

MEDIA STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

30 July 2026

Joint Portfolio Committees zoom into Xhariep Municipalities and Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality

Bloemfontein, 30 July 2026 – The Joint Portfolio Committees on Public Accounts and Finance, and Cooperative Governance and Office of the Premier, met with the Provincial Treasury to receive an overview of the financial statements of the province. The Treasury's financial performance assessment of Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, Xhariep District Municipality, Letsemeng Local Municipality, and Mohokare Local Municipality was also corroborated by the Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. The Joint Committees subsequently convened hearings with all these municipalities, with proceedings continuing into the evening of Wednesday, 29 July 2026.

Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality City Manager provided a structured overview of the municipality's progress under the Section 139(7) intervention, highlighting key governance and financial management milestones that have contributed to the restoration of institutional stability. The presentation demonstrated the transition from national administration to locally appointed leadership through the appointment of senior managers, the implementation of the Financial Recovery Plan, and the gradual withdrawal of the National Cabinet Representative.

Xhariep District Municipality has made measurable progress in strengthening its financial management and audit outcomes. The municipality has implemented all 29 audit action plans, with 26 fully completed and the remaining three in progress. The Mayor of Letsemeng Municipality emphasised political stability and highlighted that the municipality is addressing its failure to meet its revenue collection commitments, which also contributed to National Treasury temporarily withholding the transfer of the equitable share. The municipality is currently addressing prior-year audit matters raised by the Auditor-General (AG), while also investigating the opening balances to prevent the recurrence of similar audit findings. The municipality expressed satisfaction with the audit outcome and acknowledged full responsibility for the identified shortcomings. It further committed to implementing consequence management and appropriate corrective measures to address the audit findings and strengthen financial governance. Kopanong Local Municipality reported material irregularities, including the non-payment of employees' pension fund contributions and the ongoing pollution of water resources. Although the Joint Committee appreciated the energy of the municipal administration led by the Municipal Manager, it, however, maintained that matters requiring urgent corrective action must be urgently addressed to improve the lives of ordinary people.

Members of the Joint Committee, led by the Chairpersons, Hon. Oupa Khoabane and Hon. Armand Cloete, raised major concerns, especially due to the fact that no municipality in the Free State received an unqualified audit

opinion with no findings during the current period. Furthermore, members were concerned that most of the municipalities are still struggling to establish verifiable indigent registers, which prevents them from meeting their legal mandates.

Legislature committees are open to the media and the public. Journalists wishing to cover these meetings (including receiving links to virtual meetings) should send requests to the Communication Unit for inclusion.

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Issued by Communication and Marketing Unit:

Free State Legislature