

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Transport Minister Barbara Creecy lauds mobility improvements flowing from R4.5 billion Huguenot Tunnel upgrade



**Caption:** Transport Minister Barbara Creecy explains the significance of the Huguenot Tunnel upgrades to media

Cape Town, 24 October 2024 – Transport Minister Barbara Creecy says the R4.5 billion project to construct a new 3.9km section of the Huguenot Tunnel on the N1 national road holds significant economic benefits for the Western Cape. Minister Creecy today (Thursday) conducted an inspection of the Huguenot Tunnel, operated by the South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL), an entity of the national Department of Transport.

Minister Creecy said: “The upgrade of the Huguenot Tunnel is somewhat overdue. As a consequence, we are seeing increasing congestion in this tunnel. At the moment, traffic is only moving on one lane in each direction with an average of 13,000 vehicles passing through the tunnel on a daily basis and that number increases to around 25,000 during peak holiday periods.”

“Clearly, this stretch of the N1 is really important because it connects the ports of Cape Town and Saldanha to the hinterland. This is a very significant agricultural region but there’s also traffic coming from the north of the region and country as well. Once the upgrade of the tunnel has been completed in three to four years from now,

we will have two lanes carrying traffic in each direction, which will significantly reduce congestion. Most importantly, that will also allow for more efficient movement of goods and people," said Minister Creecy.

She was accompanied by the provincial MEC for Mobility, Isaac Sileku, and the mayor of Drakenstein Municipality, Stephen Korabie,

Minister Creecy said the project would, in addition to improving mobility and reducing congestion, also create significant jobs and contracting opportunities.

SANRAL CEO Reginald Demana said SANRAL would be putting the construction of the new section of the Huguenot Tunnel out to tender in coming days and he hoped to see boots on the ground in the first half of 2025. The tunnel would be upgraded in accordance with international safety standards as well as meeting the mobility demands of the significantly increased traffic volumes that come with urban development, said Demana.

"The South Bore of the Huguenot Tunnel was built in the 1980s, so it requires a significant safety upgrade in relation to electricity supply and ventilation. Some of that work has been able to happen over the last couple of years but the electricity supply can only be significantly upgraded once we move all the traffic to the new section of the tunnel, the North Bore, which will be constructed over the next few years," said Demana.

Minister Creecy further explained the significance of SANRAL's infrastructure development programme. "During his Opening of Parliament Address on 18 July 2024, President Ramaphosa said the government would forge a new inclusive growth path for the country by pursuing massive investment in infrastructure. This investment drive includes major road infrastructure, which functions as arteries of our country's economy by carrying goods and people – and is in line with one of the Seventh Administration's top priorities to drive inclusive growth, create jobs and reduce poverty. Quality road infrastructure plays a critically important role in our economy, particularly given that roads currently facilitate the movement of people and the bulk of goods and services across our country," she said.

At 3.9km, the Huguenot Tunnel is the longest road tunnel in Africa. It has been in operation for 36 years and has to date seen more than 125 million vehicles pass through.

The N1 is a vital link providing high mobility between Cape Town and the northern interior parts of the country and the Huguenot Tunnel through the Du Toit's Kloof mountain range, which is located approximately 80 km outside Cape Town, aptly illustrates the importance of well-maintained and safely operated road infrastructure.

An audio clip is available for download here: <https://we.tl/t-EqlaGU7r0U>

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