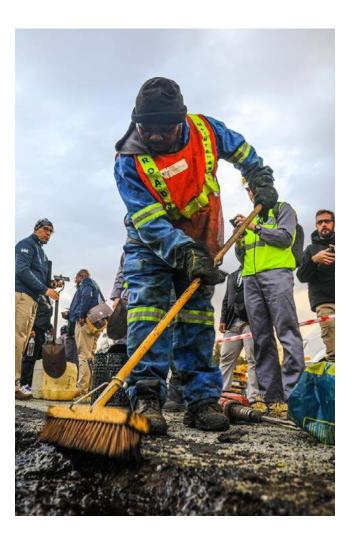
Otsile Mpela, MD of Bafenyi Asphalt, cites poor workmanship as one of the greatest obstacles to achieving quality pothole fixing and edge-break repairs. "It is imperative that the correct procedure is applied. The first thing to do is to develop a checklist of the equipment and tools required, including good-quality cold asphalt," he says.

In the execution phase, a concrete saw is used to cut out the existing asphalt around the pothole or edge-break.

"A proper square cut is required if you are patching a pothole. After cutting and preparing, it is important to use SS60 primer, which serves as a glue to hold the cold asphalt and base together.

Mpela adds that one can use a hard broom to spread it around and cover the whole exposed area. "We then leave it for three to five minutes before applying the asphalt, which is spread around with a rake. While compacting, the poured asphalt will start to go down. We keep pouring asphalt until it is level with the existing surface."

A five to 10-minute compacting period follows – and another pothole is no more.





"Forward march!" This is the command to Mpumalanga's new pothole-fixing army, a team of specialists with orders to eradicate the large number of craters that plague the roads of this scenic province. Potholed roads can act as a deterrent to tourists wanting to visit the region, which is home to iconic attractions such as God's Window, Mac Mac Falls and Kruger National Park.

As the Tourism Month of September kicked off, so did teams of men and women in green, blue and yellow in Delmas, a quaint farming town south-east of Pretoria. They are set to fan out over the province, tackling potholes as they go.



The Mpumalanga initiative is part of Operation Vala Zonke, the national Department of Transport's pothole repair campaign, spearheaded by the South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) and supported by the provincial government.

Local tour operators have long complained about the state of the roads in Mpumalanga, saying they feared that it reflected poorly on the 'state of society' in the province.

"Mpumalanga's tourism sector was badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the state of the roads is becoming a deterrent for visiting tourists. Roads leading to prominent tourist sites have been riddled with potholes for years now," said Skhumbuzo Buda, a self-employed tour operator working the Pilgrim's Rest route.

From Mashishing, a town in Thaba Chweu Local Municipality that is the centre of the SA fly fishing industry, to Dullstroom, the Highlands Meander tourist mecca that attracts hundreds of thousands of people each year, roads are riddled with potholes. These towns and villages are highly reliant on tourism to keep their economies afloat.

Mpumalanga MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mohita Latchminarain, has signalled the province's commitment to repair potholes on the R536 between Hazyview and Sabie as part of Operation Vala Zonke.

Provincial head of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Charles Morolo, who launched the Mpumalanga leg of



Operation Vala Zonke, said the province would use local labour to fix its roads.

"We are going to fill the 1,377 vacancies in the department by recruiting additional staff (from the community) and build state capacity rather than waste money on corrupt companies.

"We are going to get our own people, give them jobs, promote those who have been here for decades and create formidable teams that will serve the nation with pride," he said.

Morolo said Mpumalanga residents should get used to seeing "army battalions" of pothole fixers, armed with their equipment and restoring the roads in their various municipalities.

He added that the pothole "soldiers" would be divided into small, dedicated maintenance teams to address minor road maintenance issues reported by members of the public through the SANRAL Pothole app.

The free app, which is available for IOS and Android phones, makes it easy to report potholes from around the country and is easy to download from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. You then simply open it and you can start reporting potholes immediately after registration. The app opens up a little camera which you use to take a picture of the pothole, while the system automatically records the GPS location. The information then gets assigned to the relevant authority, depending on the location.

"In the past we were unable to address issues like emerging potholes due to limited resources and budget constraints, with months passing before minor defects were seen to. But now we are going to set up formidable teams that have received extensive training in repairing potholes across our beloved province," said Morolo.





"The success of these teams is going to be further proof of what can be achieved when we pull together - we can do amazing things. It is also crucial for these teams' journey to continue, so that skills within them are passed to new members," he added.

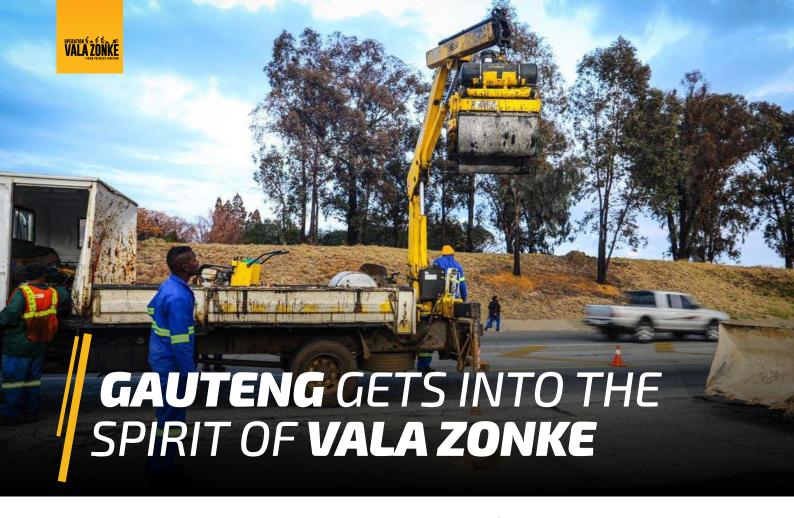
He said Mpumalanga's initiative was a model that could be shared across the country, upskilling people to take ownership of their surroundings.

Many residents of Bothibelong township, 3km north of Delmas, welcomed the initiative saying it would not only create jobs in the municipalities, but also make their area more attractive to investors.

As the pothole repairs got underway, taxi operators at the local rank rejoiced.

"It is really going to save us money on tyres and vehicle repairs," said local taxi operator Kleinbooi Mahlangu.

Busi Khumalo, who owns a local bed and breakfast outlet, said badly damaged roads were harming tourism, the economy and jobs in the province. She said that fixing the roads would definitely attract tourists to Mpumalanga.



As the National Department of Transport's potholefixing campaign Operation Vala Zonke gains momentum countrywide, the Gauteng administration is taking its war down to the tar, targeting potholes from the Vaal up to the Crocodile River on the Limpopo border.

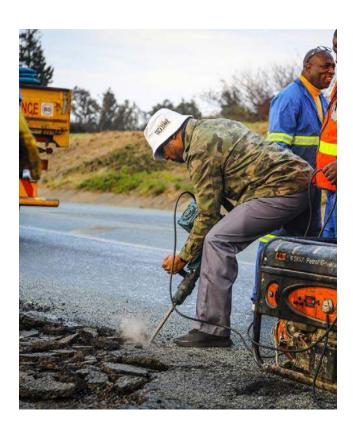
Pledging the province's cooperation at the August 8 launch of Operation Vala Zonke in Emfuleni Local Municipality, Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) CEO Dr Tshepo Mahanuke said "One finger cannot lift a spoon. The JRA stands by, and fully supports Operation Vala Zonke."

From March to 15 June this year, the JRA repaired about 112,699 potholes as part of its A Re Sebetseng maintenance programme, covering seven regions across the city, said Mahanuke. Numerous road defects have also been fixed. It aims to do even more with the Vala Zonke partnership.

In addition to daily road maintenance, the JRA has a road resurfacing programme to address roads showing various forms of damage. These roads, identified through a visual conditions assessment, are earmarked for road resurfacing or other forms of treatment.

"Resurfacing involves the milling out of the existing aged asphalt (tar surface) and retarring with new asphalt. This is done to improve the level of service of any particular road, thereby extending its lifespan. This also ensures safe and easy mobility on the City's roads," said Mahanuke.

Gauteng MEC for Public Transport and Roads
Infrastructure, Jacob Mamabolo, has been leading a robust
provincial campaign to repair potholes and roads. The
province has been running 'Smart Mobility Weekends' –
programmes run on Saturdays and Sundays to help make a
dent in the serious backlog in road repairs.



While provincial roads were in a better state, roads most decried by the public were those owned by municipalities, Mamabolo said. He added that 21 roads had already been rehabilitated in Emfuleni, with 32 to go.

Reporting a pothole in your neighbourhood has never been easier. Simply download the free SANRAL Pothole app – available for IOS and Android phones – register, and immediately begin reporting those pesky potholes. The app allows you to take a photo of the pothole, while the system automatically records the GPS location. This information then gets assigned to the relevant authority, depending on the location.



SANRAL Engineering Executive Louw Kannemeyer said it was hoped that all open potholes would be closed in the next six months. He said the most effective way to deal with potholes was to fix them as soon as they occurred, and reiterated that Operation Vala Zonke was an important campaign that would impact greatly on the lives of South Africans.

'The initiative will change the face of the country's many pothole-scarred roads, turning them into smooth carriageways that will no longer raise the ire of motorists or burn holes in their pockets by way of damaged tyres and rims," Kannemeyer said.





Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula launched Operation Vala Zonke project in Sasolburg, at Emfuleni Municipality in the Vaal in August this year to fix potholes in the country. The 16-month campaign is an initiative of the Department of Transport led by SANRAL and supported by national government. SANRAL will work with local government officials to ensure potholes are repaired speedily.

"We have designated SANRAL – our agency responsible for the national road network – to be the implementing agency for this campaign, working with different provinces. SANRAL will coordinate the efforts, working with provinces and municipalities, to ensure potholes are attended to speedily," he said.



See https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/transport-department-will-work-with-municipalities-to-fix-the-potholes-mbalula/



Minister Mbalula says his department is willing to assist municipalities that lack the capabilities and skills to fix the potholes on their local roads.



Minister Mbalula says the project will be evaluated every six months. "Then from here, we are also going to engage because I am not happy when I see Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni with potholes all over the place, eThekwini, Buffalo City and Pretoria with potholes all over the place when I know we have got the capacity," said Mbalula.

See video of the Department of Transport and SANRAL launching Operation Vala Zonke here:

Department of Transport, Sanral launch Operation Vala Zonke to repair potholes across SA roads - YouTube



South Africa is facing a huge road infrastructure maintenance backlog, estimated to be more than R200 billion. As much as 40% of the provincial road network has reached the end of its design life.

The launch of the national pothole repair campaign was accompanied by simultaneous provincial activations across all of South Africa's provinces, spearheaded by the various provincial governments.

The National Department of Transport is supporting District Municipalities with Road Infrastructure Planning through the Rural Road Asset Management Systems Grant (RRAMSG), as provided for in the Division of Revenue Act (DORA).

NORTHERN CAPE



At the launch in the Northern Cape on the R374 just outside Barkley West, Premier Dr Zamani Saul and the MEC of Roads and Public Works, Ms Fufe Makatong said that potholes will no longer be tolerated on South African roads.

"Contrary to public sentiment, potholes are not only a symptom of roads that are not maintained. Like many other roads in the country, the R374, which is the main link between the R31 and the N12, has reached the end of its design life, and the ever-increasing heavy vehicle traffic does not aid matters," Ms Makatong said.

For 20km of the section from the N12 to Barkley West, a light rehabilitation was completed in 2020, including the road being widened from 6m to 7.4m. The 18km to Barkley West, which is the remaining section, currently shows defects which include potholes, edge breaks and crocodile cracks.

The scope of the rehabilitation includes pothole repairs in the middle portion, and recycling and stabilisation of a portion of the base and gravel shoulder (2.4m width). The gravel shoulders will be repaired to correct the edge drops, the middle portion will be treated with Ralumac slurry, and the full road width will be sealed with double seal, using rubber-modified bitumen.



"No country in the world is without potholes. How we manage it, repair and then put a long-term maintenance strategy in place will determine the eventual state of our roads. SANRAL is committed to working with the Northern Cape Provincial Government. We commend them for the quantity and quality of the data that the province submits in order for us to accurately assess the state of the roads," said Randall Cable, SANRAL's Western Region Manager.

The launch included the introduction of SANRAL's new Pothole app, which the public can use to report potholes in their vicinity. The app allows the public to raise any issues (such as uploading pictures, details of the issue and getting a real-time location of the road where the issue is raised) on an interactive map that will show the owners of the different roads, as well as to get status updates on issues raised, using a pothole ticketing system.

"We are confident that this technology will allow us to engage our road users, respond to their needs and keep them informed of progress, every step of the way," said Dr Saul.

"Operation Vala Zonke is also geared to address youth unemployment, as we are using students who have completed training in road construction, to work on the pothole repairs, along with our internal resources," added Ms Makatong.

EASTERN CAPE





In the Eastern Cape the MEC of Transport, Safety and Liaison, Ms Weziwe Tikana-Gxothiwe, launched Operation Vala Zonke on the R346 route between Mount Coke and the East London Airport in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

Ms Tikana-Gxothiwe said the province was aligning their work with Operation Vala Zonke, and that the Eastern Cape Department of Transport had planned to fix 65,000m² of potholes in the province and had set aside a budget of R49 million.

"The lack of financial resources can be attributed as the reason why the roads have not been maintained, as well as not monitoring progress of work. There is a backlog of road maintenance. All our citizens want surface roads, which is a challenge. More resources are needed to assist in meeting our target. SANRAL is taking over five roads in the province, which is great.

"We have done good work in the Sarah Baartman District Municipality, and we are busy working in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. We will continue to work in Alfred Nzo District Municipality. We try to work with the communities," she said.

She also commended SANRAL for launching the Pothole app to report and monitor potholes: "We appreciate the app introduced by SANRAL. The app will assist us a lot with identifying and reporting potholes and speed up the repair time."

SANRAL Southern Region Manager Mbulelo Peterson said that as a state-owned entity, SANRAL will work with the Eastern Cape Department of Transport. "SANRAL will lead the fixing of potholes programme and provide technical support to the province," he said.

Peterson added that fixing potholes will improve road infrastructure: "We have to maintain our roads to provide a world-class road network."



Brought to you by the National Department of Transport, the provincial MECs for Transport and Roads together with SANRAL.

















