

**Welcoming Remarks by the Mayor of eThekweni Municipality Cllr  
Zandile Gumede during the official opening of Mount  
Edgecombe Interchange**

**30 October 2018**

Programme Director

Minister of Transport, Dr Blade Nzimande

Deputy Minister of Transport Sindisizwe Chikunga

KwaZulu-Natal Premier Willies Mchunu

KZN MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Mxolisi Kaunda

Sanral CEO Skhumbuzo Macozoma

Councillors;

Invited Guests;

All categories of staff

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning

From the outset, I want to congratulate the leadership all categories of staff for the completion of this important project.

In China they often say “the beginning is the most difficult part.”

I certainly know that in the beginning it was extremely difficult but through your determination you have managed to pull this off.

I am here to personally salute all role-players who have been involved in this important national project.

Apart from strengthening our status as South Africa’s transport and logistics hub, the importance of Mount Edgecombe Inter-change lies in the fact that government has a vision of ensuring that this province act as a Gateway to Africa and the world.

There is no shadow of a doubt that this interchange will help in ensuring that we achieve our vision.

Over the years, the ANC-led government launched an infrastructure revolution which involves construction of houses, provision of water and sanitation. Government has been revamping and installing basic services where they were previously unavailable.

There has been a major focus on air-freight, rail and road construction.

As eThekweni Municipality we appreciate the fact that we are benefitting from the national Strategic Infrastructure Projects.

There are major investments by state-owned transport agencies such as the Passenger Rail Authority of South Africa (PRASA) and the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL).

We have been informed that SANRAL's pipeline of roads development projects in KwaZulu-Natal is currently estimated at more than R21.6 billion.

Last year, on the 31<sup>st</sup> October, the provincial government and national government officially launched two major road projects with a combined value of over R174, 5 million. These are Eteza Traffic Control Centre in Mbonambi and KwaBhoboza Interchange in Umtubatuba.

Today, it is our turn as eThekweni Municipality. We want to express our appreciation to the provincial and national governments.

We thank you for building quality roads and highways across the province and here in eThekweni municipality.

We recognize the significance of a reliable and swift road network and the role it plays in influencing economic development.

Roads are crucial in providing better access to services, ease of transportation and freedom of movement of people and goods. Access to public facilities such as schools, clinics and other social amenities has been prioritised.

Many pedestrian bridges were constructed to save children from drowning on their way to and from school and save their teachers the indignity of having to undress in order to cross the river every time they go to work in the village school.

The labour intensive approach has become the mainstay of the road construction programme, employing over 40 000 Zibambele contractors and around 50 000 others through the Expanded Public Works Programme.

It is pleasing to know that the Department of Transport here in KZN has constructed more than 7 000 kilometres of access roads but due to budget limitations, there still remains a backlog.

Despite these challenges, we are humbled by the determination showed by the provincial department of transport. The support from the national department of transport and agencies such as SANRAL gives us hope for a better future.

With those words, thank you once again for this major milestone. We really appreciate all your hard work

I officially welcome you to eThekweni Municipality.