

Budget Debate on Vote 34: Mineral Resources and Energy

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Typically, budget speeches serve as an occasion to discuss the allocation of billions of rands on the provision of services to our citizens for the upcoming fiscal year.

For ordinary South Africans though, most of what is said is incomprehensible and meaningless. So, perhaps, in addressing the budget for the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, we should look at some numbers that do mean something to our residents.

The number of loadshedding hours in 2022 were 3 times that of the previous 5 years.¹ We have already experienced 2 896 hours of load shedding in the first quarter of 2023, almost 80% the number of hours for the whole of 2022. And of those, 548 hours have been in Stage 6 versus only 166 hours last year.²

For those who can afford it, alternative sources of energy such as generators, inverters and solar panels are available for heating, cooking and lighting. But for the nearly 3.6 million indigent households³ across our country, when the blackouts come, they are plunged into darkness, unable to withstand the frigid winter temperatures.

And the impacts of loadshedding will further condemn them to a life of poverty as the opportunities for finding employment diminish with each day. Minister of Electricity, Dr Ramokgopa told Parliament last week that it is estimated that we have already lost 650 000 jobs due to loadshedding and that all indications are that we stand to lose in excess of 850 000 if loadshedding continues unabated.⁴

Clearly, Minister Mantashe, your approach to date has not worked. And it definitely doesn't help for you to double down on your efforts while stubbornly hanging onto Cold War ideologies, archaic policies and outdated technologies. Your government's lackadaisical attitude to the energy crisis is underscored by the fact that the new Integrated Resource Plan – essentially an electricity capacity blueprint - is already two years overdue.

By contrast, the DA-run Western Cape government is urgently innovating to address both current and future energy needs. As an example, the Province has set aside R 7 billion to mitigate the electricity crisis through its Energy Resilience Programme. The programme is

¹ [By the numbers: What load-shedding does to your mental health \(businesslive.co.za\)](https://www.businesslive.co.za)

² [We've had more load shedding so far this year than in the whole of 2022 | Business \(news24.com\)](https://www.news24.com)

³ [Local government must prioritise indigent households – The Mail & Guardian \(mg.co.za\)](https://www.theguardian.com)

⁴ [‘More than 850,000 jobs will be lost as a result of load-shedding’, says Ramokgopa \(timeslive.co.za\)](https://www.timeslive.co.za)

aimed primarily at supporting local government to develop and sustain renewable energy infrastructure to ensure that participating municipalities continue to provide services during loadshedding, as well as to promote economic growth.

Chairperson, loadshedding is not just an electricity crisis. It is an unfolding humanitarian crisis. And this callous ANC government has yet to provide any real solutions aside from a new set of protocols for Stage 9 and beyond. Winter is upon us. And as the nights get longer, millions of South Africans face unrelenting darkness and bone-chilling cold. The only glimmer of hope for this country is a DA government taking office in 2024.