

**Parliamentary Debate - Arts and Culture**  
**By**  
**Mr JA Esterhuizen MP**

19 May 2015

Honourable Speaker,

Although this government states that it values the contribution of cultural industry to the national economy, not enough is being done to recognise these creative industries as core of the creative economy.

To broaden the base of arts and culture to embrace further cultural development in this country, this department needs greater financial assistance through this budget process.

Through Art we can assist in establishing appreciation for different perspectives and cultures in this country and find a common ground around which to celebrate our mutual "South Africanism".

This government has stated many times that it promotes a transformative national agenda, and accepts that the past cannot and should not be completely deleted.

This is to avoid the repetition of the same mistakes out of ignorance of what has happened before.

Tearing down and defacing statues and monuments is not supportive of this and will only cause greater intolerance, racial and cultural polarisation.

The Minister recent stated that, "Heritage sites and national monuments have cultural significance and value because of their importance to a community in revealing a pattern of South Africa's history".

In this regard we agree that place names and statues cannot be changed or moved simply to give in to current ideological pressures, but that rather a culture of mutual recognition and respect must be promoted by making place for everyone's heritage and views. Amicable resolution to this matter must be found through dialogue and negotiation.

We are also of the strong opinion that traditional leaders, who are the primary custodians of cultural heritage and practices in our traditional societies are not being given a prominent enough role to play within the mandate of this department.

There is in fact, no partnership between this department and the house of traditional leaders, not nationally or provincially and this must be corrected through the necessary assistance and funding.

Honourable Chair , South Africa's economy is one of the largest on the continent but it's contribution to the creative industries through this budget process leaves a great deal to be desired.

We would like to see more funding available for exhibitions and investment in the arts and greater funding for exposure to the burgeoning tourist trade for rural choir's and music groups.

Through tourism, 'arts and crafts' has been identified as one of the main drivers of sustainable economic opportunities and income generators for local communities and rural districts, whilst expanding business opportunities for small, medium and micro enterprises.

These small communities and industries must be supported through the continued advertising and marketing assistance of this department and the limited funds available.

Departmental spending must also be subject to stringent checks and balances. A million Rand departmental car rental account is excessive in the extreme. There can't be any real justification for that!

In closing, I would like to state that Art is important for awakening the imagination of the nation, enriching our lives and compelling us to think in new ways, whilst honouring the old ways, and to accomplish this we need the assistance of all South Africans.

The IFP supports this budget.

I thank you.