

Speech by Cayla Murray MPP

DA Western Cape Spokesperson on Finance, Economic Opportunities and Tourism

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***“What a well-run municipality can do for women’s empowerment”***

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Premier,

Honourable Leader of the Opposition,

Honourable Members,

And most importantly, to all the women who call the Western Cape home,

Today’s debate on the state of municipalities is a critical one, and as we observe Women’s Month, it is essential that we also reflect on how a well-run government, and particularly our province’s municipalities, can empower women.

Speaker, I have seen this first-hand where we govern. Veronica, who is here today, (**acknowledge Veronica**) has told me about how she was able to attend council meetings in rural Swartland.

Being able to attend these meetings helped her to voice her opinions and be heard by an elderly council – empowering her to represent and have her say on issues that affect young people – including where and how the municipal budget would be spent, and what programmes were necessary to address unemployment.

The DA-led Swartland municipality empowered Veronica by giving her a seat at the table, incorporating her feedback, and including her in their programmes – enabling Veronica to learn

how to engage key stakeholders, create petitions, interrogate policy, and help keep those living on farms and in rural towns informed.

Not only did this encourage her to join the DA, but it also empowered her to realise her full potential as she later completed her Digital Media Marketing qualification, in addition to her degree in Journalism.

Her personal agency and drive have of course enabled her to achieve a great deal – but living in an area served by a well-run (DA-led) government further enabled her to get where she is and will help enable her to get where she is going.

Speaker, the right to equality for all is enshrined in our Constitution and yet many women in our country are still fighting for equal opportunities in terms of pay, employment, land ownership, and much more. This is compounded by crisis-level GBV and femicide rates – which show that a lot more still needs to be done to ensure that women can truly enjoy their rights.

Having said that, DA-led governments in this province are working tirelessly to achieve equality for all. This is done by ensuring competent and transparent governance, and, contrary to what the opposition might believe, we **do** this through clean audits.

The DA-led provincial government further ensures that its provinces are well-run by working hand-in-glove with municipalities to support and enable them to operate at their best – and they have done so through the establishment of forensic investigation teams, monitoring dashboards and an authentic effort to deepen relationships with municipalities. This applies to all municipalities in the Western Cape, be they DA, coalition or opposition-controlled.

In fact, the latest Auditor General report revealed that our province had more than half of all clean municipal audits received *in the entire country*.

Let me repeat that, *our province had more than half of all clean municipal audits received in the entire country.*

This translates into:

- **Streetlights** that make women feel safe to walk in the evening.
- **Roadworks** that assure mothers that their children can get to school and back.
- **Housing** that our grandmothers and aunties can live in with dignity.
- And **social programs** which empower women to leave abusive relationships.

**(pause)**

An example of how well-run DA-led governments empower women is Chrysalis Academy. Chrysalis helps disadvantaged youth, including women, to enhance their skills, receive psycho-social support, develop critical people skills, and learn about concepts such as toxic masculinity and gender equality. This is a truly life-changing programme.

Speaker, while this is the DA's approach to ensuring that municipalities are well run, the ANC in this province has become so preoccupied with trying to grow their **meagre** foothold in Western Cape municipalities.

The honourable leader of the opposition, himself, has blatantly been using his standing in the municipality and media statements to try and keep an incompetent acting municipal manager in his post in Kannaland – all the while putting effective service delivery at jeopardy.

Through you, Speaker, is the honourable leader of the opposition trying to keep a grip on power at the – quite literally at the expense of women's empowerment?

As we approach the 2024 elections, I sincerely ask the women of this province – do you want to be governed by a party, the ANC, that actively sabotages your empowerment? Or will you vote for a party, the DA, that goes out of its way to enable you to achieve your full potential?

I know the strong women (and men) sitting in the seats of the gallery above me and on the benches next to me will vote to empower their fellow sisters.

I thank you.