

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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WESTERN CAPE GOVERNMENT  
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### **PREMIER ZILLE ADDRESSES EDEN DISTRICT ON SKILLS, BOOSTING THE ECONOMY**

Today Premier Helen Zille attended the Eden District Skills Development Summit where she delivered the keynote address.

Speaking to Mayors, members of the local business chamber, representatives from SETA and the national skills fund, Premier Zille highlighted the success of the Western Cape Government's Garden Route Rebuild Initiative (GRR) established in July 2017, following an unprecedented natural fire disaster that required the biggest disaster rescue operation in South African history.

She praised all the role-players for turning the disaster into an opportunity for development – and focusing on building the skills of local residents to be included in the rebuilding process.

The GRR was tasked with managing and coordinating the rebuilding process in the Eden District – which will require R2.8 billion in investment from different sectors, over the next five years. It comprises seven work streams to manage and coordinate the rebuild process, one of which is the Skills Development Work stream (SDW).

One of the main tasks of the Skills Development Work stream has been to produce a Skills Development Strategy as an integral part of the overall rebuild strategy for the next five years.

"Our government has prioritised skills development as a Game Changer in the province. Our Apprenticeship Game Changer aims to leverage the power of work-based learning through apprenticeships to improve people's lives. And our focus main focus is to ensure there is sufficiently qualified technical and vocational skilled young people to

supply the needs of the prioritised growth sectors in the province (Oil and Gas, Tourism, Agri-processing, ICT and Renewable Energy)," said Premier Zille.

Premier Zille said: "We are pleased with the work of the various work streams. But we realise long term solutions are required to revive this region's economy. That is why the Skills Development work stream has focused on driving economic growth and job creation, despite the recent fires, by working with the Local Government SETA, which has provided R12 million for skills initiatives, and tertiary institutions to offer training courses in a range of fields including hospitality, carpentry, fire-fighting, digital skills and agri-processing".

"The work of the Skills Development Work Stream will fall under the overall long term strategy of the GRRI which is a '*Garden Route that strives to be an inclusive and thriving region that unlocks the potential for all who live, work, travel and play here*'. "

This vision is supported by three key components:

1. An integrated, thriving community;
2. An inclusive, innovative and resilient business community that leads a globally competitive modern economy; and
3. A diversity of visitors from all walks of life who view the Garden Route as a "must see" destination.

And the strategy to realise this vision is centred on 6 strategic pillars comprising a range of initiatives:

1. Strengthening the tourism sector to support year-round tourism in the Garden Route;
2. Developing light manufacturing industries to support local employment;
3. Supporting local businesses to thrive in an enabling environment;
4. Creating a "skills mecca" for training in the Garden Route;
5. Facilitating inclusive urban development that erodes apartheid-era spatial boundaries; and
6. Ensuring the resilience and sustainability of infrastructure and livelihoods.

Premier Zille also encouraged all stakeholders to continue in their water saving efforts.

"Our lives depend on how well we save water. We could not have predicted this disaster - a once in 400 year occurrence. And while we cannot control the weather, we can change our behaviour towards water," said Premier Zille.

Premier Zille said: "While we recognise that it is essential for government to plan for Day Zero, the first priority must be to avoid day zero entirely. This is possible if all of us make saving water part of our daily routine".

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