**African Christian Democratic Party**

 **9 July 2019

ACDP Parliament
Speech on Vote 35: Transport**

**By Steve Swart MP and Whip**

**ACDP questions the fact that not a single conviction has been handed down for the many Metrorail train carriages torched and destroyed**

* **says it is incomprehensible that those who are guilty of reckless and negligent driving, or even driving under the influence of alcohol, will be able to claim under the proposed Road Accident Benefit Scheme**

“Chairperson,

Minister, may we from the ACDP, firstly congratulate you on your appointment as Transport Minister. This is a critical portfolio, given the high numbers of people who die or are injured on our roads on a daily basis.

I travel on the notorious N2 on daily basis. I often complain about the delays due to traffic congestion. Three weeks ago, I came across a collision involving three mini-bus taxis and a sedan. As it had just occurred, I stopped and called the emergency services. I then consoled the traumatised drivers and passengers who, thankfully, only incurred light injuries. This is the lived experience of millions of commuters on a daily basis. We express our deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones, particularly in the horrific bus accidents. Those that make use of PRASA (Metrorail), often arrive late, if at all, and are subject to serious overcrowding and criminal acts, whether at stations or on the trains themselves. How is it that so many carriages have been torched and destroyed, yet no one has been convicted?

The spirit of lawlessness on our road and rail systems must be addressed and eradicated.

This said, it is incomprehensible to allow those who are guilty of reckless and negligent driving, or even driving under the influence of alcohol, to be able to claim under the proposed Road Accident Benefit Scheme. Is this not, in effect, rewarding criminal behaviour?

What makes it even worse is that the common law allowing law-abiding citizens to claim damages from wrongdoers is to be removed.

Honourable Minister, we would also urge you to involve civil society and in particular, the faith-based community, to speak out against the carnage on our roads. If you were to meet with church leaders and leaders of other faiths and encourage them not only to pray for safety on our roads but also to speak out against lawlessness, I have no doubt that this will have a positive impact.

The public spat between the Minister of Finance, Tito Mboweni, and Gauteng Premier, David Makhura, over the Gauteng Free Way Project (E-Tolls) is totally unacceptable and is not in the best interests of the public. The ACDP warned previous ministers about the cost implications of the e-tolling and the burden it would place upon road users. This has been the first open rejection of taxation by citizens.

Minister, you have been handed a poisoned chalice. Furthermore, it is not only ‘unfortunate’ that this public spat is reduced to a twitter discussion - it is disgraceful. Is a possible solution, as previously proposed by OUTA, that bonds for the project should be funded in the same way that SANRAL funds over 18,000 kms of its non-tolled network, through allocations from National Treasury and, if needed, via a ring-fenced fuel levy increase of 10c per litre? Had this been done at the launch of the project in 2013, the capital value of the project would have already been raised. The ACDP looks forward to the report by the team of experts that is considering solutions to the e-toll problem.

To conclude, we wish to thank all those in the department and other entities who, on a daily basis, strive to make transport better and safer for all South Africans.”

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