



PARLIAMENTARY
MONITORING GROUP

MONITOR

A monthly briefing sheet to keep communities informed about what is happening in Parliament

Did you know?	Children and Poverty
<p>The Department of Social Development has launched the White Door Safe Space facility in Madibeng in the North West to accommodate abused women. Gauteng Province has 27 facilities. The Eastern Cape also adopted the concept and successfully established 100 White Door facilities.</p> <p>The Khetha Career Development Services is a helpline providing free career information, guidance and advice to anyone. Khetha gives the public access to a social media platform, email and telephone advisory service. People can send a sms, a 'please call me', an email or even a fax to the Khetha helpline and a professional career advisor will assist them. For more details sms 072 204 5056, call 0860 35 66 35, email careerhelp@dhet.gov.za or visit www.careerhelp.org.za</p>	<p>The South African Human Rights Commission briefed the Portfolio Committee on Social Development on its report titled "Poverty traps and Social Exclusion among Children in South Africa". The scope of the study was twofold - to determine the extent to which children in South Africa were still caught in a poverty trap or were socially excluded from economic and political life, and to determine the factors that enabled poverty traps and social exclusion to be perpetuated in the country.</p> <p>The Commission reported that the new democratic government recorded certain gains in the reduction of poverty in the country; however there was disturbing evidence of considerable and deep-rooted and sustained poverty among children. Some of the observations made by the Commission were that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twenty years into democracy, race remained a predicator of future deprivation for today's children • Widespread income inequality persisted • Poor quality of education and challenges in access to education were rife • High levels of youth unemployment in the country • The poor and unemployed tend to be the rural, uneducated woman and young, forcing them to be excluded from the mainstream economy and society <p>The Report identifies five key factors that are necessary to provide children with an enabling environment to develop the social and cognitive skills to escape the cycle of inherited poverty: health, education, social and family influences, geographic influences, and wealth and assets.</p> <p>Some of the recommendations which emanated from the study were that breastfeeding be encouraged, education at pre-school and foundation phase levels needed to be improved, Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers and practitioners needed to be trained and support in ECD facilities also needed to be improved, wealth and assets needed to be increased through social security and the maintenance of other welfare services, the state also needed to enforce the payment of child maintenance by absent fathers, community workers in rural areas needed to be expanded, municipal and other infrastructure and services needed to be improved, particularly in poor households and in rural areas.</p> <p>The Commission asked the Committee to endorse the recommendations. It called upon Parliament to ensure that additional funding allocations are made available and that the Executive implement the policy recommendations of this study. The Committee welcomed the study but noted that some of the recommendations have already been implemented though others needed to be strengthened further. A Member emphasised that the tremendous advances in the reduction of poverty that came about as a result of the current government should not be downplayed. A 2011 study by the Children's Institute (UCT) showed that child poverty is decreasing but many children still live in severe poverty. The decrease is largely to do with the rapid expansion of child support grants, with over 11 million current beneficiaries. According to experts, there is substantial evidence showing that the grants are being spent on food, education and basic goods and services. Child poverty is also linked to adult unemployment and with little change in this regard, children will continue to remain poor.</p>
<p>The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), in collaboration with the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), has launched the People & Parks and Wildlife Economy projects in Acornhoek, Mpumalanga. It is anticipated that the project will create more than 2 200 jobs.</p>	

Vandalism and theft of water infrastructure

The Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation met with stakeholders to discuss solutions to address vandalism and theft of water infrastructure. Municipalities were confronted with this daily and millions were spent to replace the vandalised or stolen infrastructure. Stolen cables meant people were not getting services. Everyone needed to work together to face this challenge.

Forms of theft and vandalism included illegal connections, in response to frustration at the level of services. There was also the theft of parts and infrastructure, which amounted to criminality, and the damaging of infrastructure which amounted to vandalism. In his opening remarks, the Chairperson of the Committee said that the theft and vandalism of water infrastructure had an adverse impact on communities, schools, hospitals and the elderly. These acts denied people their basic right of access to quality water and put pressure on budgets, as infrastructure had to be replaced and maintained. He argued that it might be time to look at the judicial system to review the penalties that criminals receive once they are caught. More stringent penalties were needed to teach the perpetrators and accomplices a lesson never to steal or buy stolen goods.

The SA Local Government Association (SALGA) highlighted that water and sanitation were inter-connected through an infrastructure value chain – if anything went wrong in the value chain, the whole system would be affected. The replacement value of water and sanitation infrastructure stood at R44 billion as of 2011. SALGA reported that theft and vandalism occurred across all municipalities and that illegal water connections resulted in water not reaching entire communities. SALGA identified the following factors that were causing this: 1) the inability of politicians to deliver on promises, which led to protests and 2) there was a market for goods like cables and valves, and related to this were business opportunities, such as water carting -- vandalised infrastructure was good for some businesses.

COSATU said that the underlying causes of vandalism and the theft of water infrastructure could be attributed to apartheid and colonial neglect, and that after 1994 there had been insufficient investment in infrastructure, and the privatisation of water services had worsened the situation. The 35% unemployment rate and lack of economic growth were also playing a role. This had resulted in a growing sense of alienation between communities and government and between different age groups. Such alienation had contributed to the lack of public ownership of infrastructure and government plans.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) indicated that the Second Hand Goods Act had been amended and there had been a provision which made it illegal to be in the possession of copper or non-ferrous metal which had been restructured or changed, and to buy such items was also an offence. The challenge was that it was very difficult to prove a person in possession of restructured cable was the person who had changed the cable in the first place. SAPS was convinced that with a few changes to the current Act and by proper policing of the Act, the proliferation of non-ferrous metal theft might be stemmed.

Some initiatives which municipalities could institute to eliminate theft and vandalism included collaborating with law enforcement agencies, installing CCTVs, concrete manholes which would not be stolen, the delegation of powers to municipal law enforcement agencies, robust community engagement, naming and shaming, working with scrap metal buyers, and conducting research and measurement of theft and vandalism. An effective technology-based deterrent, which provided for threat detection at a distance, and gave an automated immediate response, was also put forward as an alternative.

COSATU suggested that there was a need for an integrated water plan that would look at upgrading and maintaining infrastructure and instil in communities a culture of ownership of government infrastructure.

There were proposals that copper be declared a precious metal, compelling payment to the seller through the electronic banking system and metering the people who had illegal connections would help to alleviate this problem.

The Committee noted that an Inter-Ministerial task team led by Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Andries Nel, was specifically looking at measures to deal with cable theft. The Deputy Minister had earlier stated that the implementation of the Second Hand Goods Act had led to an increase in arrests, but not in convictions and appropriate sentences. The task team was “looking at a range of proposals at operational and policy levels and changes to legislation”. One proposal included changes to the Criminal Procedure Act to place the burden of proof on the persons found to be in possession of cables suspected to be stolen, to prove that they are legally in possession of the items.

SALGA told the Committee that municipalities did not have sufficient funds to address the challenges around the vandalism and theft of water infrastructure and ageing water infrastructure. The Committee was urged to give support for the release of sufficient funds.

Budgetary Review and Recommendations Reports (BRRRs)

BRRRs are drawn by all Portfolio Committees in Parliament after presentation of Department Annual Reports, and these take into account the information reported by departments during the year and in the annual reports, make comparisons with strategic plans, policy documents and mandates, and may also take into account information from quarterly or other special reports on activities, the Committee's own oversight visits, problems reported during the year, the reports of the Auditor-General (AG), Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC) and other source documents. You can find all the reports here: www.pmg.org.za/node/33039

Here are snippets of what is in some of these reports:

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended the Department intensify efforts to support affected provinces to resolve post provisioning challenges, particularly the Eastern Cape; ensure that learners with special needs have access to Special Schools. Teachers in these schools should be adequately trained and developed; continue to accelerate the implementation of e-Education, including ICT Infrastructure at schools as a means to improve learner success; continue to strengthen the communication strategy of the Department, in order to project their image in a positive light; strengthen monitoring of Provincial Education Departments to ensure that they implement policies regarding the retrieval of textbooks in schools; continue to strengthen support to districts and circuits to ensure that they are accountable and perform their functions effectively.

The Portfolio Committee on Energy urged the Minister to develop initiatives, in conjunction with other national government departments and entities, to ensure security of electricity supply (to ensure there is no load shedding), in conjunction with the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs develop a strategy to address the backlog related to the distribution network, and assess and develop strategies for the effective implementation of Free Basic Electricity (FBE). It suggested the Minister identify and empower an Energy Efficiency champion for South Africa, who will take ownership of all current initiatives in South Africa, conduct assessments on effectiveness of current initiatives, and develop strategies going forward including recommendations on new technologies and policies that South Africa needs to introduce in this sector.

The Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Reform requested that the Department ensure proper funding of the Recapitalisation and Development Programme so it also assists in the development of smallholder farmers. It must fast-track the second phase of the land audit to ensure completion of the full land audit that explains property ownership by race, gender and nationality. It must submit the outcomes of the special Investigating Unit investigations for past 5 years

The Portfolio Committee on Small Business Development noted that there were some gaps with regards to understanding the needs of the target market for small businesses and that research be conducted analysing the target market to tailor-make and streamline the relevant support provisions that will respond positively in tackling the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. It noted that informal traders and street vendors were still subjected to inhumane conditions, and the Department should have included human dignity as one of its values to demonstrate its understanding of its target groups (poor people). The Committee requested the Department be allocated the proposed funds; consider reviewing its transfer payments to identify savings going forward; allocate more resources to core-functional programmes (Cooperatives, and Enterprise Development and Entrepreneurship); and develop a guiding document on how will it administer loans and grants to finance SMMEs and cooperatives. The Department should ensure that all necessary functions, which were aligned with its mandate but still located in other departments, were migrated to the Department.

The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries asked the Department to provide a status update to Parliament on the implementation of the Agriculture and Forestry Transformation Charters by February 2015 and the development of the Fisheries Transformation Charter by April 2015. The Department should provide Parliament by April 2015, with a detailed plan on the management and maintenance of Fisheries vessels to address the supply chain management (SCM) irregularities raised by the AG on the financial statements of the Marine Living Resources Fund. DAFF was urged to develop a preferential procurement plan for local agricultural products and encourage provinces and local governments to procure such products from developing farmers and animal vaccines from OBP. This plan should be submitted to the Committee by April 2015.

The Portfolio Committee on Social Development urged the Minister to ensure that the department's intergovernmental relations with its counterparts, in particular those who implement its cross cutting functions, is strengthened to ensure that it manages to achieve its targets so that duplication of services by departments and civil society will be minimised. It recommended that the Minister must see to it that NPOs funded by the department expand their footprint in rural areas, there is consistent service delivery in all the provinces with particular focus on rural areas and other poor areas, that the department works in close collaboration with the South African Police Service to further promote protection of older persons and that the children residential facilities are provided with necessary training, resources and infrastructure to meet the needs of children with special needs.

Urbanisation	Disability	Government Call Centres & Hotlines
<p>The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) briefed MPs on the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF). The Framework was developed in 2012 in response to the National Development Plan and the UN-Habitat recommendation for countries to develop national urban policies. The IUDF aimed to create a shared understanding across government and society on how urbanisation should be better managed to ensure liveable, resilient and inclusive settlement areas.</p> <p>The Minister said that the country's urban design, the location of human settlements, and the lack of opportunities for the majority in South Africa, were a consequence of the country's apartheid history. Townships still remained 20 – 30 kilometres away from where most people enjoyed the kind of services that all citizens should be entitled to. The IUDF was about influencing the manner in which decisions were made and how special forms of planning took place to improve people's lives.</p> <p>COGTA stated that the global urban population was expected to increase to 70% by 2015. Africa's 40% urban population was expected to double over the next 20 years. In South Africa, 63% of the population already lived in urban areas. This figure was projected to be 70% by 2030.</p> <p>The Framework tries to address these major concerns: the lack of intergovernmental alignment of spatial planning and poor coordination between sectors, low densities and extensive sprawl of settlements that mitigate against efficiencies in transport planning, prevalence of urban sprawl, growth of informal settlements and low densities, escalating demand for serviced land and shelter, insufficient funding for new capital investments and poor maintenance of existing infrastructure, the informal sector dismissed or marginalized; and insufficient forums to promote participation and social cohesion.</p> <p>COGTA will return in the new year to brief the Committee in more detail.</p>	<p>The legislature recently hosted the inaugural Disability Rights Parliament. The event was aimed at giving a voice to this vulnerable group and creating awareness about the challenges and discrimination they experienced. Delegates from about 19 national disability organisations gave first-hand accounts about the barriers and solutions people with disabilities encounter in trying to gain access to education, health and other facilities.</p> <p>Deputy Social Development Minister Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu acknowledged that even though progress has been made, more still needs to be done.</p> <p>The Deputy Minister announced that the government, in partnership with Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), would launch a Disability Census dedicated to verifying how many people with disabilities there are in South Africa. The census was the first of its kind in the world and appealed to communities to help in gathering this information. She also noted that the White Paper on Welfare Services would be reviewed.</p> <p>Parliament said that all issues that were raised by the delegates – who presented recommendations in the five government priorities of health, education, justice, job creation and rural development – would be taken further to form part of the programme of the Fifth Parliament.</p> <p>Emanating from the debate, a declaration was produced, adopted and submitted to the appropriate parliamentary processes for consideration. Among the key recommendations made on the five priority areas were: improved access to healthcare by persons with disabilities; addressing the needs of children with disabilities at early childhood development phase; the implementation of plans to enable people with disabilities to access economic opportunities; improved physical access to courts and other justice centres; and a deliberate effort to ensure ownership of land by people with disabilities.</p> <p>Parliament already has hosted sectoral parliaments dedicated to other marginalised groups - Women, Youth and Children.</p>	<p>The Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration received an update on the performance of three government call centres and hotlines. According to a satisfaction survey, 29% of users rated the Presidential Hotline service as poor, 21% as fair and 51% as good. A number of challenges had been identified such as difficulties in capturing complex and multi-themed complaints, misclassification of cases and weaknesses in the quality of case resolution.</p> <p>The National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH) had registered 261 788 calls as at 30 October 2014 about cases of alleged corruption, and of these calls, the Public Service Commission had generated 21 397 reports for possible investigation. 14 992 cases were referred to national and provincial departments and public entities for investigation. Feedback from both national and provincial departments and public entities had been received in 10 802 (72%) cases. 8 119 (54%) cases had been finalised and closed. There were currently 6 873 outstanding cases. The successful investigation of cases of alleged corruption reported through the NACH had resulted in the recovery of R333 million from perpetrators since the inception of the NACH.</p> <p>The percentage of calls received and resolved by the Batho Pele Gateway call centre averaged 95%. Between June and October 2014 the number of calls received had declined from a maximum of 4 000 to 2 500 per month.</p> <p>Members expressed concern about sustainability and duplication. They also criticized the long delay in resolving cases, insisted that proper protection be afforded to whistle-blowers and suggested improved coordination.</p>

Legislation under consideration....

News flash >> The **Labour Relations Amendment Act** will come into operation on 1 January 2015 with the exception of Section 37(c).

The **Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act Amendment Bill** was tabled in Parliament. The amendments will make sure that children who are 12 years of age or older but under the age of 16 are not held criminally liable for engaging in consensual sexual acts with each other; and that the same applies to minors of 17 or 18 years of age for engaging in consensual sexual acts with children two years or fewer their junior. It also proposes providing presiding officers with a discretion in order to decide in individual cases whether the particulars of children should be included in the National Register for Sex Offenders or not.

The Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services invites stakeholders and interested persons to submit written submissions on the **Maintenance Amendment Bill**. The public has until 16 January 2015 to make submissions whereafter public hearings will be held in Parliament. Amongst other things, the purpose of the bill is to further regulate the lodging of complaints relating to maintenance and the jurisdiction of maintenance courts.

DA MP Michael Waters intends introducing a private member's bill to amend the Children's Act (No. 38 of 2005) to make provision for the inclusion of certain further offences that would deem a person unsuitable to work with children, and public have been asked to comment on this Bill. Interested person and institutions have been requested to make written representations on the [draft Children's Amendment Bill](#). The deadline for comments is 17 December 2014.

DA MP Geordin Hill-Lewis intends introducing a draft **Remote Gambling Bill**.

The **Judicial Matters Amendment Bill** and **Banks Amendment Bill** were introduced in Parliament. The former amends numerous Acts, administered by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, to address practical and technical challenges, with a view to enhance organisation efficiency and accountability. The latter bill seeks to enhance curatorship of banks in order to make the financial sector safer and protect depositors.

The Department of Transport has published the [Air Traffic and Navigation Services Company Amendment Draft Bill 2014](#), as well as the [Airports Company Amendment Draft Bill](#) and has asked for comments from the public by 2 January 2015. The Bills seek to give legal status to the Approach Document which is a document in which the committee provides guidelines to be followed by the companies in submitting permission applications; provide for the procedure for meetings and decisions of the Regulating Committee to ensure transparency, flexibility and predictability of the Regulatory Framework; and provide for effective appeals mechanisms where the company or any aggrieved person can appeal against the decisions of the Regulating Committee.

National Treasury briefed the Standing Committee on Finance on the draft **Financial Sector Regulation Bill**. The Bill gives the South African Reserve Bank primary responsibility to oversee financial stability. To facilitate this, the Bill creates a statutory inter-agency Financial Stability Oversight Committee (FSOC), chaired by the Governor of the Reserve Bank, with appropriate financial stability powers. National Treasury reported that it had received 300 pages of public comments on the first draft of the Bill. Based on these comments, the second draft of the Bill was about to be finalised and would be released for further public comment. It was expected to be tabled before the Committee in May 2015.

The Portfolio Committee on Health will continue processing the **Medicines & Related Substances Amendment Bill** and **Medical Innovation Bill** in 2015.

There is still no indication when the President will sign into law the **Protection of State Information Bill**, the **Private Security Industry Regulation Amendment Bill** and the **Public Administration Management Bill**. The first bill was passed by Parliament 13 months ago and the latter two were passed nine months ago.

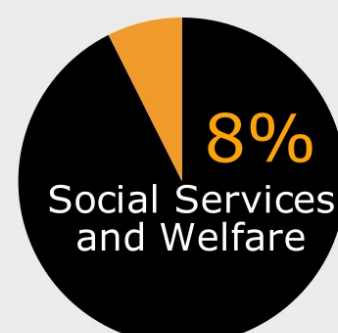
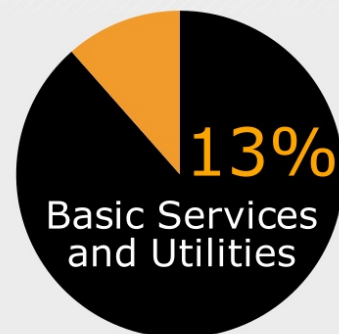
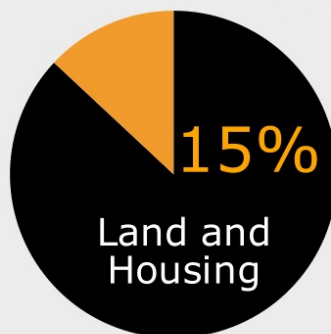
Check out our bill tracker to find out about all Bills <http://bills.pmg.org.za/bills>

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The Presidential Hotline

The Presidential Hotline was set up in 2009 to give the public a platform for issuing complaints in service delivery, and to "promote responsive government", in the words of the President. Has government been responsive?

Main areas of complaint:



Resolution rates:

It must be noted that a 'resolved' case does not mean, for example, that a house was provided to someone. Rather, a resolved case is one where a complaint is met with an adequate response, and information is disseminated.

199,078

Total number of calls made

188,718

Number of resolved calls

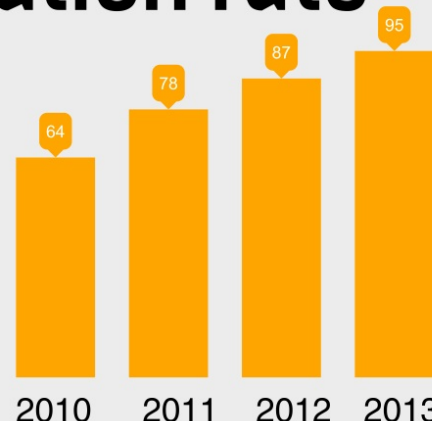
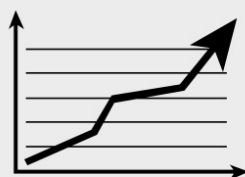
94.8%

Percentage of calls resolved

Improving the resolution rate

Resolution rates over time:

30.67%
Total percentage increase of resolution rates from 2009 to 2013.

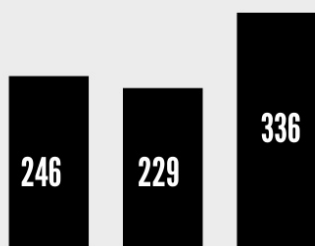


The Fifth Parliament: 2014 review in numbers: From June 17th to November 28th

Working days: Working days are comprised of committee meetings, plenary sessions, and constituency days.

811

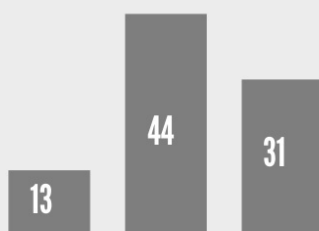
Number of committee meetings



■ Term 1 ■ Term 2 ■ Term 3

88

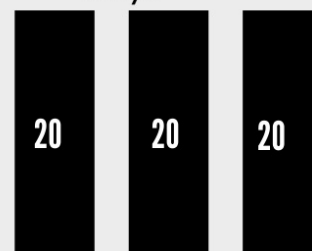
Number of constituency days



■ Term 1 ■ Term 2 ■ Term 3

60

Number of plenary days



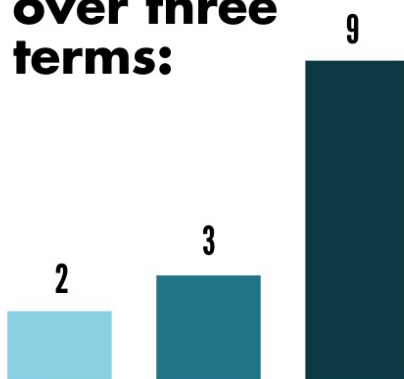
■ Term 1 ■ Term 2 ■ Term 3

*Number of committee meetings: Figures represent the number of committee meetings made aware to PMG.

Bills:

There were a total of 12 bills passed by the fifth Parliament this year:

Bills passed over three terms:



■ Term 1 ■ Term 2 ■ Term 3

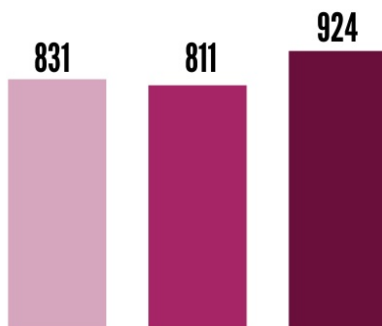
Questions:

2,799 Total number of written questions

Number of questions replied to **2,260**

81% Response rate

Written questions over three terms:



■ Term 1 ■ Term 2 ■ Term 3

924

The third term saw the most question asked in the Fifth Parliament, with 924 submitted questions.

Petitions:

There was a total of 8 petitions made during the Fifth Parliament.

2

In the first term

3

In the second term

3

In the third term



How many were implemented?

While all have been taken at committee meetings

0

have been assented to.

Sources:

www.parliament.gov.za
www.pmg.org.za