

## **DA municipalities a perfect example of best practice!**

**By Eleanore Bouw-Spies MP – DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs**

After our Portfolio Committee oversight last week, I left the North West Province saddened, angry and hopeless. Not only because of what I heard and what I saw but also because of the total disregard for people. How can public representatives so blatantly slap their communities in the face? After a week back in my home Province, the Western Cape, I have slowly recovered and have hope again.

The recent Ratings Africa's Municipal Financial Stability Index (MFSI) found the top-performing municipalities in the country to be in the Western Cape. The top 6 performing municipalities are DA governed of which 5 are from the Western Cape and the 5 worst performing municipalities are governed by the ANC.

And NO, we are not saying that we are perfect. We have our fair share of challenges. However, our municipalities perform despite these challenges that they face. Its a testament to the confidence that members of the public have in how their money is well managed and not stolen or wasted, as is the case in ANC municipalities.

So, what makes these top municipalities stand out from the rest? It is clearly not throwing another model at them, or throwing millions at them. NO. It is getting the basics right. It is about delivering proper services at the right time, proper and sound financial management, good governance and commitment to effective oversight and accountability.

Of course, the DA makes mistakes, we aren't perfect. But, on average, we outperform the ANC in every single municipality where we govern - mayor for mayor, audit report for audit report, streetlight for streetlight. And that's why people move from towns and cities where the ANC governs to towns and cities where the DA governs in hope of a better life and better opportunities.

The top-performing Municipality in the country, Mosselbay, is a perfect example of just that. Over and above 6 consecutive clean Audits, they get the basics right! To them it's about implementing and monitoring the system at its most basic level. Setting weekly work schedules with constant monitoring and immediate intervention, even when only half a day behind. They have a Service Committee that sits every week. It's about realizing that if every complaint about water leaks and potholes is not handled in 48hrs, it will culminate in a total breakdown even without you noticing the trend towards that failure. Long term plans must be strictly adhered to because every lapse essentially creates a new plan that not everyone else is aware of resulting in different outcomes and possible chaos.

Midvaal Municipality in Gauteng is another example of getting the basics right. Midvaal only spends 24% of its total revenue of R1,16 billion on salaries which allows for R130million to be spent on various infrastructure projects throughout the year. They pay their creditors within 10

days on average compared to the national average of 180 days. Unlike some municipalities that run a salary bill that is higher than their equitable share, which means that once they have paid themselves, there is no money to deliver any services to its residents.

The Attorney-General last year strongly suggested that other municipalities in Gauteng replicate Mdivaal's model of good financial and performance management. Yet the governing party refuses to reach out and learn from best practices because their egos are bigger than their commitment to deliver to the very people who elected them.