

CONGRESS TODAY



28 FEBRUARY 2026

DAY TWO

NELSON MANDELA BAY

UNITE BEHIND THE DA

PAGE 2

BEHIND THE SCENES

PAGE 6

MEET THE NEW LEADERSHIP



PAGE 5

AND THE WINNERS ARE



PAGE 3

FIGHTING FOR A WORKING PROVINCE THAT DELIVERS GROWTH, JOBS AND SAFETY

By Andrew Whitfield MP

It is with a deep sense of humility that I accept this Congress's uncontested election to lead our province for another three years. This is an endorsement of our hard work over the past three years in which we have built a strong foundation upon which we will continue to build. I wish to congratulate our Provincial Chairperson, Yusuf Cassim, for his uncontested election as well as all other office bearers elected at this congress. I am grateful to those candidates who stood but did not prevail. You have participated in and made your contribution to our party's unparalleled internal democratic processes. Thank you.

Democrats, when you elected me to this position in Graaf-Reinet three years ago, I committed to stability, progress and growth. I said we would build a high-performance machine to take the DA in the Eastern Cape forward into 2024. We achieved this goal. The DA Eastern Cape's contribution to the 2024 national election result was important - we remained resilient overall and increased our votes in real terms from our lowest levels in a decade in 2021; we have achieved our highest membership numbers in the history of the DA Eastern Cape; we successfully concluded more branch AGMs than ever before; we defended our DA wards in tough by elections and we showed explosive growth in places like Ward 10 in Makana.

We did all of this in the most competitive political environment in the history of our province because we were disciplined, focussed and dedicated. While we must rightly celebrate what we have achieved over the last three years we must also acknowledge that much more needs to be done. The last three years have not been easy and the journey travelled between the last congress and this one was not a straight line. It was a journey marked by the vigorous defence of our values, the tireless pursuit of growth and the unrelenting passion of our activists to promote our party against overwhelming odds. At this congress I want to pay specific tribute to our dedicated activists whose footsteps in our Eastern Cape soil mark this journey. Phakama amaActivist! At our last Congress we looked

ahead to the historic 2024 election, today we take aim at the 2026 local election which will be our toughest and most important election yet. It is against this backdrop that I would like this Congress to recognise the extraordinarily hard work of our councillors, in particular our ward councillors, who have been working on the frontlines of municipal decay and collapse for years. This Congress salutes you! On Thursday, in his State of the Province Address Premier Mabuyane confirmed that our province remains in crisis as we continue to battle devastating levels of unemployment and violent crime.

The third-quarter crime statistics show that kidnappings and violent crime remain deeply entrenched across the Eastern Cape. Residents of the Eastern Cape remain the most likely in South Africa to be murdered or raped, demonstrating that the province continues to face a sustained crisis of violent crime.

The Eastern Cape's official unemployment rate now stands at 42.5% with 79,000 jobs lost over the past year, while the DA run Western Cape created 95,000 over the same period! In rural areas of the province, the expanded rate of unemployment has now risen to 61.2%. This means that, on average, three out of every five working-age residents in rural Eastern Cape cannot find work.

The DA remains adamant that the only solution to the crises facing our province is clear and measurable commitments to stabilise and grow the provincial economy, restore confidence in governance, and protect jobs.

This includes decisive intervention to improve service delivery in metros as engines of economic growth, a clear plan to diversify the economy beyond manufacturing and trade into sectors such as tourism and agriculture, and the implementation of a credible Automotive Sector Recovery Strategy that secures alternative export markets. While the Premier remains in denial with no plan and no clue, it is up to us to rebuild safer communities and to grow our economy from the bottom up - town by town, city by city in the 2026 local government elections. Right here in Nelson Mandela Bay, the home of the



country's automotive industry and a centre of manufacturing excellence, we have the opportunity to win, to govern and to deliver growth and jobs for the people of this great City. Kouga is our governance blueprint. Since 2016, DA-led governance in Kouga has demonstrated that clean, accountable and stable government changes lives.

With the lowest unemployment rate in the province Kouga has become the most attractive municipality to live, work, play and invest. Recognised as the best-performing municipality in the Eastern Cape, Kouga was honoured at the 2025 Municipal Performance Awards as the best municipality in the province for excellence in financial management, stability and service delivery.

At a time when so many municipalities across the Eastern Cape are in financial distress, Kouga stands as a bright shining beacon of hope that proves that where the DA governs, we get things done! The municipalities of the Eastern Cape need the DA, it must be our focus to grow, to win, to govern and to deliver so we can get our towns and cities working.

Our municipalities are the bedrock of our economy, they are where every private investment lands, where almost every cent of public funds is ultimately spent, they are where people trade, grow their businesses and where jobs are created. The deterioration in the delivery of basic services has led to businesses closing down, property developers with mega-investments leaving town and thousands of jobs



being lost leaving households without hope in their hearts and without food in their cupboards.

The good news is that the DA has never and will never give up on the people of the Eastern Cape. We are fighting and will continue to fight for the people of our province and the work of DA ministers in the Government of National Unity shows that the Eastern Cape is not a forgotten province for the DA.

Democrats, I want us to pause at this moment and consider that our party, the Democratic Alliance, once called a desolate shack on the political landscape with just 1.7% in 1994 of the vote is now a party of government in more than 30 municipalities, 2 provincial governments and in national government.

Ultimately, our fight in councils, the provincial legislature and parliament must be fuelled by the values and principles which underpin a truly open, opportunity society for all so that we can deliver justice in our fight against crime, deliver freedom against the threat of populist tyranny and deliver prosperity against the crushing weight of poverty.

So democrats, as we leave this Congress today, I commit to

work day in and day out to ensure that this great team remains mission focussed, purpose driven and fully committed to the fight that lies ahead, because I believe in the Eastern Cape.

I believe in a better future for our children.

I believe in a province that rises up to meet its full potential.

I believe in the people and their talent.

I believe that we can unite our people and build a province that works for all.

Together ...we will build towns and cities that work;

we will restore dignity and hope to the hopeless;

we will fight for growth and jobs; and we will fight for safer communities for all.

So, let's get up, let's go out and let's fight to get the Eastern Cape working!

This extract is an abridged version of the speech. The full, unabridged speech is available online at daeccongress.co.za.

AND THE WINNERS ARE....



Best Performing Constituency: PE Northern Areas



Best Performing Branch: Kouga Ward 9



Best Performing Ancillary Constituency: DASO West

Lifetime Contribution to Democracy:



Terence Fritz



Bobby Stevenson



Donald Lee



Bredine Share



Gloria Loggenberg

STAR PERFORMERS



STAFF: Bonga Xhangayi



STAFF: Busi Mki



CLLR: Cary Clark



CLLR: Geoff Walton



CLLR: John Shaw



CLLR: Nomtshato Jonas



CLLR: Mbongeni Kotana



CLLR: Lenny Moodley



CLLR: Lemarc Stewart



CLLR: Noziphiwo Mantshongo



CLLR: Eldridge Ruiters



MPS & MPLS: Baxolile Nodada MP



MPS & MPLS: Yusuf Cassim MPL



MPS & MPLS: Dr Vicky Knoetze MPL



MPS & MPLS: Leander Kruger MPL

DA EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS ELECTS NEW PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP



Delegates at the 2026 Eastern Cape Provincial Congress in Nelson Mandela Bay elected a renewed and unified provincial leadership team tasked with guiding the Democratic Alliance into the upcoming local government election period. Andrew Whitfield was elected as Provincial Leader, reaffirming the party's commitment to strengthening governance, expanding electoral support, and

advancing accountable leadership across the province. Returning for another term as Deputy Provincial Leaders, Dr Vicky Knoetze and Mlindi Nhanha received strong support from delegates, ensuring continuity, experience, and stability within the provincial leadership collective as the DA prepares for the next phase of organisational growth. Yusuf Cassim was elected as

Provincial Chairperson, supported by Deputy Provincial Chairpersons Baxolile Nodada (Bax) MP, Chantel King MPL, and Cllr Rano Kayser, forming a leadership core focused on organisational development, campaign readiness, and effective coordination across structures. Delegates also elected representatives to the Provincial Council, reinforcing the party's governance and

oversight structures. Local Government Councillor Representatives elected were Roelf Basson, Leetesline Alphonso Booysen, and Ingrid van Wyk. Public Representative Members elected to Provincial Council include Duncan Monks, Jason Grobbelaar, Cecilia Auld, Dries van der Westhuizen, Noeleen Moodley, and Joerhan Mey. Elected as Non-Public Representative Members were Kobus Botha,

Audrey Campher, Wendall Hlabanie, Earl Hopshire, Rosline Theresa Ross, and Alain Walljee. The newly elected leadership reflects a balance of experience, renewal, and organisational depth, positioning the Democratic Alliance in the Eastern Cape to grow its municipal footprint and continue building responsive, people-centred government throughout the province.

STAR PERFORMERS



ACTIVIST: John Whitfield



A SHOUT-OUT TO THE CONGRESS ORGANISER AND TASK TEAM



Congress Organiser and Project Leader
Elmarie Botha



Venue Set-up Team

Caydon Roach, Brendan Booker

Media Team

Norman Silke, Derrick Spies

Social Media Team

Jo-Gene Strauss, Ilse Bosch,
Chumani Gugwini, Justin Oliphant

Branding and Design

Jo-Gene Strauss

Congress Website and Content

Derrick Spies

Catering Operation

Fahmeeda Jaffar, Anthony Jacobs and Team

Registration and Voting Station

Barnie Kruger, Ashleigh de Lange and Team

Artists and MC's Coordination

Rene Meyer

Constitutional Amendments Sub-Committee

Annie Jankovich-Besan

Motions and Resolutions Sub-Committee

Evangelia Iakovidis

Awards Sub-Committee

Kirsten Gelderbloem

Procurement

Rajeshree Ambaram and Mikyla Tait

Ushers and Marshalls

Lumko Jali and Team

Invited Guests Host

Eric Dyer and Team

Finance

Lisa Woods and Team

