

Parliamentary Oversight Report

The review nobody escapes

October 2025

7th Parliament



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OUTA
ORGANISATION UNDOING TAX ABUSE

 **ParliMeter**

Parliamentary Oversight Report 2025: The review nobody escapes (October 2025)

Developed by OUTA – Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse NPC

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Acknowledgements

In 2024, OUTA, in partnership with the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) and OpenUp, launched the Parliamentary Oversight Dashboard (ParliMeter) – a pioneering initiative co-funded by the European Union’s Enhancing Accountability Programme. *ParliMeter* is designed as an open-source platform providing real-time, accessible data on parliamentary activities to strengthen transparency, public engagement, and oversight in South Africa.

The project combines the partners’ expertise in democratic governance, data analysis, and civic participation to establish measurable benchmarks for effective parliamentary performance. By incorporating inclusivity at its core, *ParliMeter* aims to empower marginalised communities to access information and engage meaningfully with democratic processes.

While *ParliMeter* represents the project’s flagship innovation, OUTA’s Parliamentary Oversight Report (POR) remains a distinct and complementary publication. Now in its seventh year, the POR offers detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis of Parliament’s performance, building on OUTA’s longstanding advocacy for stronger oversight and public accountability since 2019.

Together, *ParliMeter* and the Parliamentary Oversight Report advance a shared goal: to equip citizens, policymakers, and civil society with the knowledge and tools needed to foster a more transparent, accountable, and inclusive Parliament that genuinely serves the people of South Africa. For more information on *ParliMeter*, please visit the website [here](#). For more information on the work of our partners, please visit the [Parliamentary Monitoring Group \(PMG\)](#) and [OpenUp](#).

OUTA's Parliamentary Oversight Reports

The Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA) produces an annual *Parliamentary Oversight Report* as part of its mandate to strengthen accountability and transparency in South Africa's Parliament. These reports track the performance of Parliament in holding the executive to account, highlighting trends in governance, financial management, and legislative oversight. They draw on committee proceedings, audit outcomes, and civil society monitoring to identify recurring weaknesses, while also mentioning improvements and opportunities for reform¹ This report is OUTA's seventh annual Parliamentary Oversight Report.



Parliamentary Oversight Report 2024: Laudable or lamentable? The 6th Parliament's legacy (October 2024). OUTA's sixth annual report finds that the 6th Parliament largely failed to hold the executive accountable. Despite some committed Members of Parliament (MPs), most committees were ineffective amid ongoing crises such as state capture, economic instability, service delivery failures and weak governance. Key concerns include poor responses to corruption, weak public participation, inaction on reform, and failing oversight of state-owned entities (SOEs). Recommendations for the 7th Parliament include: Enhancing public participation, strengthening budget oversight, implementing state capture reforms, restructuring SOEs and enforcing Parliament's Oversight and Accountability Model.



Parliamentary Oversight Report 2023: Parliament: The fairytale that became a nightmare (October 2023). This report offered a stark critique, raising alarm over Parliament's deepening failure to hold the executive accountable, a failure now viewed as systemic and detrimental to democratic governance. It featured 11 case studies across portfolio committees that illustrated persistent gaps in oversight and accountability. The report reflected on the broader context of the 6th Parliament, which was shaped by the legacy of state capture, the resignation of former President Jacob Zuma and the subsequent appointment of President Cyril Ramaphosa. OUTA stressed that implementing the State Capture Commission's recommendations for parliamentary reform was the bare minimum required in advance of the 2024 elections².

1 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *Oversight of Parliament*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.oua.co.za/projects/government-policy/parliament>> [Accessed 2 September 2025].

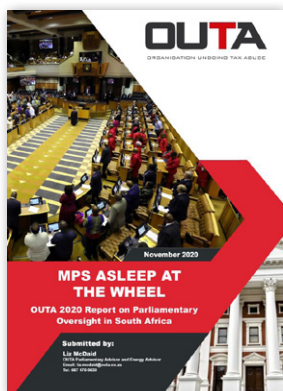
2 The Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State, headed by then Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, was established in January 2018, and issued its final reports from January 2022 to June 2022. The reports are available online here: <<https://www.statecapture.org.za/>>



Parliamentary Oversight Report 2022: Kicking the can down the road (October 2022). While some positive developments were acknowledged, the report concluded that Parliament remained largely ineffective in holding the executive accountable. It continued to approve budgets despite widespread financial mismanagement and treated public input as a procedural formality. Furthermore, resistance to meaningful electoral reform persisted, with party interests taking precedence over democratic renewal. The report concluded with a series of recommendations to enhance parliamentary oversight.



Parliamentary Oversight Report 2021: MPs dragging their feet (February 2022). This report noted Parliament's continued inability to address corruption and its failure to act on the findings of state capture. Some MPs were shown to shield individuals implicated in wrongdoing, in contradiction of their constitutional responsibilities. The report also pointed to shortcomings in public participation and the ineffectiveness of party constituency offices, which are funded by Parliament but largely absent in practice. Structural reforms were deemed essential to strengthen oversight mechanisms.



Parliamentary Oversight Report 2020: MPs asleep at the wheel (November 2020). The second report highlighted the importance of public participation in good governance and noted Parliament's failure to meaningfully implement its own public participation policy. The review revealed that MPs were increasingly reliant on government departments for information, rather than engaging independent or alternative sources. This undermined the credibility of their oversight efforts and created a concerning dependency on the very institutions they are meant to scrutinise.



Parliamentary Oversight Report 2019: OUTA Introductory Report on Parliamentary Oversight in South Africa (May 2019). This inaugural report found that MPs often failed to hold the executive to account effectively. This was attributed to both limited capacity and a lack of political will. While many committees overlooked serious instances of corruption and maladministration, some MPs demonstrated commendable resolve and commitment to public accountability. Their efforts reflected values such as integrity, honesty and justice standards which should guide the daily actions of all public representatives.

Executive summary

03

The 7th Parliament of South Africa commenced in June 2024, following the general elections on 29 May 2024. In a turning point for South Africa's democratic journey, the African National Congress (ANC) lost the majority for the first time since 1994. A Government of National Unity (GNU) was established, which brought together the ANC, Democratic Alliance (DA), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Patriotic Alliance (PA), GOOD, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), Freedom Front Plus (FF+), United Democratic Movement (UDM), Rise Mzansi and Al Jama-ah. This new arrangement was both a response to voter demand for accountability and a reflection of South Africa's shifting political landscape. The GNU represented a significant departure from the dominant-party system that had characterised South Africa's democratic politics for three decades, starting an era of multi-party cooperation, compromise and contestation.

The strategic plan for the 7th Parliament builds on the successes, failures and recommendations of its predecessor. The 6th Parliament (May 2019–May 2024) left behind many unresolved crises in governance, financial management and public trust. Therefore, the 7th Parliament has positioned its strategies around reform and renewal.

Its core strategic priorities include:

- Reinforcing Parliament's oversight role over the executive by improving committee enforcement powers while ensuring follow-up on audit findings by the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA), and advancing Parliament's own Oversight and Accountability Model;³
- Expanding public participation and transparency and adopting civic-technology platforms, open data portals, and participatory hearings in order to bridge the gap between Parliament and citizens;
- Accelerating digital transformation in parliamentary operations by enabling better monitoring of executive commitments and creating more inclusive engagement;
- Supporting institutional professionalisation, specifically through oversight of the *National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector*⁴; and
- Ensuring legislative responsiveness by fast-tracking delayed reforms in electoral law, anti-corruption frameworks, infrastructure governance and SOEs.

3 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2009. *Oversight and Accountability Model*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/oversight-reports/ovac-model.pdf>> [Accessed 9 October 2025].

4 Republic of South Africa. 2023. *National School of Government Notice 1952 of 2023: Publication of a National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector*. Government Gazette, No. 49105, 11 August 2023. Pretoria: Government Printing Works. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202308/49105gen1952.pdf> [Accessed 9 October 2025].

- The 7th Parliament stands as both a product and a reflection of South Africa's democratic evolution. The GNU was not merely an electoral outcome but was a public demand for something different: a Parliament that listens, interrogates and acts. For the first time in three decades, power has been diffused across parties, forcing consensus where once there was dominance. That alone has reshaped oversight: debates are sharper, alliances more fluid, and committee chairs more aware that scrutiny now cuts in multiple directions.

The GNU was not merely an electoral outcome but was a public demand for something different: a Parliament that listens, interrogates and acts.

However, this carries its own risks. Power shared is not always power used, and in a Parliament where accountability is everyone's job, it can easily become no one's responsibility. The challenge is whether collaboration will deepen democratic practice or merely soften scrutiny.

Between June 2024 and July 2025, numerous parliamentary meetings took place, showing a surge of activity and engagement. Joint oversight models and cross-party coordination on municipal audits suggest growing experimentation and cooperation. Parliament's alignment with the *National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector* is another indicator of the intention to engage with the departments, and 80% of the framework is reportedly rolled out. This speaks to ambition. However, ambition must now translate into consequence.

Despite this momentum, the shadows of the 6th Parliament linger.

Oversight remains reactive rather than preventive. Corruption is exposed but seldom punished. Public trust continues to waver as many South Africans still perceive Parliament as a space of performance rather than reform.

The data reveal both progress and fragility. Portfolio committees are busier than ever, but not necessarily more effective. Oversight visits uncover serious governance failures but rarely drive systemic correction. The *ParliMeter* dashboard⁵, developed by OUTA, PMG and OpenUp, exposes attendance patterns, delays and follow-up inconsistencies which is evidence that oversight is happening, but not yet hitting the mark.

This report argues that oversight must now move beyond observation.

5 ParliMeter is available online here: <https://www.parlimeter.org.za/>

The 7th Parliament has every tool it needs: constitutional authority, public backing, data visibility and cross-party legitimacy. What it requires is the will to act decisively and to ensure that findings lead to sanctions, that committee resolutions yield reform, and that transparency translates into trust.

OUTA's review of all portfolio committees reveals that while pockets of excellence exist in committees there are structural constraints, political caution and administrative overload that still erode impact. The challenge is not only to speak truth to power, but to follow truth with action.

The 7th Parliament arrives at a critical stage in South Africa's democratic journey, one where citizens no longer accept symbolic oversight but demand tangible accountability. Whether Parliament can rise to that expectation will determine not only the success of the GNU but the credibility of democracy itself.

This *Parliamentary Oversight Report 2025* therefore serves as both record and reminder that democracy survives not by the strength of elections alone, but by the vigilance of institutions that hold power to account. The 7th Parliament has the rare opportunity to redefine that standard and to prove that in a truly accountable democracy, nobody escapes accountability.

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Parliamentary oversight:

An overview

South Africa's 7th Parliament commenced in June 2024, following the general elections on 29 May 2024. This marked a turning point for South Africa's democratic journey, for the first time since 1994. A new precedent was set by forming and deploying a GNU, which brought together the ANC, DA, IFP, PA, GOOD, PAC, FF+, UDM, Rise Mzansi and Al Jama-ah. This new arrangement was both a response to voter demand for accountability and a reflection of South Africa's shifting political landscape. This coalition represented a significant departure from the dominant-party system that had characterised South Africa's democratic politics for three decades, starting an era of multiparty cooperation, compromise, and contestation.

The strategic plan for the 7th Parliament builds on the successes, failures and recommendations of its predecessor. The 6th Parliament left behind many unresolved crises in governance, financial management, and public trust. Therefore, the 7th Parliament has positioned its strategies around reform and renewal.

Its core strategic priorities include:

- Reinforcing Parliament's oversight role over the executive by improving committee enforcement powers while ensuring follow-up on AGSA audit findings, and advancing Parliament's *Oversight and Accountability Model*;
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- Accelerating digital transformation in parliamentary operations by enabling better monitoring of executive commitments and creating more inclusive engagement;
- Supporting institutional professionalisation, especially through oversight of the *National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector*; and
- Ensuring legislative responsiveness by fast-tracking delayed reforms in electoral law, anti-corruption frameworks, infrastructure governance and SOEs⁶.

6 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2024. *Draft Strategic Plan 7th Parliament 2024–2029*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/StratPlan/7/7_Parliament_Draft_Strategic_Plan_2024_2029.pdf> [Accessed 22 September 2025].

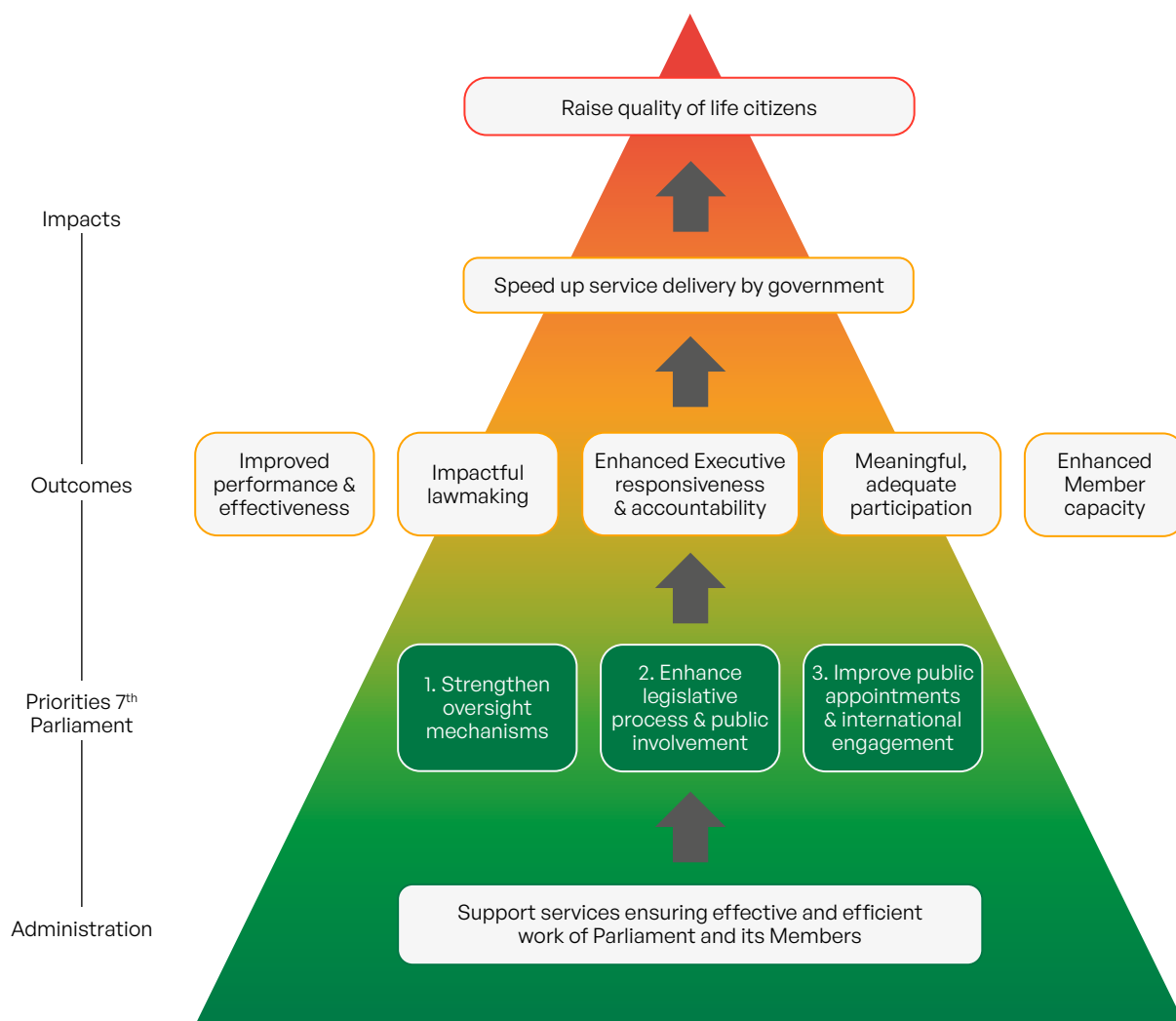


Figure 1 Priorities of the 7th Parliament⁷

7 Parliament. *Draft Strategic Plan 7th Parliament 2024–2029*. Page 29.

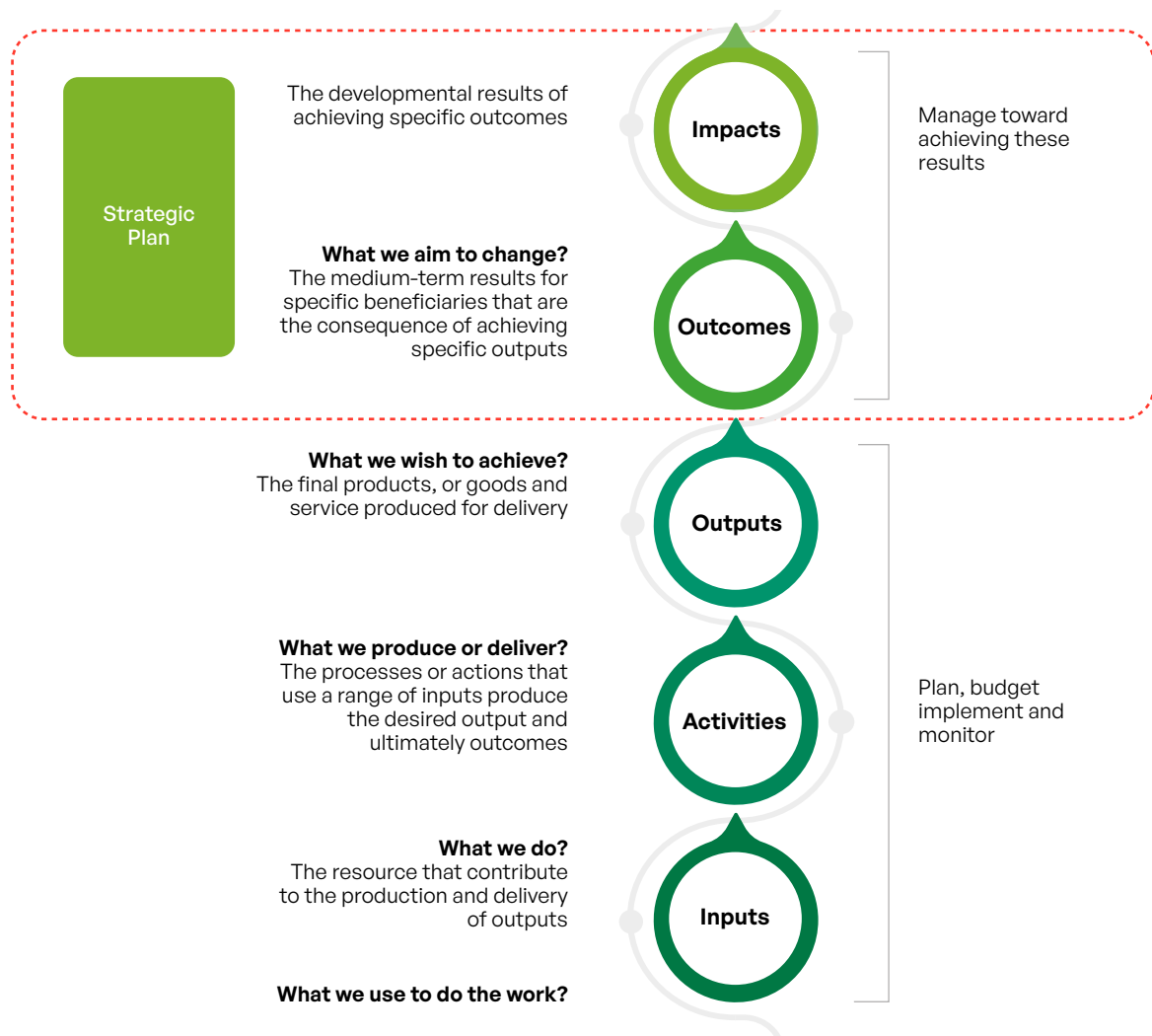


Figure 2 Strategic plan for the 7th Parliament

Is Parliament showing improvement?

The GNU has forced multiparty cooperation which has improved the quality of debates and reduced the dominance of a single party. Oversight committees are more vocal, and cross-party consensus is emerging around corruption, poor audits, and service delivery failures. There is also evidence of increased oversight activity. Between June 2024 and July 2025, Parliament held 1 165 meetings⁸, with stronger follow-up on matters such as National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) corruption, Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) irregularities, and delays in implementing the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act. Joint models of oversight, including collaboration between the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) and the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) on municipal audits, show Parliament experimenting with more coordinated approaches.

8 Based on ParliMeter data for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 [online]. Available at: <https://dashboard.parlimeter.co.za/overview/>

The 7th Parliament has embraced the *National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector*, with 157 departments engaged in workshops and 80% of the framework reportedly rolled out. This represents a step toward addressing the long-standing capacity crisis in the public service.

Issues still persisting

Despite these developments, Parliament still struggles with enforcing its own recommendations. Even when corruption or maladministration is exposed, consequences for officials are rare, leading to repeated findings with limited impact. Key reforms remain delayed, including electoral law changes, whistleblower protection, and infrastructure regulation. By the end of 2024, 22 bills were still awaiting presidential assent⁹, undermining legislative responsiveness. Public trust remains low, with many citizens viewing Parliament as reactive rather than proactive. Civil society, including OUTA, continues to highlight the lack of institutionalised transparency and meaningful public participation. Furthermore, systemic service delivery failures in water, electricity, transport, and housing persist. Oversight has yet to translate into outcomes that improve daily life for South Africans.

In conclusion, the 7th Parliament stands at a defining moment in South Africa's democratic journey. Its coalition-based structure has created both opportunities for reform and challenges of coherence. Citizens' expectations are high, as they demand from Parliament to not only have debates and create legislation, but to also enforce accountability, rebuild public trust, and drive service delivery improvements. Whether the 7th Parliament will succeed in institutionalising reform depends on its ability to overcome entrenched weaknesses, operationalise its strategies, and hold the executive to account without fear or favour. This report seeks to track that progress, measure its effectiveness, and provide evidence-based insights into the extent to which the 7th Parliament is fulfilling its constitutional mandate. A comprehensive review of all portfolio committees of the 7th Parliament was done and OUTA highlights selected case studies to provide deeper insights into key oversight themes. These case studies cover areas such as financial mismanagement, SOEs, education reform, energy stability and corruption, and are intended to illustrate the opportunities and shortcomings of parliamentary oversight in practice.

Oversight has yet to translate into outcomes that improve daily life for South Africans.

⁹ Parliamentary Monitoring Group. 2024. *Seventh Parliament End of Year Review (June–December 2024)*. [online] Available at: <[https://pmg.org.za/blog/Seventh%20Parliament%20End%20of%20Year%20Review%20\(June-December%202024\)>](https://pmg.org.za/blog/Seventh%20Parliament%20End%20of%20Year%20Review%20(June-December%202024)>) [Accessed 10 October 2025].

4.1 What is parliamentary oversight?

Parliamentary oversight refers to the constitutional and legislative mandated authority of the South African Parliament to scrutinise, monitor and evaluate the actions, decisions and performance of the executive branch, which includes the President, Deputy President, ministers, deputy ministers who oversee their respective government departments, and public entities. It serves as a critical mechanism through which Parliament holds the executive accountable for the implementation of laws, the usage of public resources, and the delivery of services to the public. This function is not only important to the operation of a democratic state but also central to upholding the principles of good governance, transparency, and accountability.¹⁰

Oversight is intended to ensure that executive actions remain within legal and ethical boundaries, that public funds are utilised efficiently and effectively, and that government departments deliver on their constitutional and policy mandates. Guarding against the misuse of power is intended to prevent systemic inefficiencies and promote the alignment of governmental practice with public expectations and constitutional obligations. In South Africa, the authority for parliamentary oversight is derived from a robust legal framework. Section 55(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, empowers the National Assembly to scrutinise and oversee executive action¹¹, while Sections 92(2) and 92(3) require Cabinet members to act in accordance with the Constitution and hold them collectively and individually accountable to Parliament¹².

Powers of National Assembly

The National Assembly must provide for mechanisms –

(a) to ensure that all executive organs of state in the national sphere of government are accountable to it; and

(b) to maintain oversight of –

(i) the exercise of national executive authority, including the implementation of legislation; and

(ii) any organ of state.

The Constitution, Chapter 4, Section 55 (2)

¹⁰ De Visser, J. 2005. *Developmental Local Government: A Case Study of South Africa*. Antwerp: Intersentia.

¹¹ Parliament of South Africa. 2005. *Constitutional landscape of the constitutional provisions dealing with the interrelated themes of oversight, accountability, transparency and responsiveness in respect of Parliament's functions*. [online]. Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/oversight-reports/constitutional-landscape-of-parliament-nov-2005111.pdf>> [Accessed 28 July 2025].

¹² Republic of South Africa. 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. [online] Available at: <[justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/saconstitution-web-eng.pdf](https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/saconstitution-web-eng.pdf)> [Accessed 29 July 2025].

Furthermore, the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act (Act No. 4 of 2004) provide legal protections and procedural mechanisms to facilitate effective parliamentary oversight¹³. Further support is provided through the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act (Act No. 9 of 2009)¹⁴, which enhances Parliament's role in financial oversight by allowing it to amend money bills and influence the allocation and management of national resources¹⁵. Together, these instruments establish the foundation for Parliament's supervisory function and enable it to fulfil its democratic mandate of ensuring that the executive remains answerable to the public it serves.

4.2 Why is it important?

Parliamentary oversight is an essential pillar of democratic governance and plays a vital role in ensuring that the executive remains transparent, accountable and responsive in its actions. Through effective oversight Parliament intends to ensure that the implementation of laws, policies, and public spending aligns with its legislative intentions and the broader public interest¹⁶. This oversight function is intended to act as a safeguard against the abuse of power, corruption, and maladministration by subjecting executive decisions and performance to continuous scrutiny and public evaluation. By doing so, it strengthens the rule of law and promotes adherence to constitutional values.



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- 13 Republic of South Africa. 2004. *Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliaments and Provincial Legislatures Act* (Act 4 of 2004). Government Gazette, 7 June. [online] Available at: <<https://www.gov.za/documents/powers-privileges-and-immunities-parliaments-and-provincial-legislatures-act>> [Accessed 29 July 2025].
- 14 Mc Lennan, A. 2018. The Power of the Purse: Fiscal Oversight and the South African Parliamentary Budget Office. *AJPSDG*, 1(1) pp. 90-105. Available at: <<https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/EJC-1724bd4d11>> [Accessed 28 August 2025].
- 15 Republic of South Africa. 2009. *Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act 9 of 2009*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/PBO/act-9-2009-money-bill-amendment-procedure.pdf>> [Accessed 28 August 2025].
- 16 Calland, R. 1999. *The First Five Years: A Review of South Africa's Democratic Parliament*. Cape Town: IDASA.

Furthermore, parliamentary oversight should contribute significantly to improving service delivery by identifying institutional weaknesses, policy gaps, and implementation failures. It needs to enable Parliament to make evidence-based recommendations, demand corrective action and follow up on commitments made by the executive. This enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of government programmes and contributes to the realisation of socio-economic rights. Oversight also plays a critical role in building public confidence in democratic institutions. When citizens see that their elected representatives actively hold government accountable, it fosters trust, enhances legitimacy, and deepens democratic participation¹⁷. In addition, oversight reinforces the separation of powers, a foundational doctrine of constitutional democracy, by ensuring that Parliament acts as an independent check on the executive's authority and that power remains balanced and subject to democratic control¹⁸.

Oversight plays a critical role in building public confidence in democratic institutions.

4.3 How does Parliament do it?

In South Africa, Parliament conducts oversight through a diverse range of mechanisms that are designed to ensure comprehensive scrutiny of executive performance and decision-making. One of the primary mechanisms is the work of portfolio committees in the National Assembly, select committees in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), as well as joint committees that comprise of both National Assembly MPs and NCOP delegates and the occasional ad hoc committees of either House. These are cumulatively known as parliamentary committees¹⁹. Some of these committees – particularly portfolio and select committees – are aligned with corresponding government departments and are responsible for examining the strategic plans, budgets and annual performance plans and reports of national departments and national public entities. This is how they conduct oversight.

They should also assess audit outcomes issued by the AGSA, a key accountability institution whose findings often prompt further committee action²⁰. Committees hold public hearings, summon departmental officials, request technical briefings and conduct oversight visits to verify service delivery and infrastructure development on the ground.

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- 17 Democracy Development Programme. 2023. The role of parliamentary oversight in promoting better service delivery in South Africa. *DDP Blog*. [online] Available at: <<https://ddp.org.za/blog/the-role-of-parliamentary-oversight-in-promoting-better-service-delivery-in-south-africa>> [Accessed 1 August 2025].
- 18 Maganoe, S. 2023. Legislative oversight and executive accountability in South Africa. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal (PER)*, 26(1), pp.1-27. [online] Available at: <https://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?pid=S1727-37812023000100013&script=sci_arttext> [Accessed 4 August 2025].
- 19 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *How Parliament is Structured*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/how-parliament-is-structured>> [Accessed 4 August 2025].
- 20 Auditor-General of South Africa. 2025. *Official Website*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.agsa.co.za>> [Accessed 20 July 2025].

Budgetary oversight is another critical mechanism, enabled by the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, which empowers Parliament not only to consider but also to amend the national budget²¹. This ensures that fiscal planning reflects public priorities and that expenditure is subjected to parliamentary approval and review. MPs further exercise oversight by posing oral and written questions to ministers, which must be answered within stipulated timeframes. These questions enhance transparency and enable Parliament to obtain direct responses on pressing national issues²². Debates and motions, such as motions of no confidence, or discussions on urgent matters also provide platforms for interrogating executive conduct and policy decisions in a public and accountable manner.

In addition to these formal mechanisms, Parliament encourages public participation in its oversight activities. Citizens, civil society organisations, and stakeholders are invited to make submissions, participate in public hearings, and engage in petitions. This participatory approach not only enhances the inclusiveness of the oversight process but also helps Parliament to remain attuned to the lived realities and needs of the public²³. Ultimately, oversight in South Africa is both a constitutional obligation and a dynamic process, combining legal authority, institutional procedures and civic engagement to strengthen accountability and democratic governance.

Parliament encourages public participation in its oversight activities. Citizens, civil society organisations, and stakeholders are invited to make submissions, participate in public hearings, and engage in petitions.

Parliament is expected to exercise its powers consistently to act as the central oversight body. It must ensure government spending is lawful and effective, combat corruption and maladministration, and connect policy to service delivery. By enabling debate and citizen participation, Parliament functions both as guardian of the public purse and a conduit for public concerns in governance. While Parliament has shown progress such as joint committee work, visible oversight visits, stronger debates, and support for professionalising the public service, there are still weaknesses that persist. These include limited follow-up on AGSA findings, capacity shortfalls, and political interference which undermines Parliament's impact, delays in ministerial responses and shallow public participation, especially in rural areas, which further weakens oversight.²⁴

21 Republic of South Africa. 2009. *Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act 9 of 2009*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/PBO/act-9-2009-money-bill-amendment-procedure.pdf>> [Accessed 28 August 2025].

22 Parliament of South Africa. 2024. *Parliamentary Questions and Replies*. [online] Available at: <[https://www.parliament.gov.za/questions-and-replies?sorts\[date\]=-1](https://www.parliament.gov.za/questions-and-replies?sorts[date]=-1)> [Accessed 20 July 2025].

23 Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments. 2025. *Public Involvement in the Parliament of South Africa*. [online] Available at: <<https://asgp.co/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/South-Africa-PowerPoint.pdf>> [Accessed 20 July 2025].

24 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Draft Oversight Priority Plan for the 7th Parliament Consultation Version*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Pages/2025/02-05-2025_NCOP_Strategic_Planning/day1/06-05-2025/Oversight_Priority_Plan_Consultation_version_August_2024.pdf> [Accessed 23 September 2025].



Parliament's powers

- Scrutinises strategic plans, budgets and performance reports of departments and public entities
- Interrogates Auditor-General (AGSA) audit outcomes
- Summons ministers and officials for oversight purposes, conducts oversight visits and convenes public hearings
- Can amend the national budget in terms of the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act
- Members may pose oral and written questions to ministers, initiate debates and motions of no confidence
- Facilitates public participation through hearings, submissions, and petitions



The role Parliament is expected to play

- Exercise powers with consistency and rigour to ensure accountability
- Ensure lawful, efficient expenditure aligned with national priorities
- Detect and respond to corruption, maladministration, and poor performance
- Strengthen service delivery by scrutinising executive policies and implementation
- Facilitate open debate on executive conduct and enable citizen and civil society participation
- Act as institutional guardian of the public purse



The extent to which Parliament fulfils its mandate

- Committees increasingly engage in joint oversight and visible oversight visits, which improves efficiency and effectiveness of oversight
- Debates in committees and Parliament have become more assertive, especially on corruption and service delivery failures
- Parliament supports professionalisation of the public service to strengthen state capacity
- Weaknesses: Limited follow-up on AGSA findings, capacity constraints, and uneven ministerial compliance
- Political dynamics compromise impartiality and weaken enforcement of accountability
- Public participation mechanisms exist but often fail to reach rural and marginalised communities

Figure 3 Parliament's powers, role and the extent to which it fulfils its mandate

Parliamentary oversight and accountability

The 7th Parliament of South Africa was established after the May 2024 national and provincial elections, with its first sitting on 14 June 2024. It will serve a five-year term from 2024 to 2029. This Parliament functions under the GNU, which has reshaped oversight dynamics by requiring broader cooperation among multiple parties. There are various mechanisms within Parliament through which oversight is intended to occur, including the scrutiny by parliamentary committees during committee meetings, committee oversight visits, attending to community and local issues during constituency leave, submitting questions to the executive, encouraging public participation and passing legislation. The sections that follow shed more light on these mechanisms.

5.1 Parliamentary committees

Parliamentary committees are the driving force of oversight and law making. These committees are made up of MPs that are representatives of the National Assembly and delegates of the NCOP. These committees include portfolio committees, select committees, standing committees, joint committees and ad hoc committees²⁵.

1. **Portfolio committees** are established at the start of every Parliament, after the elections, and are in line with rules 225-230 of the National Assembly. The portfolio committees mirror government departments and are permanent oversight committees. Members are selected proportionally from political parties represented in the National Assembly, and the committees are chaired by MPs. For the 7th Parliament, there are 30 committees.
2. **Standing committees** are also initiated at the beginning of every new Parliament. Standing committees are permanent structures that aid in oversight and are the financial watchdogs. These committees are composed of MPs that are nominated proportionally from political parties represented in the National Assembly or NCOP, depending on the committee. They remain active throughout the five-year term of Parliament. There are currently five standing committees that are not linked to departments.

25 Parliament of South Africa. 2005. *Constitutional landscape of the constitutional provisions dealing with the interrelated themes of oversight, accountability, transparency and responsiveness in respect of Parliament's functions*. [online]. Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/oversight-reports/constitutional-landscape-of-parliament-nov-2005111.pdf>> [Accessed 28 July 2025].

3. **Select committees** are established at the start of a new Parliament under the rules of the NCOP and are permanent bodies. Select committees are clustered and oversee multiple government departments within their thematic areas. Their role is to conduct oversight, process bills, and scrutinise executive performance on behalf of the provinces. They are composed of provincial delegates from political parties represented in the NCOP.
4. **Joint committees** are established either at the start of a Parliament or by resolution when both Houses agree to consider a cross-cutting matter together. They are not always mandated by law but are important permanent or semi-permanent structures. They are composed of members from both the National Assembly and NCOP.
5. **Joint standing committees** are also established at the start of a new Parliament and are mandated by the Constitution. They are permanent bicameral committees that include members from both the National Assembly and NCOP. They remain active throughout the five-year term of Parliament. Their main purpose is to deal with issues of national importance that require the participation of both Houses.
6. **Subcommittees** are temporary bodies set up at any time during a parliamentary term by a parent committee. They focus on specialised tasks such as reviewing rules or handling petitions. Their membership is drawn from the parent committee, and they are dissolved once their specific assignment is completed.
7. **The Parliamentary Group on International Relations** is set up at the start of a new Parliament as a permanent parliamentary forum. Its purpose is to coordinate Parliament's international relations, diplomacy, and engagements with foreign legislatures and multi-lateral institutions. It ensures that both Houses of Parliament are represented in international forums. It is composed of members of the National Assembly and NCOP and remains in place for the entire parliamentary term.
8. **Ad hoc committees** are established at any time during a parliamentary term by resolution of the National Assembly, the NCOP, or both Houses. They are temporary in nature and are dissolved once they complete their specific mandate. Their purpose is to investigate or address a single urgent issue. Their structure is made up of proportional representation of parties in the relevant House.
9. **The programme committees** of the National Assembly and NCOP are established at the start of each new Parliament as permanent internal governance structures. Their roles are to plan, schedule, and coordinate the programme of both Houses. They are composed of representatives from the NCOP or NA, including provincial delegates and office-bearers, and function throughout the five-year term.
10. **The Constitutional Review Committee** is established at the start of each Parliament by both Houses as well as when required by the Constitution. It is a permanent joint body that is tasked with reviewing the Constitution on an annual basis, and furthermore considers proposals for constitutional amendment. Members from both Houses form part of the committee and are nominated proportionally from political parties. This committee plays a vital role in safeguarding constitutional accountability and reform.

11. **The Mediation Committee** is set up at the start of a new Parliament, composed of representatives from both Houses and is in line with the rules of both Houses. However, it is only active when there are disagreements that arise between the two Houses over a bill. Its purpose is to resolve any legislative deadlocks: for example, on 15 May 2025, the National Gambling Amendment Bill [B27B–2018] was referred to the Mediation Committee in terms of Joint Rule 138 for consideration²⁶.
12. **The Rules Committee of the National Assembly**²⁷ is established automatically at the start of each Parliament and is a permanent governance committee. Its role is to adopt, review and interpret the rules of the National Assembly to ensure the effective and efficient functions of the House. It is composed of MPs from different parties.
13. **The Rules Committee of the NCOP**²⁸ is also established at the start of each Parliament and is a permanent governance committee. Its function is to review, amend and apply the rules governing the NCOP's proceedings. Ensures that NCOP proceedings comply with the Constitution and the NCOP Rules. It is composed of members drawn from provincial delegations.
14. **The Members' Support Forum** is created at the beginning of each Parliament as part of the National Assembly's internal governance and administrative framework. Its purpose is to ensure that MPs are effectively supported in carrying out their legislative, oversight, and constituency work. It's not a constitutional committee, but functions as a permanent forum. It's composed of members of the National Assembly across political parties, and deals with the practical and administrative needs of MPs throughout the parliamentary term.
15. **The Multi-Party Women's Caucus** is established at the start of each Parliament by resolution of the National Assembly rules. It is a permanent and a multi-party structure that promotes women's representation and addresses gender-related issues within Parliament and broader society. The caucus includes individuals from all parties in the National Assembly and is chaired by an MP.

The GNU has created the largest Cabinet and departmental footprint South Africa has had, with 32 ministers and 43 deputy ministers. This increase in executive oversight leaves MPs to carry heavier committee workloads, straining oversight capacity and limiting the time and expertise dedicated to scrutiny.

26 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *National Council Of Provinces Order Paper*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Docs/order_pap/01vchl7hd6anbasyy54jb2lfi45grv77bo.pdf> [Accessed 22 September 2025].

27 Parliament of South Africa. 2016. *Rules of the National Assembly, 9th Edition*. 28 September 2016. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Rules/NA/2016-09-28_NA_RULES.pdf> [Accessed 22 September 2025].

28 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Rules of the National Council of Provinces, 9th Edition*. March 2008. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Rules/NCOP/Rules_of_NCOP_9th_edition.pdf> [Accessed 22 September 2025].

For the 7th Parliament, the overall committee structure remains largely unchanged from previous terms, with 30 portfolio committees, five standing committees, clustered select committees, joint committees and various governance or ad hoc committees. However, the context has shifted significantly due to the GNU which has created the largest Cabinet and departmental footprint South Africa has had, with 32 ministers and 43 deputy ministers. This increase in executive oversight leaves MPs to carry heavier committee workloads, straining oversight capacity and limiting the time and expertise dedicated to scrutiny.

Changes include the creation of the Portfolio Committee on Electricity and Energy, together with shifting mandates and focus areas across committees. There has also been greater use of joint oversight models such as used by Scopa and the Portfolio Committee on Cogta. An emphasis has been placed on professionalisation and digital governance oversight through the *National Framework towards Professionalisation of the Public Sector*, and a more active Constitutional Review Committee considering multiple amendment proposals. Furthermore, the Mediation Committee was invoked early in 2025 to resolve a legislative deadlock on the National Gambling Amendment Bill. While there are many changes, the fundamental challenge remains that Parliament is structurally the same but practically more overloaded which has an impact on effective oversight.

In this 7th Parliament we continue to see changes within political parties and across committees. MPs tend to shift between committees, but this movement is mainly dictated by the party's strategies, structural changes in government, or political reshuffling, instead of MPs themselves. The ANC, as the largest party, shifts its members more frequently due to Cabinet changes and internal politics, while the EFF deliberately rotates its MPs to build collective expertise across different sectors. The DA maintains more stability by keeping specialists in place, though shifts still occur when necessary, and smaller parties have little room for change because of limited numbers. The MKP also records high levels of relocation, but these are mostly the result of internal turbulence rather than planned strategy. While these movements sometimes strengthen oversight by filling skills gaps, they often weaken continuity, stripping committees of long-term expertise and institutional memory. As a result, parliamentary committees often revisit the same issues without resolution, weakening sustained oversight and reducing their ability to hold the executive accountable²⁹.

See **Figure 4** below for an outline of the parliamentary committees.

29 Mancebo A. 2025. The South African Parliament's Capacity to Constrain the Executive Branch Weakened by a Dominant Party System. *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 58(1):121-123.



Figure 4 Parliamentary committees

5.2 Oversight visits

This section highlights a selection of case studies that OUTA considered particularly significant in illustrating the state of parliamentary oversight. While we focus on these examples, we acknowledge that other portfolio committees have also undertaken oversight visits that contribute meaningfully to accountability and governance.

The Portfolio Committee on Land Reform and Rural Development during the week of 24-28 February 2025 conducted an oversight visit in KwaZulu-Natal to assess governance challenges at the Ingonyama Trust Board and explore possible interventions. As part of the programme, the committee met with King MisuZulu KaZwelithini, the sole trustee of the trust, before engaging provincial departments, the Ingonyama Trust Board and land reform beneficiaries. Discussions covered governance failures, legislative reforms, the disbursement of funds to communities and progress on infrastructure projects such as land development in Makhathini and the planned construction of a local mill³⁰. The oversight was high in value, as it identified governance and operational challenges, particularly the blurred accountability between the sole trustee and the Ingonyama Trust Board, under-utilisation of rural infrastructure and delays in community benefit-sharing. The committee's interventions prompted calls for clearer legislation, improved monitoring of rural projects, and stronger collaboration between the department, the Ingonyama Trust Board and communities. The oversight report was finalised on 11 June 2025, confirming that the oversight produced actionable recommendations³¹. **Are there any improvements?** There were some signs of improvement, but outcomes remain mixed. The oversight visit helped surface governance failures at the Ingonyama Trust Board and prompted renewed discussions on legislative reform and stronger oversight of funds. Engagements with the King, the trust and beneficiaries improved dialogue and accountability, while projects like the Makhathini land development and the proposed mill showed progress on infrastructure planning. However, persistent concerns about weak governance, limited community benefit from revenues and slow implementation mean improvements are more structural and procedural than immediately visible in-service delivery³².

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- 30 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Alert: Land Reform Committee Conducting Oversight Visit to KwaZulu-Natal to Assess State Governance – Ingonyama Trust*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-alert-land-reform-committee-conducting-oversight-visit-kwazulu-natal-assess-state-governance-ingonyama-trust>> [Accessed 8 September 2025].
- 31 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2025. *Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports Wednesday, 11 June 2025*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Docs/atc/01ls62wggzftcx2davicfihzrxtvig6txw.pdf>> [Accessed 13 October 2025].
- 32 Ndenze, B. 2025. *Parliament calls for review of Ingonyama Trust legislation*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ewn.co.za/2025/04/01/parliament-calls-for-review-of-ingonyama-trust-legislation>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education conducted oversight visits to schools in KwaZulu-Natal's Ugu and Ilembe districts in February 2025 to assess readiness for the 2025 academic year. The visits focused on learner admissions, teacher ratios, curriculum rollout (including coding, robotics, maths and science), rural and special school support, social cohesion measures such as school safety and gender-based violence frameworks, as well as key services like learner transport, nutrition, information communication technology (ICT) connectivity and the delivery of learning materials³³. A portfolio committee meeting was held before 1 April 2025 to deliberate and finalise the KwaZulu-Natal oversight report³⁴. **Are there any improvements?** There are persistent gaps in teacher shortages, rural and special school resources, transport and ICT connectivity, which meant that the visits functioned more as accountability checks than as immediate service delivery improvements. Real impact will depend on whether the department acts on the findings to close these gaps before and during the school year³⁵.

The Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies met with mobile network operators Vodacom, MTN, Cell C, Telkom and Rain in June 2025 to assess compliance with national priorities and regulatory frameworks. Key concerns raised included the high cost of data, rural connectivity, prepaid data expiry and the need for coordinated corporate social investment projects. The operators stressed the urgency of legislative and policy reform, regulation of over-the-top services, and spectrum allocation changes. The committee expressed dissatisfaction with the slow pace of policy reform, calling for a revised timetable for amending the Electronic Communications Act and anticipating the *Draft White Paper on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and Online Safety*³⁶. In line with national security and technology sovereignty, the committee also urged the operators to consider mobilising resources to build a national communication satellite³⁷. **Are there any improvements?** While mobile network operators highlighted investment needs and policy bottlenecks, the issues of the high cost of data, patchy rural connectivity and prepaid data expiry remain unresolved. The committee's push for faster legislative reform and exploration of a national satellite reflects intent, but until amendments to the Electronic Communications Act and the new White Paper are delivered, service delivery to consumers is largely unchanged. Any real improvement will depend on how quickly government aligns policy with industry capacity and holds mobile network operators accountable for affordability and access³⁸.

33 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Basic Education Portfolio Committee Visits Schools in Ilembe District*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-basic-education-portfolio-committee-visits-schools-ilembe-district>> [Accessed 8 September 2025].

34 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2025. *Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports Tuesday, 1 April 2025*. [online]. Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Docs/atc/01ls62wge6cphfquhajzez5xlljsauiznnx.pdf>> [Accessed 13 October 2025].

35 Lombo, N. & Subban, M. 2024. Physical Infrastructure Challenges in Rural Schools. Reflections to Promote Quality Education. *Administratio Publica*, 32(1): 69-101. [online] Available at: <<https://shorturl.at/egx6Z>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

36 Department of Communications and Digital Technologies. 2025. *Draft National White Paper for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and Online Safety*. Government Gazette, No. 52972, 11 July 2025. Pretoria: Government Printing Works. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202507/52972gen3369.pdf> [Accessed 12 October 2025].

37 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *South Africa: Communications Committee Welcomes Engagement With Mobile Network Operators*. [online] Available at: <<https://allafrica.com/stories/202506180434.html>> [Accessed 9 September 2025].

38 Department of Communications and Digital Technologies. 2025. *Policy Direction to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa on Inquiry into Need for Applications for Individual Electronic Communications Network Services Licences*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202508/53214gon6542.pdf> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs conducted an oversight visit to the Free State in February 2025, focusing on Mangaung Metro and Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality. The programme included engagements with the provincial Members of the Executive Council (MECs), the AGSA, the South African Local Government Association (Salga) and the Department of Cooperative Governance on the state of municipalities, the effectiveness of support in terms of Section 154 of the Constitution³⁹, and audit outcomes. The committee interrogated the governance, financial management, bulk infrastructure and service delivery challenges, with specific attention to recovery plans, debt management, irregular expenditure, infrastructure maintenance, water and electricity access, poverty alleviation initiatives and local economic development programmes^{40,41}. **Are there any improvements?** The visit exposed severe governance and service delivery failures, strengthening accountability through engagement on recovery plans and finances. However, water, electricity and infrastructure challenges persist, so real improvements depend on effective follow-through under Section 154 support⁴².

Parliament's Peace and Security Cluster Committees⁴³ briefed the media and public on 7 July 2025, under the theme "Deepening the values of peace, justice, safety and security". Chairpersons reported on oversight progress, including updates on the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), anti-corruption efforts, the Correctional Services Amendment Act, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, governance and accountability in security structures, and policing challenges such as the gap between arrests and convictions and crimes against women and children. The briefing took place at the Good Hope Chamber, Cape Town, and was broadcast live on Parliament TV and social media platforms⁴⁴. **From OUTA's perspective**, there is scepticism of the Peace and Security Cluster briefing, understanding that Parliament continues to raise longstanding issues without delivering measurable outcomes. While live broadcasts and a focus on rehabilitation show efforts at transparency, OUTA would argue that real accountability lies in tangible progress through stronger prosecutions, safer communities, and visible anti-corruption results.

39 Republic of South Africa. 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. [online] Available at: <[justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/saconstitution-web-eng.pdf](https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/saconstitution-web-eng.pdf)> [Accessed 29 July 2025].

40 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Alert: COGTA Committee to Conduct Oversight Visit to Municipalities in the Free State*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-alert-cogta-committee-conduct-oversight-visit-municipalities-free-state>> [Accessed 9 September 2025].

41 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2025. *Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports Tuesday, 20 May 2025*. [online]. Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Docs/atc/01ls62wgcf16tu5ztp5c3t3zhx2n2by2.pdf>> [Accessed 13 October 2025].

42 Parliamentary Budget Office. 2025. *Section 139 and 154 Municipal Interventions: Occasional Paper May 2025*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/PBO/Occasional_Papers/2025/06-05-2025/PBO_Brief_Section_139_and_154_Municipal_Interventions_May_2025_1.pdf> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

43 This cluster is four committees: the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development, the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, the Portfolio Committee on Police, and the Select Committee on Security and Justice.

44 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Peace and Security Cluster Media Briefing*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/project-event-details/4213>> [Accessed 8 September 2025].

The Portfolio Committee on Health has concluded its virtual public hearings on the Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery System Control Bill, which began on 19 March 2025 and ran until late August. A total of 48 of the 59 registered stakeholders made oral submissions which represented industry, civil society, health professionals, academics and political organisations. Supporters welcomed the bill as a key tool to reduce smoking prevalence, protect non-smokers and regulate emerging products, while critics argued it unfairly equates electronic delivery systems with combustible tobacco and may fuel illicit trade. The hearings followed earlier provincial consultations across all nine provinces, where over 7 900 participants voiced sharply divided views. Committee chairperson Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo stressed that the bill seeks to reduce harm, not ban smoking. The committee called on the Department of Health to respond to stakeholder concerns before deciding on the bill's desirability⁴⁵. The Portfolio Committee on Health's report was formally adopted and finalised, as reflected in the ATC record for 12 September 2025⁴⁶. **What changes have been made?** The Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery System Control Bill introduces major changes by regulating both traditional tobacco and electronic devices under the same framework. It proposes plain packaging with graphic health warnings, bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship, restrictions on point-of-sale displays, and stricter controls on manufacturing and imports. These measures aim to align South Africa with international health standards and reduce smoking prevalence while addressing emerging products like e-cigarettes⁴⁷. The Portfolio Committee on Health appears to have taken public input seriously, but has not yet reached a final position on the bill's desirability. However, the outcome so far is procedural rather than substantive. The Committee has asked the Department of Health to respond to stakeholder concerns before making a final determination. This shows that members listened to public submissions, particularly criticisms about the treatment of e-cigarettes and fears of illicit trade, but have not yet amended the bill accordingly.

45 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Health Committee Concludes Public Hearings on Tobacco Bill*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-health-committee-concludes-public-hearings-tobacco-bill>> [Accessed 9 September 2025].

46 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2025. *Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports Friday, 12 September 2025* [online]. Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Docs/atc/01ls62wghwb77ljb6obzejwwixwl7mbh4z.pdf>> [Accessed 13 October 2025].

47 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Health Committee Concludes Public Hearings on Tobacco Bill*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-health-committee-concludes-public-hearings-tobacco-bill>> [Accessed 9 September 2025].

The Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements conducted a two-day oversight visit in Mossel Bay, Knysna and George municipalities in the Western Cape on 24-25 July 2025. The programme included engagements with national, provincial and municipal human settlements officials on the implementation of strategic plans, grants and programmes, as well as site visits to housing and informal settlement projects. Key focus areas included the Khayaletu Bungalows development in Knysna, the upgrading of Izinyoka Informal Settlement in Mossel Bay, and progress in George, particularly the response to the five-storey building which collapsed in May 2024 while under construction and other ongoing projects⁴⁸. **Was service delivery improved?** The oversight has spurred some tangible improvements in areas such as policies, access to title deeds, planning and project inspections, but not yet enough to claim across-the-board or fully realised service delivery gains⁴⁹.

The Portfolio Committee on Mineral and Petroleum Resources conducted a two-day oversight visit to the Strategic Fuel Fund (a SOE) in Saldanha and Astron Energy Refinery in Milnerton on 25-26 March 2025. The visit assessed the refinery's readiness for the 2027 clean fuels deadline, its operational challenges, and the role of the Strategic Fuel Fund in maintaining sufficient petroleum reserves and managing oil and gas infrastructure to ensure security of supply⁵⁰. The committee demonstrated purposeful scrutiny and follow-through. The committee's report⁵¹ indicates that members assessed the Strategic Fuel Fund's Saldanha and Milnerton facilities and Astron Energy's refinery to test readiness for Clean Fuels II by July 2027, clarify ownership of pipeline and tank-farm assets, and interrogate risks linked to reserves, import policy and the consolidation of the Strategic Fuel Fund, PetroSA and iGas; the resultant directives, reflect targeted, value-adding oversight, and the report was finalised by the Committee on 27 May 2025. **Are there any improvements made?** Service delivery in terms of readiness, infrastructure and investments has improved; but risk remains, especially around emergency preparedness and ensuring all systems scale up in time for the 2027 deadline⁵².

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- 48 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Human Settlements Committee to Conduct Oversight Visit to Mossel Bay, Knysna and George Municipalities*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/human-settlements-committee-conduct-oversight-visit-mossel-bay-knysna-and-george-municipalities>> [Accessed 10 September 2025].
- 49 Republic of South Africa. 2025. *Strategic Plan 2025-2030: The Presidency*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/sites/default/files/2025-05/Strategic%20Plan%202025-2030.pdf>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].
- 50 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Alert: Mineral and Petroleum Resources Committee Visits Strategic Fuel Fund in Saldanha and Astron Energy Refinery in Milnerton, Western Cape*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-alert-mineral-and-petroleum-resources-committee-visits-strategic-fuel-fund-saldanha-and-astron-energy-refinery-milnerton-western-cape>> [Accessed 10 September 2025].
- 51 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2025. *Announcements, Tablings And Committee Reports Wednesday, 28 May 2025*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Docs/atc/01ls62wgfxtpra5tbxifezmvzpwn5q2uwg.pdf>> [Accessed 13 October 2025].
- 52 Republic of South Africa. 2025. *Strengthening Disaster Resilience And Responses*. [online] Available at: <<https://p20.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/p20/Research%20Papers/P20%20Strengthening%20DRR%20Aug%2025.pdf>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

The Chairperson of the **Portfolio Committee on Police**, Ian Cameron, wrote to South African Police Service (SAPS) senior management demanding answers on the continued operational deployment of officers facing serious criminal charges, including rape, drug possession, corruption and firearm offences. He warned that impunity within the service undermines public trust and the integrity of the justice system. Cameron highlighted specific cases in the Western Cape and called for urgent implementation of Section 34 boards of inquiry into fitness for duty to assess whether such members are fit to remain in the service. He stressed that accountability cannot be optional and urged SAPS leadership to take decisive action to restore professionalism and credibility⁵³. This matter hasn't gone through formal committee consideration. **Are there any improvements?** While the committee chair's intervention highlights urgent accountability gaps, SAPS has a long record of slow or inconsistent action against members facing serious charges. Without visible enforcement of Section 34 boards or clear disciplinary outcomes, the demand risks becoming another warning without consequence.

The Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration has received progress updates from the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), the National School of Government and the AGSA on implementing the *National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector*. Committee chairperson Jan de Villiers stressed that the framework is a priority for the 7th Parliament to build a capable, ethical and developmental state, with progress to be monitored quarterly. The DPSA reported that 157 departments participated in professionalisation workshops in 2024/25, while the National School of Government noted 80% implementation of the framework. Members welcomed the updates but raised concerns over weak enforcement mechanisms against corruption and over-reliance on consultants. The committee requested more detailed reporting on performance indicators and consultant expenditure in the next quarterly update⁵⁴. **Did it have an effect?** The workshops alone did not drive change because they focused on awareness and training without strong enforcement mechanisms, leaving departments free to ignore reforms. Persistent corruption, weak accountability, and an over-reliance on consultants also diluted their impact, meaning knowledge gained in workshops did not translate into sustained behavioural or institutional change⁵⁵.

53 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Police Committee Chairperson Initiates an Urgent Enquiry on Saps Members Charged for Serious Offences*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-police-committee-chairperson-initiates-urgent-enquiry-saps-members-charged-serious-offences>> [Accessed 8 September 2025].

54 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Public Service and Administration Committee Receives Update on Implementation of Professionalisation Framework*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-public-service-and-administration-committee-receives-update-implementation-professionalisation-framework>> [Accessed 10 September 2025].

55 National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council. 2025. *National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council Final Report To the President, the Cabinet, and the Country*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/sites/default/files/2025-08/National%20Anti-Corruption%20Advisory%20Council%20Final%20Report%202025.pdf>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

5.3 Constituency days and leave

The 7th Parliament’s constituency and leave schedule reflects a deliberate balance between legislative work, constituency engagement and oversight duties during the first full year of the GNU. Both Houses followed a structured annual rhythm, alternating between sitting periods, committee work, and constituency weeks designed to keep MPs connected to citizens.

Constituency activity and public engagement

Between July 2024 and June 2025, the National Assembly and NCOP each dedicated roughly nine to ten weeks to constituency work, divided across four periods.

- The National Assembly averaged two- to three-week intervals, while the NCOP’s longer three-to-four-week cycles reflected its provincial liaison responsibilities.
- Early constituency blocks (July to August 2024) helped newly elected MPs re-establish community links after the elections.
- Later sessions (April and August 2025) supported mid-year oversight and budget follow-up.

This cyclical pattern ensures MPs can alternate between national duties and constituency-based feedback, a core principle of participatory democracy.

Table 1 National Assembly constituency period

7 th Parliament: NA					
Year	Constituency period starts	Constituency period ends	Constituency period length	Term	Total weeks for year
2024	29 July	19 August	3 weeks	1st term	6 weeks
	23 September	7 October	2 weeks	2nd term	
	9 December	13 December	1 week	3rd term	
2025	13 January	5 February	4 weeks	1st term	6 weeks ⁵⁶
	7 April	17 April	2 weeks	1st term	

56 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Parliamentary Programme 2025*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/parliament-programme>> [Accessed 15 October 2025].

Table 2 National Council of Provinces constituency period

7 th Parliament: NCOP					
Year	Constituency period starts	Constituency period ends	Constituency period length	Term	Total weeks for year
2024	5 August	19 August	2 weeks	1st term	5 weeks
	23 September	7 October	2 weeks	2nd term	
	9 December	13 December	1 week	3rd term	
2025	13 January	26 January	2 weeks	1st term	4 weeks
	22 April	5 May	2 weeks	1st term	

National Assembly and NCOP leave period

Parliament's combined leave periods totalled about six weeks, clustered mainly around July–August, and December (2024), and January, April–May (2025). This structure offered predictable breaks without undermining committee operations or public accessibility, allowing civil society actors like OUTA to plan engagements during active working periods.

Table 3 National Assembly and NCOP leave period

7 th Parliament NA & NCOP					
Year	Leave period starts	Leave period ends	Leave period length	Term	Total weeks for year
2024	17 December	1 January	2.5 week	3rd term	2.5 weeks
2025	2 January	10 January	1.5 weeks	1st term	2.5 weeks
	29 April	2 May	1 week	1st term	

For civil society and advocacy groups, these defined constituency phases mark the best windows to engage MPs, committees and constituency offices. April, August and October represent the most accessible months for consultation, outreach and local collaboration. Monitoring how effectively MPs utilise these blocks will remain vital for assessing Parliament's commitment to genuine citizen engagement.

In conclusion, the 2024/25 constituency calendar demonstrates Parliament's ongoing effort to integrate public participation into its oversight rhythm. Its effectiveness, however, depends on how actively Members use these intervals for community dialogue and accountability, ensuring that time spent in constituencies translates into tangible legislative and oversight outcomes.

5.4 MP meeting attendance

In OUTA's previous *Parliamentary Oversight Reports* the portfolio committee meeting attendance was scrutinised, with efforts being made to link the number of meetings, meeting attendance and meeting content covered, to the veracity of the oversight work committed by MPs. This work has resulted in a robust dashboard – *ParliMeter* – that provides detailed insights into attendance, breaking it down into variables such as meeting frequency, average length per meeting, average meetings attended per member, and the total number of meetings. In addition, *ParliMeter* digs even deeper into the individual attendance rates of MPs and political parties, giving a comprehensive overview of the parliamentary schedule. Below is an overview of four parameters for the period of 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, as recorded on *ParliMeter*.

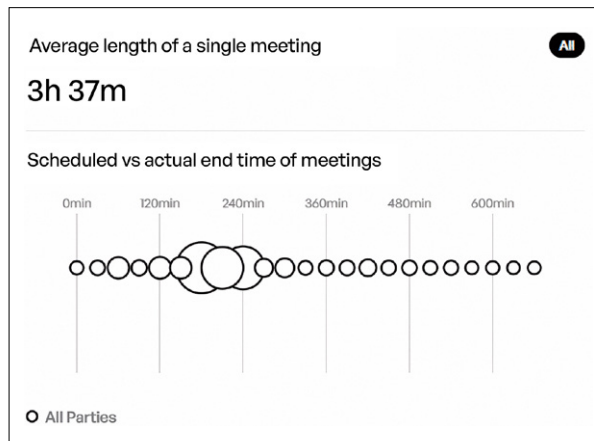


Figure 5 Average length of a single meeting

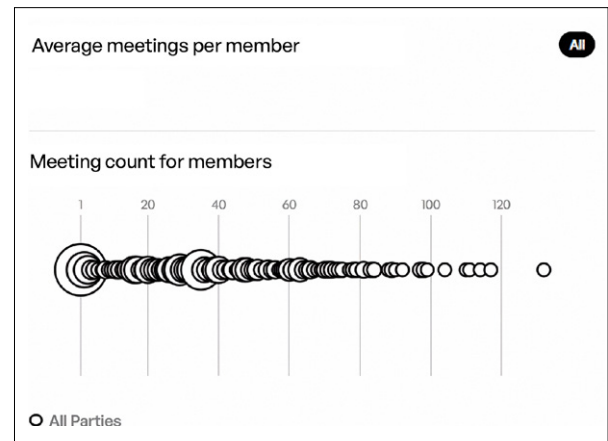


Figure 6 Average meetings per member

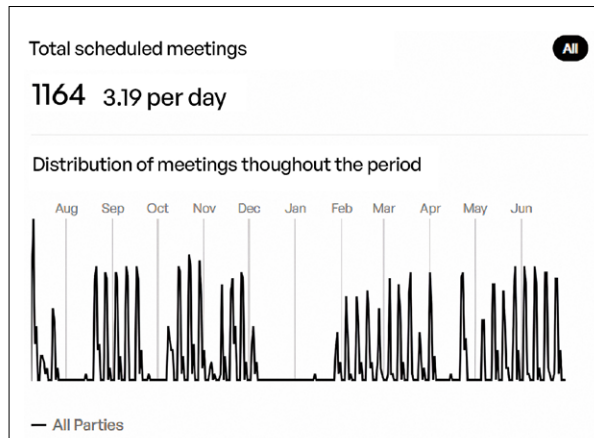


Figure 7 Total scheduled meetings

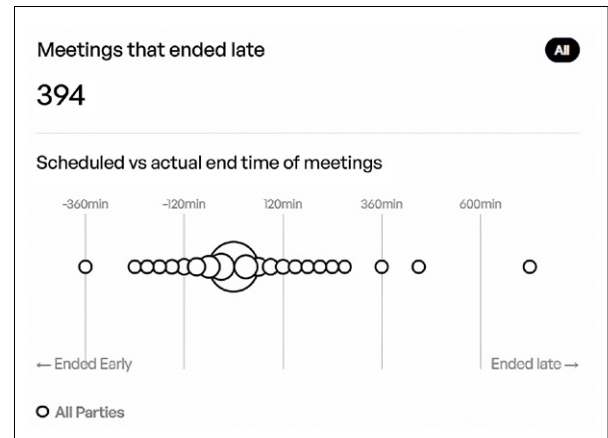
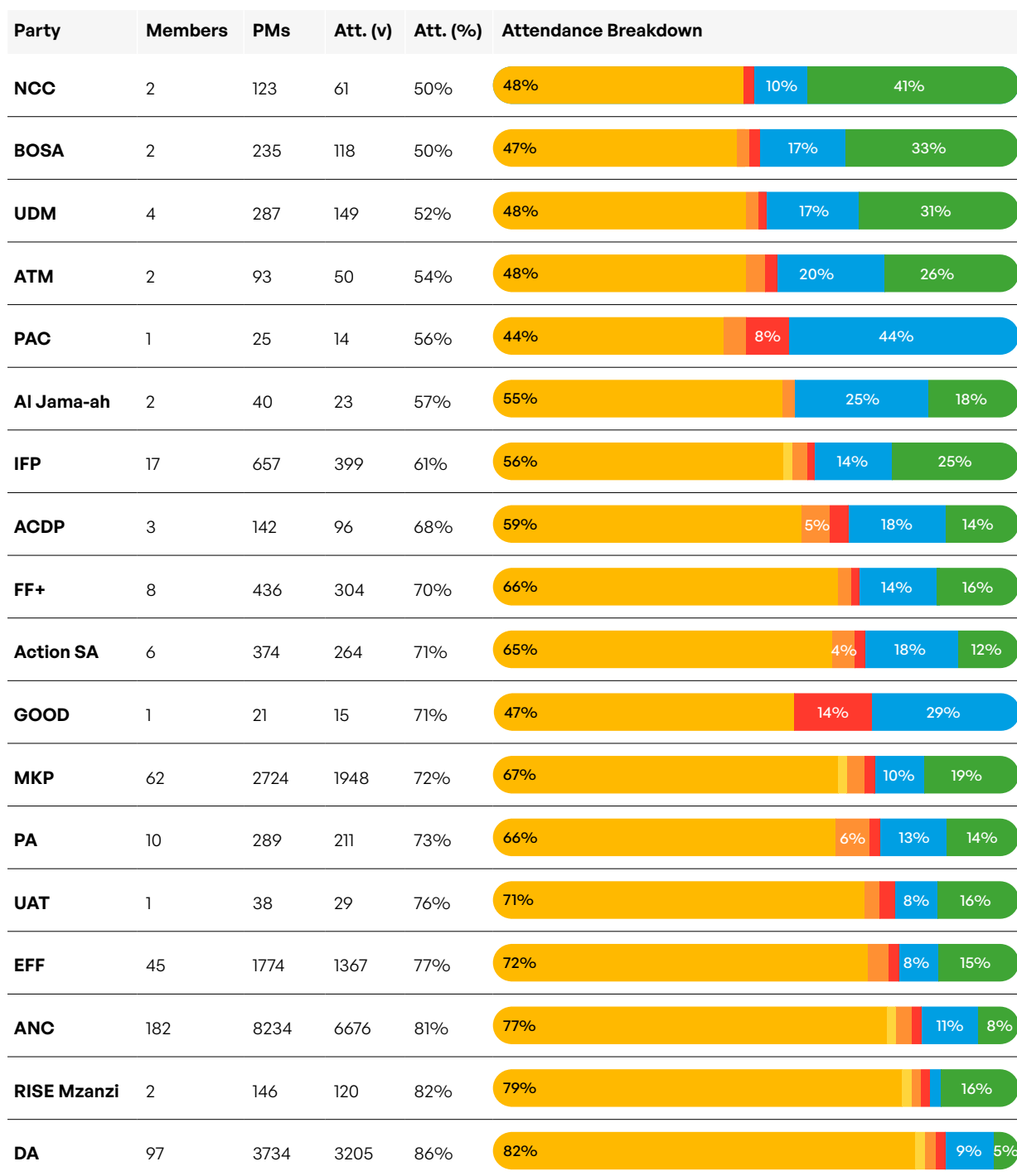


Figure 8 Meetings that ended late

Based on these statistics, there is no doubt MPs are very busy, but we also know that being busy does not necessarily equate to meaningful oversight and productive outcomes. Active and regular (if not full) meeting attendance is one way in which Parliament can conduct proper oversight of the executive.

Another interesting feature within *ParliMeter* is the meeting attendance rates amongst parties. The image below provides an overview of the current 18 represented parties within Parliament, with the lowest attendance rate at the top in ascending order.



CMs = committee meetings PMs = possible meetings Att (v) = attended value Att % = attended percentage
 ● Present ● Absent ● Absent with Apologies ● Departed Early
 ● Arrived Late ● Arrived Late and Departed Early

Figure 9 Political parties' attendance of committee meetings

This figure is more complex than can be deduced at first glance. It might seem as though the parties at the top – the National Coloured Congress (NCC) to Al Jamah-ah – have poor attendance figures, but it must be noted that they have some of the least MPs in Parliament. This means there are fewer MPs to attend the various committee meetings, causing them to be overstretched and necessitating them to prioritise certain committees over others. However, one would then assume that the parties with the greatest number of MPs would have near perfect attendance rates, but this is not the case. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), with 45 members, has an attendance rate of 77%, the ANC has an attendance rate of 81% (and 182 members), and the DA has the highest attendance rate of 86% with 97 members. There are many intricacies when looking at attendance data, and one must bear in mind that absence, absence with apologies, late arrivals and early departures are not always captured accurately.

The National Assembly Rules, sections 38 and 39, make provision for the absence from meetings and sanctions for those absent⁵⁷:

38. Absence from meetings of committee:

1. A member may not without his or her party's approval be absent from more than two consecutive meetings of a committee to which the member has been appointed as a full member in terms of the rules.
2. A member's approved absence from a meeting of a committee referred to in Subrule (1) must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting as formally adopted by the committee.

39. Sanctions for extended unauthorised absence from meetings of committee:

1. A member who is absent from three or more consecutive meetings of a committee referred to in Rule 38 (1) without his or her party's approval may be fined an amount to be determined by the Rules Committee from time to time for each day of absence.
2. (The Speaker must inform the member without delay of the imposition of a fine in terms of this rule.

It is therefore highly recommended that Parliament and party chief whips ensure that attendance is captured and reported accurately, and when MPs do fail to attend meetings, they be called to task.

The table on the next page provides a summary of the number of meetings by each portfolio committee.

57 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2016. *Rules of the National Assembly. 9th edition. Section 138(3)*, page 100. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Rules/NA/2016-09-28_NA_RULES.pdf> [Accessed 14 October 2025].

Table 4 Number of meetings per portfolio committee

Committees	Number of meetings: 1 June 2024 to 30 June 2025 ⁵⁸
Portfolio Committee on Agriculture	30
Portfolio Committee on Basic Education	38
Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies	46
Portfolio Committee on Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs	39
Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services	26
Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans	29
Portfolio Committee on Electricity and Energy	39
Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour	32
Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	27
Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation	30
Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development	46
Portfolio Committee on Health	34
Portfolio Committee on Higher Education	37
Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs	32
Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements	35
Portfolio Committee on Land Reform and Rural Development	31
Portfolio Committee on Mineral and Petroleum Resources	26
Portfolio Committee on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	21
Portfolio Committee on Police	34
Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration	30
Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure	24
Portfolio Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation	26
Portfolio Committee on Social Development	34
Portfolio Committee on Small Business Development	30
Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture	39
Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition	57
Portfolio Committee on Transport	27
Portfolio Committee on Tourism	22
Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation	35
Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities	34
Total number of meetings from 27/06/2024 to 30/06/2025	990
Average number of meetings per portfolio committee per year	33

58 ParliMeter. 2025. *ParliMeter Dashboard Overview*. [online] Available at: <<https://dashboard.parlimeter.co.za/overview/>> [Accessed 22 September 2025].

Between 1 June 2024 and 30 June 2025, the 30 active portfolio committees collectively convened 990 meetings, averaging around 33 meetings per committee over the year. The volume of meetings reflects Parliament’s effort to sustain a busy oversight and legislative programme in its first full year after the elections. However, there are variations in committee activity. For example, the Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition held 57 meetings (the most meetings), the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development and the Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies each held 46 meetings, making these three the most active committees, reflecting their heavy legislative workloads, ongoing policy reforms and multiple high-profile inquiries. They were followed by the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the Portfolio Committee on Electricity and Energy and the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture each with 39 meetings, maintaining high levels of engagement, driven by urgent oversight demands and sector-specific challenges.

However, several committees sat far fewer times, including the Portfolio Committee on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation which held 21 meetings (the lowest number), the Portfolio Committee on Tourism with 22 meetings, and the Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure with 24 meetings. These lower figures suggest either less mandates or reduced prioritisation within the legislative programme. The spread indicates that while Parliament is broadly maintaining its committee system as the “engine room” of oversight, there are gaps in workload intensity. High-performing committees appear to have sustained continuous hearings, legislative scrutiny, and stakeholder engagement, whereas others may have struggled with capacity constraints or limited legislative pipelines. This unevenness is important in assessing where parliamentary oversight has been most concentrated during the first year of the 7th Parliament.

5.5 Questions and answers

The submission of questions by MPs and NCOP delegates to the various ministers is another effective tool that Parliament can use to conduct oversight. Ministers who receive written and oral questions must respond within 10 days. The deputy minister may reply to a question on behalf of the minister, if they are authorised to do so, and “provided the Deputy Minister is able also to respond competently to any permissible supplementary questions that may be asked”⁵⁹. This section presents an analysis of questions submitted by MPs to ministers during the 7th Parliament’s first year, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

The 2024–2025 period reflects a strong and evolving culture of parliamentary oversight in South Africa. Members of Parliament submitted 6 762 questions across Written, Oral, Presidential and Deputy Presidential categories. Written questions, making up over 90% of all submissions, remain the main oversight tool but achieved only 35% compliance, revealing ongoing administrative delays despite a high 88% completion rate. In contrast, Oral, Presidential and Deputy Presidential questions showed markedly better punctuality, underscoring stronger central coordination.

Police, Basic Education and Health were the most scrutinised portfolios, with Transport standing out for administrative efficiency and Justice and Home Affairs continuing to face severe backlogs. The DA and EFF remained the leading drivers of parliamentary oversight, supported by sustained activity from the IFP, ActionSA and Rise Mzansi. Ten MPs accounted for a substantial share of all questions, reflecting broad cross-party engagement on key service delivery, governance and fiscal issues. While overall responsiveness remains high, structural bottlenecks persist in large departments.














Members of Parliament submitted 6 762 questions across Written, Oral, Presidential and Deputy Presidential categories.

59 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2016. *Rules of the National Assembly. 9th edition. Section 138(3)*, page 100. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Rules/NA/2016-09-28_NA_RULES.pdf> [Accessed 14 October 2025].

Overview of the dataset (1 July 2024–30 June 2025)

The register comprises four question types – Written, Orals, President, and Deputy President – each recording the member, party, portfolio, key dates, response classification in terms of compliance (Timeous/Late), and status (Answered/Unanswered).












Table 5 Volumes and performance by category

	 Total Questions	 Timeous Replies	 Answered	 Unanswered	 Compliance (%)	 Answer Rate (%)
 Written	6 154	2 162	5 388	606	35.13%	87.55%
 Orals	553	291	525	7	52.62%	94.94%
 President	31	30	31	0	96.77%	100%
 Deputy President	24	24	24	0	100%	100%
 Total	6 762	2 507	5 968	613	—	—

Comparative insights across question types

- **Volume contrast:** Written questions dominate the oversight workload (91% of all questions).
- **Compliance gap:** On-time performance is 13–65 percentage points higher for orals and leadership sessions than for written.
- **Executive accountability:** President/Deputy President questions show near-perfect punctuality and completion, while line departments lag.
- **Systemic drivers:** Persistent late replies in written stem from bureaucratic routing, vetting, and cross-portfolio dependencies.













Table 6 Summary of performance by question type

	 Total Questions	 Timeous Replies	 Late	 Answered	 Unanswered	 Compliance (%)	 Answer Rate (%)
 Written	6 154	2 162	3 832	5 388	606	35.13%	87.55%
 Orals	553	291	105	525	7	52.62%	94.94%
 President	31	31	0	31	0	100%	100%
 Deputy President	24	24	0	24	0	100%	100%

Compliance and responsiveness (deeper analysis)

- **Written questions.** Compliance at 35% reflects sustained clearance pressure, but an 88% answer rate confirms that most queries are eventually concluded. Late replies cluster in portfolios requiring multi-agency inputs (e.g., Police, Justice, Home Affairs).
- **Oral questions.** Achieved 53% on-time performance and 95% answered rate, benefiting from fixed schedules, shorter clearance chains and the incentive of public accountability during sittings.
- **Leadership questions.** The President and Deputy President categories were almost perfectly punctual and fully answered, showing the effectiveness of centrally managed response systems and dedicated briefing teams.
- **Timeline observations (semester comparison).** Comparing July–December 2024 and January–June 2025 shows stable completion rates with minor punctuality gains in the first half of 2025, notably in Transport and Health. Leadership-level performance remained consistent.

Table 7 Ministerial analysis (written) – observations and performance

Most questioned portfolios (Top 12)		
Executive	Total	Compliance (%)
 Police	510	14.71%
 Basic Education	377	44.03%
 Health	369	58.54%
 Defence & Military Veterans	252	22.62%
 Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs (COGTA)	247	45.34%
 Higher Education	244	31.97%
 Finance	238	26.05%
 Transport	232	77.16%
 Water & Sanitation	226	51.77%
 Home Affairs	225	21.33%
 Sport, Arts & Culture	217	57.14%
 Justice & Constitutional Development	208	11.54%

Observations

- The Police portfolio remained the most questioned, followed by Basic Education and Health — illustrating Parliament’s persistent focus on safety, education quality and healthcare delivery.
- Transport again performed positively, achieving over 77% compliance, a general benchmark for administrative efficiency and workflow discipline, but with much scope for improvement.
- Police and Home Affairs recorded the weakest punctuality (below 25%), signalling ongoing systemic constraints in data flow and response coordination.
- Health and Education displayed balanced performance — frequently questioned yet moderately responsive.
- Water and Sanitation continued to perform above the cross-departmental average, showing possible improvement in information management and responsiveness.
- Justice remains the most delayed portfolio, with procedural dependencies and case-driven complexities limiting its ability to respond on time.

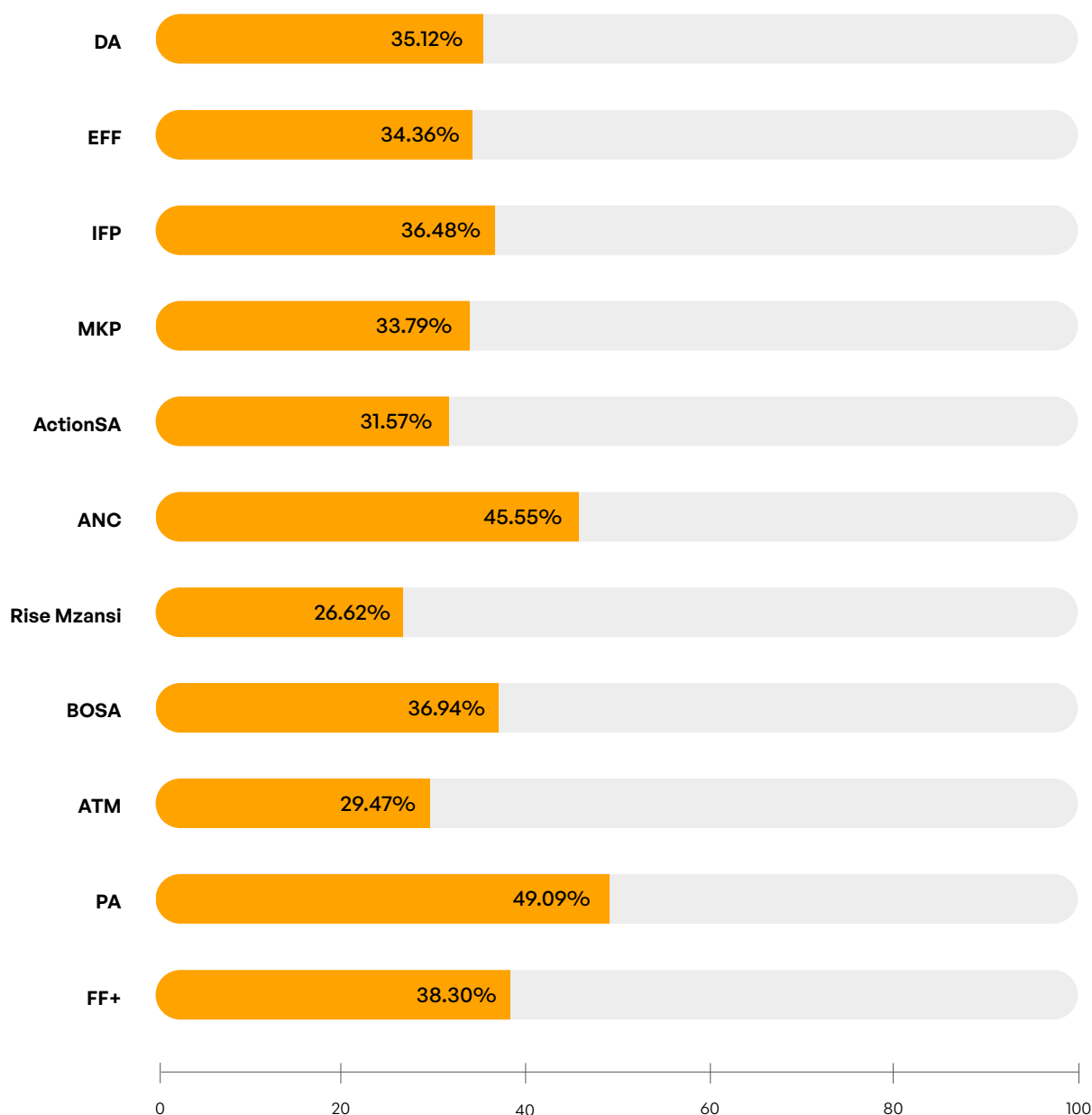


Figure 10 Political party analysis — observations and performance

Key observations:

- **Opposition leadership:** DA and EFF dominate in oversight volume, underlining their role as the main drivers of executive scrutiny.
- **Compliance differentials:** ANC and PA-linked queries achieved higher on-time response rates, likely reflecting internal coordination rather than preferential treatment.
- **Newer parties:** ActionSA and Rise Mzansi show strong engagement but lower compliance (on time) outcomes due to a focus on difficult, data-heavy portfolios.
- **Portfolio choice effect:** Parties questioning responsive departments (Transport, Health) record better compliance results.

Most active Members of Parliament (all categories)

These ten MPs account for a substantial portion of total oversight activity across all categories, reflecting consistent engagement with critical portfolios.

Table 8 The MPs asking the most questions

Member (Party)	Total	Compliance (%)	Answered	Unanswered	Top portfolios
Mr C G Niehaus (EFF)	92	23.91%	80	11	Defence and Military Veterans; Electricity and Energy
Mrs M O Clarke (DA)	92	54.35%	91	0	Health; Correctional Services
Mr S M Gana (Rise Mzansi)	90	34.44%	77	12	Police; Transport
Ms H Ismail (DA)	89	50.56%	76	11	Tourism; Police
Mr M K Montwedi (EFF)	89	32.58%	77	8	Agriculture; Land Reform and Rural Development
Mr K P Sithole (IFP)	85	29.41%	78	6	Communications and Digital Technologies; Presidency
Ms N R Mashabela (EFF)	81	35.80%	75	6	Basic Education; Tourism
Mr C Hattingh (DA)	79	26.58%	54	15	Defence and Military Veterans; Presidency
Ms O M C Maotwe (EFF)	78	26.92%	64	13	Finance; Electricity and Energy
Ms N H Mhlongo (IFP)	76	55.26%	74	2	Health; Electricity and Energy

The MPs leading in questioning focus on portfolios central to public service delivery, crime prevention, fiscal management and education. Collectively, they represent multiple parties — predominantly the EFF, DA and IFP — illustrating broad cross-party commitment to oversight.

Year-on-year trends and observations

- **Volume stability:** Aggregate question volumes remain high across both semesters, reflecting institutionalised oversight activity.
- **Incremental punctuality improvements:** Early 2025 saw measurable gains in Transport, Health and Cogta.
- **Persistent laggards:** Police, Justice and Home Affairs continue to exhibit structural response delays.
- **Completion consistency:** Despite fluctuating compliance and on-time rates, completion rates remain strong, indicating departments’ commitment to eventual resolution.

Reflections and recommendations

Structural bottlenecks persist in high-volume portfolios requiring cross-departmental coordination. Focus areas should include modernised data systems, better internal routing and balanced question distribution. Leadership categories (President, Deputy President) demonstrate the value of central oversight and fixed timetables. Based on this analysis, the following recommendations can be made:

- Establish a quarterly performance tracking dashboard by department.
- Introduce escalation mechanisms for ministries repeatedly late in responding.
- Publish compliance scorecards to enhance transparency and accountability.
- Reinforce administrative capacity in heavily scrutinised portfolios.
- Develop an internal digital monitoring tool for MPs to track progress of their questions.

The full-year dataset confirms a robust culture of parliamentary oversight alongside uneven administrative responsiveness. Written questions remain the principal instrument for scrutiny and, while the majority ultimately receive answers, on-time performance is constrained in several high-demand portfolios. By contrast, oral and leadership-level questions (President and Deputy President) exhibit disciplined adherence to deadlines, reflecting the benefits of fixed sittings and central coordination.



The full-year dataset confirms a robust culture of parliamentary oversight alongside uneven administrative responsiveness.

5.6 Public participation as a pillar of parliamentary oversight

Public participation remains the constitutional foundation for ensuring that Parliament reflects the will of the people. Participation and oversight are mutually reinforcing, and the legitimacy of parliamentary democracy depends on visible responsiveness to citizen input. During the period of review there were some key engagements with civil society organisations such as the MP Induction Week (1–5 July 2024); the Civil Society Public Participation Dialogue hosted by Parliament’s Public Participation Working Group (PPWG) on 25 November 2024; and cluster media and stakeholder briefings (November 2024 to June 2025). Collectively, these initiatives advanced the discourse on how Parliament can embed citizen engagement into its oversight functions and uphold the vision of a People’s Parliament.

Strengthening collaboration between Parliament and civil society

The MP Induction Week in July 2024 created a new space for direct engagement between MPs and civil society organisations. OUTA’s participation showcased its research and oversight tools, notably the *ParliMeter* dashboard and the *Tips for MPs and Permitted Plundering* publications both funded by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). Feedback from MPs was positive, acknowledging the value of civil society research in improving oversight and accountability. These interactions established a foundation for structured collaboration between Parliament and civil society. However, early 2025 saw a noticeable slowdown in follow-up engagements, with several planned partnerships postponed or cancelled — underscoring the need for sustained momentum and institutional consistency in civic participation.

Civil Society Public Participation Dialogue – November 2024

Hosted by the Public Participation Working Group (PPWG), the dialogue provided a formal platform for Parliament and non-state actors to assess public participation practices since the 6th Parliament. Discussions emphasised transforming participation from a symbolic activity into a strategic instrument of governance. Key challenges identified included weak feedback mechanisms, exclusion of rural, youth, women’s and First Nation voices, under-resourced Parliamentary Constituency Offices, and limited coordination between legislative and executive spheres. Opportunities for reform included expanding hybrid engagement platforms, strengthening partnerships with community radio, and leveraging civil society expertise to support oversight capacity and citizen education.

Cluster stakeholder engagements: November 2024 – June 2025

Parliament institutionalised cluster media and stakeholder briefings as part of its broader Public Participation Strategy⁶⁰. Between November 2024 and June 2025, a total of 10 hybrid cluster engagements were held (out of 15 completed by September 2025). Over 1 000 stakeholder representations participated, including more than 250 civil society organisations, 80 academic and research participants, and 60 traditional and faith-based organisations.

Attendance grew consistently through the first half of 2025, peaking between April and June. Hybrid participation enabled equitable access, improving inclusion for rural, youth, and marginalised groups. OUTA actively contributed to at least five clusters – finance, economic, governance, social services, and peace and security – providing analysis on fiscal accountability, ethical governance and participatory oversight.

The sessions also demonstrated a marked increase in youth and academic engagement. Student formations from UCT, Stellenbosch University, CPUT, and UNISA, alongside youth-led advocacy networks such as Youth Capital and the BRICS Youth Association, began to feature prominently from March 2025 onwards. This signalled an encouraging generational shift towards more inclusive democratic participation.

Key Insights and trends

1. Rising visibility and public engagement: Parliament's communication reach grew sharply over the period, with impressions rising from under 1 billion in February to over 5 billion by June, culminating in a record 7.1 billion in July. This rise correlated with heightened oversight and stakeholder engagement.
2. Hybrid participation and accessibility: The hybrid model – combining physical and virtual attendance – significantly expanded access, allowing for national reach and cross-sectoral dialogue. Participation from rural stakeholders, traditional leaders, and youth forums increased steadily throughout the period.
3. Sectoral breadth and oversight themes: The finance cluster focused on fiscal prudence and pro-poor budgeting, the economic cluster on industrialisation and small business, the social services cluster on education and health, and the peace and security cluster on justice reform and policing accountability.
4. Expanding youth and academic participation: From March 2025 onwards, student bodies from UCT, CPUT, Stellenbosch, and UNISA, alongside youth formations like Youth Capital and the BRICS Youth Association, contributed to discussions, signalling a generational renewal in civic participation.

60 Analysis and insights gleaned from the *Parliament of South Africa: Report on Cluster Media and Stakeholder Briefings, November 2024 – September 2025* report submitted by Parliament on 14 October 2025. This report is unpublished.



Outcomes from discussions are being systematically fed into committee recommendations and inquiries, strengthening accountability loops.

5. Institutional trust and public sentiment: Parliament's Net Reputation Score rose to 53%, attributed to transparent and inclusive committee work and proactive communication. Committee chairs' accessibility enhanced public credibility.
6. Collaboration and integration: Cross-cluster cooperation increased coherence, with finance and governance clusters aligning on budget accountability, and social services and peace and security clusters collaborating on gender-based violence and school safety.

From November 2024 to June 2025, Parliament demonstrated tangible progress in mainstreaming public participation across all clusters. The hybrid stakeholder engagement model has not only widened access but also strengthened institutional transparency and the link between public voice and legislative follow-up.

From November 2024 to June 2025, Parliament demonstrated tangible progress in mainstreaming public participation across all clusters.

Observations for oversight and public participation

The integration of stakeholder briefings into committee oversight processes represents a shift from consultation to active collaboration. Outcomes from discussions are being systematically fed into committee recommendations and inquiries, strengthening accountability loops. The visibility of civil society, including OUTA, as a recurring and trusted participant, indicates Parliament's growing recognition of independent expertise in oversight. Youth and academic participation have emerged as a strategic success, countering political disengagement trends among younger citizens.

Reflections and recommendations

The 2024/25 period reflected a Parliament becoming more open, participatory, and visible. The combined effect of the MP Induction Week, PPWG Dialogue and cluster briefings is evident in Parliament's expanding reach, strengthened accountability, and more representative engagement. Based on public participation analysis, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Revitalise Parliament's Oversight and Accountability Model (OVAC) with enforceable consequences for non-compliance.
2. Advance along the Ladder of Participation (part of the OVAC model) — from consultation to collaboration.
3. Institutionalise digital inclusion via hybrid hearings and e-submissions.
4. Standardise feedback mechanisms to track and respond to public input.
5. Benchmark parliamentary practices with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063, and Inter-Parliamentary Union indicators.
6. Deepen youth and academic partnerships to foster civic education and oversight literacy.

Sustaining this trajectory will require predictable scheduling, systematic reporting on public inputs, and continued civil society collaboration.

For OUTA's parliamentary oversight work, these engagements reaffirm the importance of structured participation within parliamentary clusters as an evidence-based oversight tool. OUTA's active and repeated inclusion across clusters highlights its evolving role as a credible civic partner in promoting accountability, fiscal prudence and participatory democracy within the 7th Parliament.

Public participation is the engine of parliamentary oversight. It transforms accountability from a bureaucratic function into a citizen-driven process that sustains democracy. The 2024/25 cycle affirmed that when Parliament listens and responds, citizen trust and democratic legitimacy deepen. OUTA remains committed to championing transparent systems, informed citizenry, and participatory legislative culture — vital to building a People's Parliament that serves all South Africans.

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5.7 Status of legislation (bills)

By December 2024, Parliament had enacted 10 bills, having prioritised financial legislation earlier in the year. Significant legislative developments included:

- The revival of the Protection of State Information Bill, referred to the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development to address presidential reservations;
- The introduction of the Constitution Twenty-First Amendment Bill by DA MP Advocate Glynnis Breytenbach on 1 November 2024, proposing an independent Anti-Corruption Commission as a Chapter 9 institution;
- The President's referral of the Copyright Amendment Bill and Performers' Protection Amendment Bill to the Constitutional Court on constitutional grounds; and
- The return of the Regulation of the Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-related Information Amendment Bill to the National Assembly due to concerns about its constitutional vulnerability.

At the end of 2024, a total of 22 bills awaited presidential assent, with the EFF and MKP vocal in criticising the President for undue delays. A joint National Assembly Programme Committee meeting confirmed that Cabinet would finalise its 2025 legislative programme by March 2025, with submission to Parliament scheduled for April⁶¹. For real-time updates, view ParliMeter⁶².

By December 2024, Parliament had enacted 10 bills, having prioritised financial legislation, and 22 bills awaited presidential assent.

⁶¹ Parliamentary Monitoring Group. 2024. *Seventh Parliament End of Year Review (June-December 2024)*. [online] Available at: <[https://pmg.org.za/blog/Seventh%20Parliament%20End%20of%20Year%20Review%20\(June-December%202024\)>](https://pmg.org.za/blog/Seventh%20Parliament%20End%20of%20Year%20Review%20(June-December%202024)>)> [Accessed 15 September 2025].

⁶² ParliMeter. 2025. *ParliMeter Bill Tracker*. [online] Available at: <<https://dashboard.parlimeter.co.za/bill-tracker/>>. [Accessed 10 October 2025].

A significant portion of the legislative programme remains in progress, with several bills from 2025 and earlier sessions still awaiting conclusion. Long-standing items include complex and politically sensitive reforms such as the Constitution Amendment Bills (from 2018 through to 2025), the Protection of State Information Bill dating back to 2010, and sectoral measures such as the Marine Oil Pollution (Preparedness, Response and Cooperation) Bill (2022) and the Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery Systems Control Bill (2022). These “long waiters” reflect the difficulty of securing consensus or overcoming institutional continuity, particularly where bills intersect with constitutional amendments, entrenched interests, or highly technical regulatory issues. At the same time, core fiscal instruments, such as appropriation and revenue bills, continue to move rapidly through Parliament, often reaching enactment within weeks or months, as evidenced by the 2024 and 2025 Division of Revenue and Appropriation Bills that have already commenced.

Among the 2025 cohort, several bills are advancing through committees but remain unfinished. The Eskom Debt Relief Amendment Bill, Revenue Laws Amendment Bill, and Rates and Monetary Amounts Bill were all mid-process in finance and appropriations committees at the middle of the year, highlighting Parliament’s focus on fiscal stabilisation. Institutional reform measures, including the Insourcing Bill, the Intergovernmental Monitoring, Support and Interventions Bill, and the National State Enterprises Bill, were similarly “in progress”, indicating a wide scope of reform under deliberation. However, some bills have been withdrawn, for example the March 2025 Appropriation and Division of Revenue Bills, highlighting the stop-start nature of legislative planning. While certain urgent measures like money bills are expedited and signed, many policy-heavy or reform-driven bills remain caught in early stages, committee processing, or prolonged consultation, pointing to a mixed record of legislative momentum.



A significant portion of the legislative programme remains in progress, with several bills from 2025 and earlier sessions still awaiting conclusion.

Legacy reflection – An overflow from the 6th Parliament

The 6th administration of South Africa (the executive and government), which spanned from 2019 to 2024, leaves behind a complex and contested legacy. While it introduced reforms aimed at restoring public trust, combatting corruption, and stabilising governance after the Jacob Zuma era, several unresolved issues have spilled over into the 7th Parliament, shaping its priorities and challenges. This “overflow” presents both obstacles and opportunities for institutional renewal. The following reflections are based on the key recommendations from OUTA’s report titled *A Review of Parliamentary Legacy Reports: Looking into South Africa’s Fourth to Sixth Parliament*⁶³.

6.1 Issues remaining from the 6th administration

1. **Incomplete structural reforms:** The 6th administration initiated the rebuilding of state institutions weakened by state capture; however, many of these structural reforms remain incomplete. This is particularly evident in critical entities such as Eskom, Transnet, and the SAPS, where institutional dysfunction and governance deficits persist⁶⁴. Although the State Capture Commission made urgent recommendations to enhance institutional accountability, implementation has been sluggish. Progress on prosecutions and governance reforms has been limited, raising concerns about the political will to fully dismantle the architecture of state capture⁶⁵.
2. **Parliamentary oversight and accountability:** Despite a renewed focus on oversight, the 6th Parliament fell short in holding the executive fully accountable. Parliamentary committees frequently failed to enforce their recommendations, follow through on AGSA findings, or provide rigorous budget scrutiny⁶⁶. These gaps underscore the need for the 7th Parliament to institutionalise consequence management and improve the enforcement capacity of oversight structures. The 7th Parliament is taking more serious oversight steps such as holding ministers to account for flawed appointments; commissions of inquiry; committees pushing for AGSA findings to lead to consequences. However, enforcement remains uneven. Many actions are reactive, public-pressure driven, or symbolic, fewer robust systems visible yet for tracking and enforcing oversight outcomes continuously⁶⁷.

63 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2024. *A Review of Parliamentary Legacy Reports: Looking into South Africa’s Fourth to Sixth Parliament*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.outa.co.za/web/content/447631>> [Accessed 26 September 2025].

64 Mathebula, N. E. & Masiya, T. 2022. Governance Issues and State Capture at Eskom and Transnet: A Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Theory for Policy Studies. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 11(1), pp.146-163.

65 The Presidency of South Africa. 2025. *Progress report on implementation of actions in the President’s response to the recommendations of the State Capture Commission*. [online] Available at: <<https://tinyurl.com/tpzhbvmw>> [Accessed 8 August 2025].

66 Mancebo A. 2025. The South African Parliament’s Capacity to Constrain the Executive Branch Weakened by a Dominant Party System. *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 58(1):121-123.

67 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Strategic Plan 7th Parliament 2024–2029*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/StratPlan/7/Reviewed_Strategic_Plan_V17_2025.pdf> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

3. **Service delivery failures:** Persistent failures in the delivery of basic services, especially water, electricity, sanitation, and transport, were a defining feature of the 6th administration. Load-shedding, collapsing infrastructure, and widespread dissatisfaction over housing and healthcare have extended into the 7th administration. AGSA reports and frequent community protests continue to reflect the consequences of mismanagement and underinvestment.
4. **Legislative process and bill management:** Key legislative reforms including those related to land redistribution, whistleblower protection, anti-corruption frameworks and electoral system change were either delayed or abandoned. The 7th Parliament now faces public pressure to fast-track these reforms to meet constitutional requirements and public expectations. Land reform was revived through the Expropriation Act, 2024⁶⁸, but broader redistribution and restitution remain delayed; constitutional amendment attempts abandoned. There are reform proposals published (2023-2025) for whistleblower protection, but these are still pending; not abandoned, just slow. Electoral reform was revived with the Electoral Amendment Act, 2023; the Electoral Reform Panel is active and recommendations are under review. Anti-corruption was also revived with the NPA's Investigating Directorate Against Corruption made permanent (2024) and procurement reforms; but the full State Capture Commission recommendations and the establishment of an independent Anti-Corruption Commission remain delayed⁶⁹.
5. **Public trust:** Perhaps the most significant institutional legacy is the erosion of public confidence in Parliament and broader government institutions. Parliament was often perceived as reactive, compromised by political infighting, and plagued by poor committee attendance. This damaged its credibility and undermined its role as a guardian of constitutional accountability. Restoring public trust is a long-term challenge requiring political leadership and institutional renewal.
6. **Parliamentary weakness in follow-up and enforcement:** While oversight committees were active, they lacked capacity to ensure follow-up on their recommendations, AGSA findings, and Scopa referrals. The absence of dedicated enforcement mechanisms diminished the deterrent effect of oversight and allowed maladministration to persist unchallenged. The 7th Parliament must address these weaknesses by institutionalising post-report implementation monitoring.

68 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Expropriation Act No. 13 of 2024*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.gov.za/documents/acts/expropriation-act-13-2024-english-sepedi-24-jan-2025>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

69 National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council. 2025. *National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council Final Report To the President, the Cabinet, and the Country*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/sites/default/files/2025-08/National%20Anti-Corruption%20Advisory%20Council%20Final%20Report%202025.pdf>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

7. **Anti-corruption and whistleblower protection:** Despite commitments to reform, the 6th Parliament failed to strengthen legal protections for whistleblowers⁷⁰. High-profile cases, such as the assassination in August 2021 of Gauteng Department of Health official Babita Deokaran, who tried to stop the looting of Tembisa Hospital, exposed the severe personal risks faced by those who expose corruption. The failure to amend the Protected Disclosures Act has had a chilling effect on future disclosures, underscoring the moral and legal imperative for reform. South Africa is still waiting for comprehensive anti-corruption and whistleblower protection reforms; proposals exist, but no major legislative amendments have been enacted yet.
8. **Modernisation of parliamentary processes and digital transformation:** Although digital governance was prioritised in policy rhetoric, actual implementation was limited. Parliament's digital infrastructure remained underdeveloped, and initiatives such as open data portals and online public participation were either fragmented or underutilised. The temporary digitisation of parliamentary meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic was not sustained. The 7th Parliament must invest in civic tech and e-governance tools to enhance transparency and democratic engagement.
9. **State capture:** The consequences of state capture continue to affect the 7th Parliament. Several SOEs and the government remain in financial crisis and under parliamentary or judicial scrutiny. The recommendations contained in the final reports of the State Capture Commission, which included matters for Parliament to act on, require coordination across institutions such as the NPA, the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), the AGSA, and the Hawks (the SAPS's Directorate for Priority Investigation). The failure to secure high-profile convictions has undermined public trust and negatively impacted investor sentiment.
10. **Electoral reform:** The 6th Parliament failed to pass a comprehensive electoral reform bill by the Constitutional Court's deadline (arising from the June 2020 judgment in the case brought by New Nation Movement NPC and Others against the President and others, in which OUTA acted as a friend of the court⁷¹), resulting in minimalist compliance via the Electoral Amendment Act (2023). Civil society organisations and political stakeholders have criticised the act for inadequately accommodating independent candidates. This unresolved issue is likely to resurface ahead of the 2026 local government elections, whilst Parliament is grappling with the recommendations made by the Electoral Reform Consultation Panel.

70 Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr. 2025. *Safeguarding truth: A new look at the proposed whistle-blower protections in South Africa*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.cliffedekkerhofmeyr.com/news/publications/2025/Practice/Dispute-Resolution/dispute-resolution-alert-11-june-2025-safeguarding-truth-A-new-look-at-the-proposed-whistleblower-protections-in-South-Africa>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

71 New Nation Movement NPC and Others v President of the Republic of South Africa and Others. 2020. ZACC 11. *Concourt media summary and judgment*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.concourt.org.za/index.php/judgement/509-speaker-of-the-national-assembly-and-another-v-new-nation-movement-npc-and-others-cct110-20>> [Accessed 14 October 2025].

11. **Coalition governance and legislative frameworks:** Post-2021 local elections, increased political fragmentation and coalition instability have introduced governance uncertainty, especially at municipal level. These dynamics escalated following the 2024 general election, making it difficult for the 7th Parliament to secure legislative consensus or ensure consistent budgetary and oversight processes.
12. **Public participation and civil engagement:** Improve public consultation processes for legislation, foster stronger relationships with civil society organisations and develop tools like the People's Assembly and Taking Parliament to the People to measure and enhance engagement.

From OUTA's perspective, these challenges highlight how the 6th Parliament's failures continue to burden the 7th Parliament. Structural reforms in SOEs remain incomplete, oversight often reactive, and service delivery still collapsing. Parliament's limited follow-through on AGSA findings and the slow pace of legislative reform, especially on whistleblower protection, anti-corruption and electoral law, shows weak political will to dismantle state capture's legacy. Public trust has eroded because oversight mechanisms lack enforcement teeth, while coalition instability compounds governance fragility. Without institutional renewal, digital transformation, and genuine public participation, reforms will remain cosmetic, and accountability will remain selective. OUTA would stress that systemic enforcement, transparency and civic engagement must be prioritised if Parliament and government are to restore legitimacy.



Without institutional renewal, digital transformation, and genuine public participation, reforms will remain cosmetic, and accountability will remain selective.



The NHI seeks to overhaul the country's two-tier health system by establishing a national public fund that guarantees universal access to healthcare, while gradually limiting the role of private medical insurance and regulating the prices charged by private providers.

6.2 Case studies related to reflections

This section examines case studies that OUTA found particularly significant under the overflow from the 6th Parliament, showcasing how unresolved challenges continue to shape the current term. At the same time, we acknowledge that other portfolio committees are also engaging with these inherited issues through their own oversight efforts.

On 7 August 2024, President Ramaphosa confirmed that South Africa would move ahead with the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Act, signed into law in May 2024, despite strong political and industry opposition. The NHI seeks to overhaul the country's two-tier health system by establishing a national public fund that guarantees universal access to healthcare, while gradually limiting the role of private medical insurance and regulating the prices charged by private providers. Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi announced that transitional mechanisms such as advisory committees and alignment of other health laws, would be implemented immediately. Supporters describe the NHI as a historic step toward equity, aiming to reverse entrenched healthcare inequalities rooted in apartheid. However, critics including major insurers and the DA, now part of the ANC-led coalition government, argued that the funding model is unworkable and warn of risks to service quality. The minister insisted that the poor, who stand to benefit the most, have not yet had their voices heard, and pledged further engagement with stakeholders. The insight is that while the NHI represents a landmark reform in principle, its practical and financial viability remains highly contested, with coalition politics and powerful private sector resistance likely to shape its trajectory⁷².

⁷² Payton, N. 2024. *South Africa moves to implement national health bill despite resistance*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/south-africa-moves-implement-national-health-bill-despite-resistance-2024-08-07/>> [Accessed 12 September 2025].

On 19 December 2024, Eskom announced it expected a profit of over R10 billion for the year ending March 2025, its first profit in eight years as compared to a R55 billion loss the previous year. CEO Dan Marokane credited operational stability, reduced diesel costs from nine months without load-shedding, and the government's R250 billion debt-relief package, while CFO Calib Cassim highlighted a 12.7% tariff hike and a R11.7 billion reduction in gross debt. However, Cassim warned that municipal debt of R95 billion threatens to erode these gains. Eskom's unbundling into separate generation, transmission, and distribution entities continues as part of ongoing reform, signalling progress but also exposing unresolved risks to long-term stability⁷³. The **Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration** is actively maintaining oversight by receiving quarterly updates, questioning the use of consultants, and pressing for stronger accountability mechanisms within the *National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector*. Its role is not only to monitor progress but also to ensure that implementation translates into a capable and ethical public service, especially by demanding detailed reporting and measurable performance indicators. At the same time, committees such as those overseeing public enterprises remain engaged with state-owned entities like Eskom, whose 2025 Integrated Report (released on 30 September 2025) formed part of ongoing accountability processes. The report integrated financial, operational, and sustainability disclosures, confirming Eskom's return to profitability, but also underscoring persistent risks such as ballooning municipal debt and the complexities of unbundling reforms. Together, these developments highlight Parliament's committees as central actors in pushing both departmental and SOE accountability⁷⁴.

On 14 February 2025, the **Portfolio Committee on Higher Education** welcomed a briefing from the SIU on corruption and fraud in the post-school education sector, particularly within NSFAS. The SIU revealed that 58 institutions had outstanding credit balances owed to NSFAS, while 40 044 students were found ineligible after re-vetting. Committee chair Tebogo Letsie raised concern over delays in cooperation between the NPA, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, and the SIU, which hinder accountability as implicated officials often leave their posts before action is taken. The committee condemned unethical practices by students and NSFAS staff enabling fraudulent funding approvals and expressed alarm at findings of financial misconduct at the University of Fort Hare, where senior officials personally benefited by nearly R19 million from service providers. While commending the SIU for recovering funds, the committee criticised the slow pace of investigations and resolved to hold a joint meeting with the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development to improve inter-agency collaboration and speed up prosecutions⁷⁵.

73 Dlodla, N. 2024. *South Africa's Eskom expects to turn profitable in 2025 after wider \$3 billion loss*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/south-africas-eskom-reports-3-bln-loss-split-transmission-unit-2024-12-19/>> [Accessed 12 September 2025].

74 Eskom. 2025. *Eskom Integrated Report 2025*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.eskom.co.za/investors/integrated-results/2025>> [Accessed 22 September 2025].

75 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Lengthy Probes Gives Fraud Suspects Exit Room, Making it Difficult to Recover Misappropriated Funds*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-lengthy-probes-gives-fraud-suspects-exit-room-making-it-difficult-recover-misappropriated-funds>> [Accessed 11 September 2025].

On 23 April 2025, the **Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs** urged the Department of Home Affairs to bring forward the target for finalising the *White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection* from 2030 to 2027, stressing the need for urgent migration policy certainty in line with international obligations. While welcoming the department's continued digitisation drive, including online document ordering, an electronic travel authorisation system, and broader ICT reforms, the committee called for clear timelines and stronger internal controls, noting failures such as the Barberton office closure due to weak contract management. It also raised concern over persistent system downtime and overreliance on State Information Technology Agency (SITA) platforms, urging full implementation of Council for Scientific Research (CSIR) recommendations and clarity on filling the ICT leadership post. Furthermore, the committee criticised the underfunding of the Border Management Authority, warning it weakens national security, while supporting the rollout of ICT tools like drones and body-worn cameras to control corruption⁷⁶.

On 14 May 2025, the **Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development** was briefed by the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council (NACAC) on its proposal to establish a new Office of Public Integrity as a statutory Chapter 9 body that would incorporate the SIU. NACAC argued that while law enforcement is essential, systemic corruption requires a broader mandate including public education, mobilisation, risk assessments, policy research, intelligence reporting and civil asset recovery. Committee chair Xola Nqola welcomed the “promising” plans but stressed that Parliament will closely monitor whether they move to implementation. Members also pressed for stronger whistleblower protection, referring to ongoing assassinations, and NACAC confirmed it is advocating for a whistleblower fund, psychosocial and legal support, enhanced security, and a full overhaul of the Protected Disclosures Act. The committee was further briefed by the Magistrates Commission, endorsing the removal of Magistrate Govender from office, but raised concern over delays in concluding inquiries into suspended magistrates. With seven magistrates on suspension already costing over R31 million due to cases dating back to 2016 and 2018, Nqola warned that the prolonged processes undermine fiscal responsibility and hinder the appointment of new judicial officers. The insight is that while institutional reforms against corruption are advancing, systemic weaknesses in accountability and judicial discipline remain a fiscal and governance burden⁷⁷.

76 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Committee Calls for DHA to Review Target Deadline for White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection*. [online] Available at: <<https://tinyurl.com/mt8kcohu>> [Accessed 14 September 2025].

77 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Justice Committee Hears Recommendation to Incorporate SIU into New Permanent Anti-Corruption Agency*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-justice-committee-hears-recommendation-incorporate-siu-new-permanent-anti-corruption-agency>> [Accessed 12 September 2025].

On 4 June 2025, the **Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition** met with stakeholders across the steel value chain to assess progress on the Steel and Metal Fabrication Master Plan. Industry associations welcomed the plan's intent and noted some positive outcomes, such as improved quality of locally produced steel, renewed standards enforcement, and modest new investment, however, warned that its implementation has not adequately addressed structural challenges. The sector remains weakened by cheap steel imports especially from China, high production and transport costs, insufficient infrastructure investment, and the failure of SOEs and government departments to prioritise local steel procurement. Stakeholders criticised a disconnect between the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and industry, siloed implementation, and the composition of the steering committee, arguing it limited collective representation. Concerns were also raised about interventions in the scrap metal market, which have harmed recyclers, waste pickers, and some steel producers. Proposals included convening a steel indaba to forge urgent short-term measures to save the industry, alongside long-term inputs into industrial policy. Committee chair Mzwandile Masina supported the call, stressing the need for immediate interventions and coherent government policy to stabilise and revitalise the steel industry's contribution to the economy⁷⁸. The ArcelorMittal plant has remained shut, with no decisive solution from government to stabilise production or secure jobs. The portfolio committee's concerns have largely been sidelined. Despite calls for stronger interventions, the department has not meaningfully followed through on committee directives. Instead, policy responses have been piecemeal and slow, leaving structural challenges unresolved. This reflects both weak government responsiveness and a worrying disconnect between policy ambition and actual implementation, heightening the risk of long-term decline in South Africa's steel industry⁷⁹.



The sector remains weakened by cheap steel imports especially from China, high production and transport costs, insufficient infrastructure investment, and the failure of SOEs and government departments to prioritise local steel procurement.

78 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition Briefed on the Implementation of Steel and Metal Fabrication Master Plan*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-committee-trade-industry-and-competition-briefed-implementation-steel-and-metal-fabrication-master-plan>> [Accessed 10 September 2025].

79 Parliamentary Monitoring Group. 2025. *Progress and outcomes of implementing the Steel and Metal Fabrication Master Plan: stakeholder engagement*. [online] Available at: <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/40876/>> [Accessed 22 September 2025].



The department reported that 157 departments engaged in workshops during 2024–2025 to align with the framework and implement the Directive on Human Resources Management and Development, while the National School of Government noted that approximately 80% of the framework has been implemented.

On 12 June 2025, the **Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration** received progress updates from the Department of Public Service and Administration, the National School of Government and the AGSA on the rollout of the *National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector*. Chairperson Jan de Villiers stressed that implementation of the framework is a priority for the 7th Parliament in building a capable, ethical and developmental state, with oversight to be maintained on a quarterly basis. The department reported that 157 departments engaged in workshops during 2024–2025 to align with the framework and implement the Directive on Human Resources Management and Development, while the National School of Government noted that approximately 80% of the framework has been implemented. Committee members welcomed progress but raised concerns over the lack of enforcement mechanisms, mainly regarding accountability for corruption and procurement abuse, and highlighted the overreliance on consultants. They requested detailed reporting on consultant expenditure and clearer performance indicators in the next update. The committee reaffirmed its commitment to oversight, emphasising the need for robust monitoring tools and stronger accountability measures to ensure the framework achieves its intended impact⁸⁰. The committee has already flagged weak enforcement and consultant overreliance, showing it is aware that progress without accountability risks hollowing out the framework's impact. By maintaining quarterly oversight, demanding detailed reporting on consultant expenditure, and insisting on measurable performance indicators, the committee is positioned to strengthen enforcement and ensure corruption and procurement abuse are directly addressed. Its ability to push for accountability depends on consistent follow-through and ensuring that the department and National School of Government respond to recommendations with tangible reforms rather than surface compliance⁸¹.

80 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Public Service and Administration Committee Receives Update on Implementation of Professionalisation Framework*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-public-service-and-administration-committee-receives-update-implementation-professionalisation-framework>> [Accessed 9 September 2025].

81 Parliamentary Monitoring Group. 2025. *Reforms in public service recruitment; appointment of foreign nationals; MTDP / Professionalisation Framework; Performance monitoring tools; with Deputy Minister*. [online] Available at: <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/40254/#:~:text=The%20Portfolio%20Committee%20on%20Public%20Service%20and%20Administration,appointment%20of%20foreign%20nationals%20in%20the%20public%20service.>> [Accessed 22 September 2025].

The Budgetary Review and Recommendation Reports – Emerging themes

The following section reflects issues that remained consistent throughout the 6th Parliament (2019–2024), many of which have spilled over into the 7th Parliament. Much of this section is based on the Budgetary Review and Recommendation Reports (BRRRs). These reports are a parliamentary tool used by committees to assess the performance and finances of the departments they watch over. In terms of the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, the National Assembly committees “must” annually submit BRRRs on each department for tabling in the National Assembly; these reports “must” assess the departments’ service delivery performance and the departments’ effectiveness and efficiency, and “may” include recommendations. The BRRRs must be submitted after the adoption of the Appropriation Bill and before the adoption of the reports on the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement⁸². These themes will need to be revisited and reassessed once the 2025 BRRRs are released to determine whether progress has been made.

82 The Appropriation Act no 3 of 2025 was assented to by the President on 6 August 2025 and gazetted on 8 August 2025. The Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement is due in Parliament on 11 November 2025.

Table 9 Themes emerging from BRRRs

Emerging themes	Discussion
Poor audit outcomes and financial mismanagement	A persistent concern across many national and provincial departments and their entities is the recurrence of irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditure. The AGSA continues to report that a significant proportion of entities fail to adhere to financial controls, procurement regulations, and supply chain management standards. Despite clear audit findings and recommendations, year-on-year repetition of financial mismanagement issues remains unaddressed. This is compounded by a systemic lack of consequence management and accountability for transgressions, allowing financial misconduct to continue with impunity. Oversight remains weakened due to limited consequence management, political interference from majority-party dynamics, capacity and skills gaps in committees, and the absence of strong tracking systems to enforce AGSA recommendations. Oversight often becomes reactive and symbolic rather than systemic, allowing financial mismanagement to persist despite repeated findings and reforms.
Vacancies and skills shortages	Human resource constraints, particularly high vacancy rates in technical, compliance and leadership roles, undermine institutional effectiveness. Many departments struggle to fill funded posts, delaying service delivery and administrative performance. Poor recruitment planning, coupled with weak staff retention and development strategies, exacerbates these workforce challenges. The result is a skills deficit that directly affects programme execution and compliance with governance frameworks.
Under-expenditure and budget misalignment	Many departments routinely underspend their allocated budgets, especially on key service delivery and infrastructure programmes. This reflects a disconnect between budget allocations, strategic planning, and implementation readiness. Budgets are often misaligned with Annual Performance Plans (APPs), and poor planning practices lead to significant rollovers or last-minute expenditure surges at the end of the financial year. This pattern undermines fiscal discipline and the achievement of developmental objectives.
Poor performance and incomplete targets	Performance shortfalls continue to plague the public sector, with several departments failing to meet their predetermined objectives. Weak internal monitoring and evaluation systems contribute to the poor tracking of outcomes. Furthermore, performance indicators are often ill-defined, not measurable, or not time-bound, making accountability and improvement difficult. This results in limited progress towards institutional and policy goals.
Weak governance and oversight structures	Many state entities are led by boards that are dysfunctional, partially vacant, or lack the capacity to provide strategic direction and oversight. Internal oversight mechanisms, such as audit committees and internal audits, are often poorly implemented or their recommendations are ignored. This contributes to institutional instability and repeated governance failures.
Ineffective consequence management	Despite clear evidence of misconduct, officials implicated in wrongdoing are rarely held accountable. Repeat findings from oversight bodies, including the AGSA and Scopa, are not accompanied by disciplinary or legal action. This perpetuates a culture of impunity and weakens the deterrent effect of oversight. Consequence management remains an issue. Committees such as Scopa can highlight wrongdoing, but they lack direct enforcement powers and must rely on the executive or law-enforcement agencies to act. Political considerations, majority-party protection of ministers and senior officials, and weak follow-through on recommendations mean that disciplinary or criminal processes are rarely triggered.

Emerging themes	Discussion
Slow implementation of infrastructure projects	Delays in infrastructure development are a recurring issue, often resulting from poor planning, inadequate contract management, poor supply chain management and insufficient project oversight, within departments, entities and implementing agencies. Budget constraints and limited project management capacity further contribute to cost overruns, incomplete projects, and missed development targets. These failures diminish the potential impact of capital investment and hinder local economic development. Chronic budget shortfalls, coupled with skills gaps in project management, often lead to cost overruns, stalled or incomplete projects, and long delays. Political interference and corruption further erode efficiency, while Parliament's oversight of infrastructure delivery remains inconsistent, allowing systemic problems to repeat and reducing the developmental impact of capital investment.
Poor intergovernmental coordination	Fragmentation across spheres of government undermines effective service delivery. National programmes are often poorly coordinated with provincial and municipal implementation structures, leading to duplication, inefficiency, and misaligned priorities. The lack of integrated planning and cooperative governance hinders holistic development.
Inadequate ICT systems and data management	Many departments continue to operate using outdated, siloed information systems, limiting operational efficiency and data sharing. Poor data quality and inadequate digital infrastructure affect planning, decision-making and performance monitoring. These limitations also hinder the transition to digital government and open-data practices.
Weaknesses in policy implementation	While South Africa has developed a strong policy and legislative framework, implementation remains weak due to a lack of capacity, inadequate funding, poor coordination and a culture of corruption and criminality. Legislative mandates are often unmet, with institutions struggling to translate policy into tangible outcomes. This disjuncture between policy design and implementation is a significant obstacle to developmental progress.



Committees are showing stronger willingness to summon ministers and senior officials, interrogate flawed appointments, and demand accountability on AGSA findings.

There are some improvements in the 7th Parliament, although they remain irregular and often fragile.

Committees are showing stronger willingness to summon ministers and senior officials, interrogate flawed appointments, and demand accountability on AGSA findings⁸³. There has also been greater use of joint oversight models, such as Scopa working with the Portfolio Committee on Cogta on municipal audits, as well as an increased emphasis on digital governance and professionalisation reforms⁸⁴. Parliament has also begun to highlight the importance of linking ICT and data systems across key state institutions, for example, between the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Revenue Service (SARS) to close loopholes in compliance, tax collection, and identity management. On the economic front, bigger infrastructure projects are receiving closer oversight attention, with committees pressing departments to improve planning, contract management, and delivery timelines. The Constitutional Review Committee and Mediation Committee have both been more actively utilised early in the term, signalling a more assertive parliamentary posture⁸⁵. National Treasury has also started shifting focus towards tying municipal grants more directly to delivery outcomes, which if implemented consistently, could drive stronger accountability at local government level. However, these improvements are still tempered by persistent challenges: consequence management remains weak, majority-party dynamics continue to blunt follow-through, and systemic issues like financial mismanagement, under-expenditure, and skills shortages remain deeply entrenched.⁸⁶

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- 83 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Draft Oversight Priority Plan for the 7th Parliament Consultation Version*. [online] Available at: <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Pages/2025/02-05-2025_NCOP_Strategic_Planning/day1/06-05-2025/Oversight_Priority_Plan_Consultation_version_August_2024.pdf> [Accessed 23 September 2025].
- 84 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: COGTA Committee Mobilises Joint Oversight to Tackle Municipal Audit Failures*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-cogta-committee-mobilises-joint-oversight-tackle-municipal-audit-failures>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].
- 85 Parliament of South Africa. 2025. *Media Statement: Constitutional Review Committee Concludes on Legacy Submissions, No Amendments to Come*. [online] Available at: <<https://parliament.gov.za/press-releases/media-statement-constitutional-review-committee-concludes-legacy-submissions-no-amendments-come>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].
- 86 Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2025. *Media Alert: Parliament Pilots Joint Oversight Strategy to Address Underperformance in Free State Municipalities*. [online] Available at: <<https://tinyurl.com/cjtytea7>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

This section presents case studies that OUTA found noteworthy in relation to the themes which emerged from the BRRRs, highlighting patterns of concern and oversight gaps. While these examples are emphasised here, we recognise that other portfolio committees are also actively addressing the issues that have been raised.

On **8 October 2024**, the AGSA reported to Parliament that the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) had **significantly reduced irregular expenditure**, dropping from R1.2 billion incurred in 2019/20 to R363 million in 2023/24, with no irregular spending recorded at the department itself or the Water Research Commission, and the closing balance of irregular expenditure decreasing from R18.618 billion in 2020/21 to R10.991 billion in 2023/24⁸⁷. Most irregularities stemmed from non-compliance with procurement rules at the Water Trading Entity, where a new procurement strategy is being implemented. The AGSA commended the improvement but stressed the need for strong consequence management to deter future violations. She noted that while DWS had developed a Water Services Improvement Plan, its ability to influence municipal water performance remained constrained by legislative limits, with the Blue Drop Report (2023) showing continued decline in municipal drinking water systems. The AGSA recommended closer collaboration with National Treasury, Cogta, the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency and Salga to strengthen oversight and highlighted weaknesses in project management, urging stricter supervision of contractors to ensure timely, quality infrastructure delivery⁸⁸.

On **28 March 2025**, South Africa's analogue television switch-off in terms of the **Broadcasting Digital Migration** programme was delayed again after the Pretoria High Court suspended the 31 March deadline set by the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies Solly Malatsi in December 2024. The ruling followed a successful application by eTV, supported by Media Monitoring Africa and SOS Support Public Broadcasting, which argued that millions of South Africans risked losing access to television due to a lack of proper consultation. The court interdicted both the minister and Sentech SOC Limited from proceeding with the analogue signal shutdown and dual-illumination phase-out. While Malatsi maintained that sufficient consultation had taken place and accused eTV of prioritising commercial interests, he said he would study the judgment before deciding next steps. The ruling marked yet another setback in South Africa's digital migration process, which has faced repeated delays since missing the International Telecommunication Union's June 2015 deadline⁸⁹.

87 Auditor-General of South Africa. 2024. *Budgetary review and recommendations report (BRRR). Presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation*. [online] Available at: <https://static.pmg.org.za/241008BRRR_slides_Water_Portfolio_031024_Final.pdf> [Accessed 13 October 2025].

88 Khumalo, M. 2024. *DWS makes improvement in irregular expenditure -AGSA*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.jacarandafm.com/news/news/dws-makes-improvement-irregular-expenditure-agsa/>> [Accessed 23 September 2025].

89 Maphanga, C. 2025. *Court halts digital migration deadline, delays analogue TV switch-off*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/1024706-2/>> [Accessed 14 September 2025].



The DA criticised NSFAS for late payments, mid-year defunding, and irregularities in accommodation tenders, which left students vulnerable to rogue landlords and unsafe environments.

On **17 June 2025**, the DA revealed shocking and unsafe **student living conditions** during an oversight visit to a university residence in Gqeberha, highlighting broken infrastructure such as fencing, plumbing, kitchens, and bathrooms, alongside unpaid NSFAS allowances that left many students desperate. MP Matlhodi Maseko described the situation as a national disgrace and announced the launch of a reporting portal to document and escalate student accommodation failures. Testimonies from student representatives exposed further exploitation, including landlords withholding possessions and allegations of students being forced to trade sex for housing. The DA criticised NSFAS for late payments, mid-year defunding, and irregularities in accommodation tenders, which left students vulnerable to rogue landlords and unsafe environments. The party committed to working with Deputy Minister for Higher Education Dr Mimmy Gondwe to escalate the issues to the department and NSFAS, stressing that accommodation crises must not undermine access to quality education⁹⁰.

90 Democratic Alliance. 2025. *Student living crisis exposed – DA oversight reveals crumbling conditions, commencing national action*. [online] Available at: <<https://shorturl.at/NpCNg>> [Accessed 14 September 2025].

Case studies: OUTA interactions with Parliament

8.1 Still calling for meaningful electoral reform

On **30 July 2024**, OUTA and 21 other civil society organisations raised concerns about the inadequacy of the new **Electoral Reform Consultation Panel**. Despite the Electoral Amendment Act of 2023 requiring reforms ahead of the 2029 elections, the process was delayed when statutory deadlines were ignored and the Committee in December 2023 called for extra nominations, leaving the panel incomplete before the May 2024 elections. Civil society representatives were excluded from the panel despite qualified nominations, while it was dominated by current or former IEC members, some seen as biased against reform. OUTA stressed that this undermines meaningful accountability and constituency-based representation, and called for stronger public involvement to ensure the process is transparent, inclusive and democratic.⁹¹

8.2 Calling for better governance at Samsa

On **8 August 2024**, OUTA urged the Portfolio Committee on Transport to intervene in the governance crisis at the **South African Maritime Safety Authority** (Samsa). Despite a new board being appointed in September 2023, Samsa has been without a permanent CEO since 2016 and reinstated Chief Operations Officer Sobantu Tilayi, even after he was found guilty in a disciplinary hearing and criticised in a January 2024 high court ruling. Samsa faced a R44 million civil claim linked to this case. OUTA warned that ongoing governance failures threaten maritime safety at a time when Red Sea instability has pushed more shipping traffic around the Cape. OUTA called for urgent oversight, an AGSA audit into irregular spending, and action from new Transport Minister Barbara Creecy to hold officials accountable.⁹²

91 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2024. *Electoral reform requires civil society involvement*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.oua.co.za/blog/newsroom-1/electoral-reform-requires-civil-society-involvement-1367>> [Accessed 15 September 2025].

92 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2024. *OUTA asks new Parliament to intervene in Samsa*. [online] Available at: <<https://shorturl.at/U6ZpA>> [Accessed 15 September 2025].



Civil society contributing to oversight: OUTA alert on the Services SETA

In 2024, OUTA obtained a copy of the Werksmans investigation report on the **Services Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)** after a protracted battle with the Services SETA in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA). This report was compiled in May 2023 and exposed significant wrongdoing in the Services SETA, and had been blocked from release. The report found evidence of tenders inflated by over 1 200% (from R6.6 million to R89 million), conflicts of interest, rushed payments, missing records and service providers being paid for items that were not delivered.

The Werksmans investigation was a direct result of OUTA's investigation into tender irregularities at the Services SETA, after whistleblowers approached OUTA in 2018. The whistleblowers had been persecuted and fired by the Services SETA administration, but the Werksmans report exonerated them.

On **8 October 2024**, OUTA handed over the Werksmans report to the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education. The following day, the Services SETA leadership appeared before the committee, so the committee was able to question them about items in the report. The report revealed both a shocking state of affairs at the Services SETA – with all nine tenders investigated not following procedure – and a lack of accountability. The committee did not hold back when questioning the Services SETA leadership, and sharply criticised them for not implementing a single recommendation from the Werksmans report and not holding anyone to account.

OUTA's statement of 17 October 2024 on this matter details more of the problems in the Services SETA⁹³. A year after the committee's meeting, the record of the meeting is incomplete⁹⁴, which is concerning.

OUTA's statement also called on Minister Nobuhle Nkabane to appoint a new Services SETA board in March 2025 with integrity and a focus on skills development, warning that public funds meant for education and training continue to be looted.

93 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2024. *Parliament grills Services SETA over ignored Werksmans report*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.oua.co.za/blog/newsroom-1/parliament-grills-services-seta-over-ignored-werksmans-report-1380>> [Accessed 15 September 2025].

94 Portfolio Committee on Higher Education. 2024. *Higher Education Portfolio Audit Outcomes; DHET & Services SETA 2023/24 Annual Report. Minutes of committee meeting, 9 October 2024*. [online] Available at: <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/39580/>> [Accessed 15 October 2025].

8.4 Watching the Budget

On **20 November 2024**, OUTA made a **submission on the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) 2024** to the Standing and Select Committees on Appropriations, calling the MTBPS a betrayal of the fight against corruption due to the failure to provide sufficient resources for law enforcement⁹⁵. OUTA believes that substantial increases in the budgets for key elements of the criminal justice system – such as the NPA, SIU, SARS and the Public Protector – are long overdue. The lack of attention to these areas, combined with a lack of a clear oversight strategy and corresponding structure with systems, will lead to an ongoing failure to address the accountability and oversight gaps that plague many government departments.

Also in November, a submission was made with Econometrix to the National Treasury, arguing against increasing taxes, with reference to the Laffer curve. The core argument was that South Africa has reached the point of diminishing returns on tax revenue, where higher tax rates lead to lower overall revenue due to reduced economic activity and compliance. The submission highlighted the growing gap between government spending and revenue, resulting in a widening fiscal deficit and unsustainable debt levels.⁹⁶

8.5 Improving collaboration between Parliament and civil society

On **5 December 2024**, OUTA welcomed a “new era of collaboration” with Parliament after co-hosting a **Civil Society Parliament Symposium** on 27 November 2024 with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). The hybrid event brought together parliamentary officials, civil society organisations and governance experts to strengthen oversight, accountability and transparency in the 7th Parliament. Key outcomes included commitments to build stronger partnerships between Parliament and civil society, improve public engagement in governance, generate actionable recommendations for oversight and support capacity building. OUTA stressed that parliamentary oversight cannot succeed without civil society’s involvement and that joint problem-solving is essential for protecting democracy⁹⁷.

95 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2024. *OUTA submission to the Standing & Select Committees on Appropriations on MTBPS 2024*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ota.co.za/web/content/459757>> [Accessed 15 October 2025].

96 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2024. *Tax Proposals: Budget 2025. Submission to National Treasury for Budget 2025*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ota.co.za/web/content/317527>> [Accessed 15 October 2025].

97 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2024. *OUTA welcomes new era of collaboration with Parliament*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ota.co.za/blog/newsroom-1/outa-welcomes-new-era-of-collaboration-with-parliament-1392>> [Accessed 15 September 2025].

8.6 Improving public understanding of Parliament: Launching civil society's ParliMeter

On **6 March 2025**, OUTA, in partnership with OpenUp and the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), officially launched *ParliMeter*, a new online parliamentary oversight dashboard co-funded by the European Union's Enhancing Accountability and Transparency programme. This tool provides real-time, neutral data on MP attendance, bill progression and committee meetings, aimed at strengthening transparency, accountability and public engagement in the 7th Parliament. OUTA describes *ParliMeter* as a "gateway to participatory democracy", enabling citizens, journalists, researchers and civil society organisations to track Parliament's performance and hold it accountable. Planned enhancements include adding voting records, deeper committee monitoring, and expanding datasets to support evidence-based policymaking⁹⁸.

8.7 Broadcasting Digital Migration still years behind

On **27 March 2025**, OUTA submitted a **research report** to the Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies, urging urgent parliamentary intervention in South Africa's troubled **Broadcasting Digital Migration project**. With the final analogue switch-off deadline set for 31 March 2025, OUTA highlighted more than a decade of delays, irregular expenditure, poor planning and a failure to distribute set-top boxes (STBs) to indigent households. A pending court case brought by e.tv underscored that the minister's decision to set the deadline without consultation was "unsustainable," while the SABC warned of financial risks if the process was mishandled. Despite approval in 2008, the project remains incomplete, with millions of households at risk of losing access to free-to-air TV. OUTA called for accountability measures against wasteful spending, mandated STB distribution to at least 80% of poor households, and a nationwide public awareness campaign⁹⁹. By October 2025, the project was still incomplete and the deadline uncertain.¹⁰⁰

98 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *OUTA and partners launch ParliMeter, a ground-breaking parliamentary oversight tool*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.oua.co.za/blog/newsroom-1/oua-and-partners-launch-the-parlimeter-a-ground-breaking-parliamentary-oversight-tool-1403>> [Accessed 15 September 2025].

99 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *Broadcasting Digital Migration: Costly, delayed, and lacking oversight*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.oua.co.za/blog/newsroom-1/broadcasting-digital-migration-costly-delayed-and-lacking-oversight-1408>> [Accessed 15 September 2025].

100 Myles Illidge. 2025. *South Africa is 14 years over its digital migration deadline*. MyBroadband. 8 October 2025. [online] Available at: <<https://mybroadband.co.za/news/broadcasting/613334-south-africa-is-14-years-over-its-digital-migration-deadline.html>> [Accessed 15 October 2025].



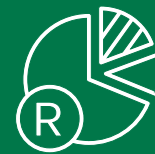
Submission to Parliament: Limit executive perks

On **16 April 2025**, OUTA made a formal **submission to Parliament supporting the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Amendment Bill, 2025**, which seeks to prevent unchecked executive perks granted through the Ministerial Handbook. The bill, a Private Member's Bill introduced by MP Alan Beesley, follows the 2022 scandal where ministers and deputies were quietly awarded free utilities and larger offices at a cost of R87 million annually, later reversed after public backlash. OUTA's submission called for Parliament to be notified within 30 days of any benefit changes, mandatory recommendations from the Independent Commission, legal recognition of the Handbook as a delegated legislative instrument, and full public access to costings and justifications. Benefits granted outside this process should be deemed unauthorised expenditure under the PFMA¹⁰¹.



Changing the Budget: a first for the executive

In 2025, in a first for South Africa, the Minister of Finance had to produce three versions of Budget 2025. On 19 February 2025 Version 1 got as far as Parliament, but was pulled before Minister Enoch Godongwana was able to table it. Version 2 was tabled on 12 March, but drew public fury when it announced a VAT increase of 0.5 percentage points a year for two years, to take VAT to 16%, instead of cutting corruption and waste. A month later, the minister announced the VAT amendment would be withdrawn and thus also the Appropriation Bill and Division of Revenue Bill, and new money bills would be tabled. **On 21 May 2025**, version 3 was tabled in Parliament: this is the version that Parliament processed.



In 2025, in a first for South Africa, the Minister of Finance had to produce three versions of Budget 2025.

¹⁰¹ Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *OUTA calls for stronger checks on executive perks*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ota.co.za/blog/newsroom-1/outa-calls-for-stronger-checks-on-executive-perks-1410>> [Accessed 15 September 2025].



OUTA argued that Treasury should instead focus on improving tax collection, cutting unnecessary spending, and implementing recommendations from past expenditure reviews.

While the Budget was not blocked by Parliament itself – Parliament has never blocked the Budget – the three versions of the Budget were a direct result of public anger and the executive, as the GNU, having to manage their internal conflict. This was a significant milestone in managing the Budget. It also resulted in parliamentary committees having to rush to get the much-delayed money bills processed.

At the time, OUTA welcomed government's decision to keep VAT at 15%, and stressed that while tax hikes can stabilise state finances, South Africa's core challenge is not revenue generation but wasteful expenditure, corruption, and poor fiscal discipline. OUTA noted that the real crisis lies in spiralling debt-service costs of R482 billion for 2025/26, now exceeding combined health and policing budgets¹⁰². OUTA argued that Treasury should instead focus on improving tax collection, cutting unnecessary spending, and implementing recommendations from past expenditure reviews. OUTA also criticised the limited increase to the SARS budget, noting that although funds for compliance and investigative capacity are vital, the allocation remains inadequate. OUTA urged the GNU to engage more collaboratively before making decisions that affect the economy, warning that ad-hoc tax hikes create instability and distrust¹⁰³.

¹⁰² Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *Budget 3.0: Government cornered into rethinking fiscal discipline*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.oua.co.za/blog/newsroom-1/budget-3-0-government-cornered-into-rethinking-fiscal-discipline-1418>> [Accessed 15 September 2025].

¹⁰³ Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *OUTA welcomes decision to keep VAT at 15%*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.oua.co.za/blog/newsroom-1/oua-welcomes-decision-to-keep-vat-at-15-1412>> [Accessed 15 September 2025].

Observations from Indicators for Democratic Parliament

The *Indicators for Democratic Parliament* (IDP)¹⁰⁴ framework are tools provided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to help national parliaments assess and improve their effectiveness, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness. This multi-partner initiative supports alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)¹⁰⁵, particularly targets 16.6 and 16.7¹⁰⁶, which promote accountable institutions and inclusive decision-making. Covering areas such as autonomy, legislative processes, oversight, and public participation, the indicators support self-assessment¹⁰⁷ to highlight strengths and identify areas for reform.

The framework¹⁰⁸ is adaptable to any parliamentary system or size and encourages democratic governance and public trust. The framework not only serves as a self-assessment, but it also guides parliaments through reform and accountability processes¹⁰⁹. By using this tool, parliaments can better address public concerns, serve their constituencies more effectively, and contribute to the broader goals of peace, justice, and strong institutions.

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- 104 Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2024. *Indicators for democratic parliaments*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ipu.org/impact/democracy-and-strong-parliaments/ipu-standards/indicators-democratic-parliaments>> [Accessed 10 September 2024].
- 105 United Nations South Africa. 2025. *Sustainable Development Goals*. [online] Available at: <<https://southafrica.un.org/en/sdgs>> [Accessed 1 August 2025].
- 106 United Nations South Africa. 2025. *Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*. [online] Available at: <<https://southafrica.un.org/en/sdgs/16>> [Accessed 5 August 2025].
- 107 Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2023. *About indicators: Indicators for democratic parliaments*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/about/about-indicators>> [Accessed 15 July 2024].
- 108 Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2023. *Assessment guidance*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parliamentaryindicators.org/resource-library/assessment-guidance>> [Accessed 5 August 2025].
- 109 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *Summary of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament*. [online] Available at: <[https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef4b563562b4bfd3373_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20\(part%201\).pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef4b563562b4bfd3373_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20(part%201).pdf)> [Accessed 26 September 2025].

The following observations are derived from the indicator assessment discussed in *Assessing the South African Parliament Using the assessment Criteria of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament-Target 1: Effective Parliament, Target 2: Accountable Parliament, Target 3: Transparent Parliament and Target 4: Responsive Parliament*¹¹⁰.



Figure 11 Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

¹¹⁰ Parlimeter. 2024. *OUTA's Assessment of South Africa's Parliament against the Indicators of a Democratic Parliament*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.parlimeter.org.za/features/idp-assessment>> [Accessed 1 September 2025].

The following two figures – Figure 11: Combined observations from Target 1-4 of the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, and Figure 12: Unique observations from each specific target – are drawn from the reports produced by OUTA as an external civil society organisation assessment of Parliament.

These are the OUTA reports and the analyses are also available on *ParliMeter*¹¹¹:

- Assessing the South African Parliament: Using the Assessment Criteria of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament – Target 1: Effective Parliament¹¹².
- Assessing the South African Parliament: Using the Assessment Criteria of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament – Target 2: Accountable Parliament¹¹³.
- Assessing the South African Parliament: Using the Assessment Criteria of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament – Target 3: Transparent Parliament¹¹⁴.
- Assessing the South African Parliament: Using the Assessment Criteria of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament – Target 4: Responsive Parliament¹¹⁵.

111 OUTA's Assessment of South Africa's Parliament against the "Indicators of a Democratic Parliament". Available at: <<https://www.parlimeter.org.za/features/idp-assessment>>, [Accessed 16 October 2025]

112 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *Assessing the South African Parliament: Using the assessment Criteria of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament Target 1: Effective Parliament*. [online] Available at: <[https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef56e7ef0335c93f6f1_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20\(Target%201%20part%204\).pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef56e7ef0335c93f6f1_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20(Target%201%20part%204).pdf)> [Accessed 26 September 2025].

113 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *Assessing the South African Parliament: Using the assessment Criteria of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament Target 2: Accountable Parliament*. [online] Available at: <[https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef4d2322b54b6633b60_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20\(Target%202%20part%205\).pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef4d2322b54b6633b60_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20(Target%202%20part%205).pdf)> [Accessed 26 September 2025].

114 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *Assessing the South African Parliament: Using the assessment Criteria of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament Target 3: Transparent Parliament*. [online] Available at: <[https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef43fd58cd357a09949_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20\(Target%203%20part%206\)%20\(1\).pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef43fd58cd357a09949_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20(Target%203%20part%206)%20(1).pdf)> [Accessed 26 September 2025].

115 Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse. 2025. *Assessing the South African Parliament: Using the assessment Criteria of the Indicators for Democratic Parliament Target 4: Responsive Parliament*. [online] Available at: <[https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef39a32a05525020e04_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20\(Target%204%20part%207\).pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66dd440e7b05cf45c0958c82/68d63ef39a32a05525020e04_Indicators%20for%20Democratic%20Parliament%20Report%20(Target%204%20part%207).pdf)> [Accessed 26 September 2025].

9.1

Combined observations from Target 1–4 of the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

Combined observations from Targets 1 to 4 of the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

MPs and institutional integrity and professionalism

- MP's effectiveness is limited by inconsistent professional development and resource disparities. Mandatory induction and continuous training are needed.
- Parliament upholds ethical standards but political influence can undermine independence. Codes of ethics exist but enforcement is uneven, especially for junior staff. Gaps remain in senior staff and MP's training on complex ethical issues, requiring specialised skills such as legislative drafting and research.
- South African parliamentary rules allow for urgent debates and motions, but their use is often subject to political contestation. This was evident in delayed responses to urgent issues such as water shortages in KwaZulu-Natal or the energy crisis, where opposition motions were blocked or deprioritised.
- Parliamentary committees have constitutional powers to oversee executive responses to emerging issues such as during Covid-19 or Eskom load shedding. However, in practice, oversight is often delayed or diluted by party majorities and limited resourcing of committee support staff.

Transparency in parliamentary operations, public engagement and gaps in financial reporting

- Parliamentary sessions are public, but transparency in decision-making and records is inconsistent. Procurement and financial documents are often in formats which are difficult to use.
- Financial data on MPs' salaries is available, but expense reports and smaller contracts remain hard to access; real-time updates are lacking.
- Legal frameworks like the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) support transparency, but implementation and timely sharing of information need improvement.
- Public engagement exists but outreach to marginalised groups is inconsistent; rural areas require more targeted initiatives.
- ICT resources support transparency, but capacity for advanced systems like real-time bill tracking is limited, particularly in rural areas.
- Accessibility improvements exist (for example, ramps), but challenges persist for remote communities.
- Legislative information is published, but complex formats hinder public understanding, especially for non-experts.
- While Parliament has formal mechanisms such as public petitions, hearings, and committee engagements, many citizens, particularly in rural marginalised communities, struggle to access or navigate these processes. Language, digital divides, and low civic awareness limit meaningful participation.
- Parliament uses social media, a website, and parliamentary TV to share information, yet many citizens remain unaware of key legislative developments. Inadequate use of indigenous languages and limited outreach in informal settlements hinder Parliament's communication with broader society.

Financial, administrative and institutional independence

- Legal provisions protect independence, but underfunding and resource constraints weaken efficiency. Increased funding and stronger financial oversight are needed.
- Committees and oversight bodies face political pressure, reducing impartiality and accountability.
- Budget processes follow legal framework, but delays and limited accessibility of budget documents hinder transparency.
- While Parliament has participated in discussions on the National Development Plan (NDP) goals and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not all legislation is consistently reviewed for alignment with the SDG framework. Committees often lack the tools and expertise to systematically apply sustainability assessments.
- Parliament is part of national coordination mechanisms on SDGs but lacks a formalised role in shaping or reviewing national SDG reports submitted to the UN. Greater collaboration with civil society organisations and clearer accountability structures are needed to strengthen Parliament's impact on South Africa's development agenda.

Figure 12 Shared IDP Observations: Target 1–4



Target 1 Effective Parliament

Parliamentary autonomy and political dynamics

The South African Constitution guarantees parliamentary independence, but political dominance by the ruling party often challenges Parliament's ability to act autonomously, specifically in oversight functions. The importance of maintaining a separation of powers is emphasised, and proposals for legal and procedural reforms to strengthen the autonomy of Parliament are needed.

Emergency and crisis procedures

There is a need for improvements in relation to crisis management protocols and preparedness. This includes strengthening the legal framework for crisis procedures and ensuring that parliamentary business can continue smoothly under extreme circumstances.

Legislative and oversight effectiveness

In spite of having a strong legal framework for legislative and oversight functions, issues such as procedural inefficiencies, political tensions, and resource constraints limit parliamentary effectiveness. Delays in the implementation of reforms and inconsistent application of procedures hinder Parliament's ability to fully hold the executive accountable.

Parliamentary calendar and agenda-setting

There is a need for better coordination in setting the parliamentary calendar and agenda. Challenges during peak legislative periods impact MP's ability to manage their time and resources effectively.

Resource allocation and inclusivity

Smaller parties and independent MPs face challenges in accessing resources, which limits their ability to perform oversight and legislative functions. Enhancing resource allocation, increasing training for MPs, and improving infrastructure will ensure that Parliament can operate more efficiently and inclusively.



Target 2 Accountable Parliament

Anti-corruption measures

South Africa has a strong anti-corruption framework, including the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (PRECCA) and the Office of the Public Protector. However, enforcement is inconsistent, with political interference limiting effectiveness. Parliamentary committees, though vital for oversight, struggle with limited resources and political pressure, hindering thorough investigations.

Regulation of lobbying

Parliament lacks a comprehensive legal framework for lobbying. Without a statutory register for lobbyists, excessive influence on legislative decisions is difficult to trace, resulting in a lack of transparency in policy formulation.

Public Engagement and participation

While Parliament has made efforts to engage the public, particularly on anti-corruption issues, engagement tends to be irregular and reactive. There is a need for more structured and inclusive channels for citizen involvement especially in decision-making processes that directly impact citizens' lives.

Parliamentary ethics

Parliament benefits from a robust anti-corruption legal framework, including PRECCA and the Office of the Public Protector, aligned with international standards like the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). However, enforcement remains inconsistent, often undermined by political interference. Parliamentary committees such as the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and some portfolio committees, may conduct in-depth oversight, but political interference and limited resources hinder the thoroughness of their investigations, weakening the effectiveness of their scrutiny of anti-corruption initiatives.



Target 3 Transparent Parliament

Explanatory and educational materials

Parliament produces explanatory materials aimed at educating the public about its functions and processes. While these materials are valuable, their frequency and reach are insufficient, particularly in underserved or rural areas. More interactive and simplified content should be developed to increase public understanding.

Media access to parliamentary proceedings

The media is generally granted access to parliamentary proceedings. However, logistical challenges such as overcrowding during significant debates and the limited availability of media spaces during high-profile events can impact the coverage, particularly for smaller or independent organisations.

Social media and public outreach

Parliament maintains an active presence on social media platforms, but engagement is often reactive rather than proactive. There is a need for greater consistency and more interactive content, such as live sessions or behind-the-scenes updates, to foster stronger connections with the public, especially for younger generations.

Evaluation and continuous improvement

While Parliament regularly evaluates its transparency practices, there is a need for a more structured and consistent approach to soliciting public feedback and monitoring progress. Incorporating feedback from diverse community groups and evaluating the impact of reforms on public trust and participation will help ensure that Parliament remains responsive to all citizens' needs.



Target 4 Responsive Parliament

Delays in processing public input

Parliamentary committees receive and process public inputs, but delays are common and there is limited public visibility on how submissions are handled. The absence of real-time tracking or public-facing updates reduces citizens' confidence in parliamentary responsiveness.

Weak feedback to citizens

Although committee reports and debates reflect public input, individual citizens or civil society organisations rarely receive clear feedback on the outcome of their contributions. This is particularly evident in petition processes and public hearings in sectors such as health, housing, and local governance.

Figure 13 Unique IDP Observations: Target 1–4

Recommendations for the second year of the 7th Parliament

10.1 Strengthen financial oversight and audit accountability

Parliament should reinforce financial accountability by rigorously enforcing the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), specifically with regards to Section 131 in the MFMA, which requires ministers, directors-general, mayors and boards to table remedial action plans following negative audit findings. Committees must track these plans and escalate non-compliance to Scopa or ad hoc inquiries, as well as demand quarterly updates from accounting officers on implementation progress. Budget allocations, particularly conditional grants, should be directly linked to measurable performance outputs, with mid-year expenditure hearings institutionalised to address discrepancies and prevent chronic underspending, especially in infrastructure portfolios such as Human Settlements, Public Works and Infrastructure, Water and Sanitation, and Transport. Entities with persistent irregular or fruitless expenditure, such as the Road Accident Fund (RAF), NSFAS, Prasa and Eskom, should face a sanction regime that includes freezing or cancelling senior management bonuses, withholding performance incentives, and referral to law-enforcement. Transparent inquiries, such as Scopa's investigation in late 2025 into the RAF, should be replicated across other high-risk institutions to ensure public accountability.

10.2 Address vacancies and skills shortages

Persistent skills shortages undermine service delivery across Health, Higher Education, Police, and Public Works and Infrastructure. Parliamentary committees should require quarterly reporting on critical vacancies and maintain vacancy dashboards with turnaround timelines per department. Recruitment processes must be monitored to ensure timely placement of doctors, teachers, engineers, correctional staff and investigators. The rollout of the *National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector*, including ethics testing, leadership competency programmes and pre-entry standards, must be enforced by 2026, with strict parliamentary oversight of the Department of Public Service and Administration. Ring-fenced training budgets should be protected from fiscal reallocation during periods of financial stress, particularly in sectors with chronic capacity gaps.

10.3 Ensure budget alignment and service delivery

To close loopholes of budget misalignment and under-expenditure, committees must interrogate departmental APPs line by line, ensuring allocations directly support measurable outputs. In-year oversight of expenditure should be normalised through quarterly hearings, with early flagging of under-spending in high-impact infrastructure and social programmes. Chronic underspending must attract penalties, including the imposition of sanctions on senior management. Special scrutiny should be placed on large-ticket entities such as NSFAS, RAF and Eskom where billions of rand in allocations risk diversion from core service delivery mandates.

10.4 Improve governance and consequence management

Effective governance requires that every committee institutionalise live oversight trackers, publicly accessible through platforms such as PMG or Parliament's website, recording recommendations, compliance deadlines, and follow-up actions. Systemic failures in entities such as Prasa, the South African Social Security Agency, Postbank, the Independent Police Investigative Directorate and Eskom should be escalated through plenary resolutions for stronger remedial interventions. Consequence management must be enforced consistently, including disciplinary timelines for maladministration and corruption cases. At the same time, finalisation of the Whistleblower Protection Bill should be prioritised, alongside the establishment of secure funding for psychosocial, legal and protective support, ensuring that individuals who expose misconduct are not left vulnerable.

10.5 Accelerate infrastructure and service delivery oversight

Oversight of infrastructure projects must be intensified through quarterly site verification visits across key sectors, including Prasa rail corridors, housing schemes, water-treatment facilities and school infrastructure. These inspections should result in published reports with enforceable deadlines for remedial action. Departments such as the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Human Settlements, Transport, and Water and Sanitation should be mandated to publish quarterly dashboards tracking project progress against expenditure, while procurement reforms must be fast-tracked to eliminate irregularities in construction and supply chain management.

10.6 Enhance intergovernmental coordination

Parliament should institutionalise joint oversight weeks, enabling cluster-based committees to conduct coordinated inquiries into municipal service delivery failures, for example through combined Cogta, Human Settlements, and Water and Sanitation portfolio interventions. The District Development Model for municipalities requires independent audits to demonstrate tangible outcomes rather than rhetorical commitments. National Treasury and Cogta must be compelled to present measurable outputs of the model to Parliament to justify its continuation.

10.7 Modernise ICT and data systems

The modernisation of Parliament and public service ICT systems is urgently needed. Parliament should expand digital platforms for e-submissions, Hansard access, and real-time tracking of committee recommendations and public submissions. Sector-specific ICT reforms must be monitored against strict deadlines, a new mining cadastre should be operational by 2026, NSFAS systems fully stabilised by the end of 2025, NHI ICT platforms piloted prior to full roll-out, and Home Affairs' visa modernisation completed by mid-2026. Furthermore, cyber-security risks must be integrated into annual oversight, with Scopa and the AGSA jointly auditing ICT resilience across state entities.

10.8 Sharpen policy implementation and legislative management

Parliament must demand that departments finalise regulations within six months of new legislation being signed into law, closing persistent regulatory gaps evident in statutes such as the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, the National Health Insurance Act, and the Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Act. Committees should publish scorecards that track whether laws are fully operational, partially enforced, or stalled. Ahead of the 2026 municipal elections, Cogta must table a coherent framework for coalition governance to prevent instability in municipalities, ensuring that local governance is safeguarded against political deadlock.

10.9 Rebuild public trust and participation

Restoring public confidence requires Parliament to scale up participatory oversight. The Marriage Bill's provincial hearings model should be extended to other high-impact legislation, including the NHI, Electoral Amendment Bill, and Whistleblower Protection Bill. Committees should establish formal advisory panels with civil-society organisations such as OUTA, My Vote Counts and Defend Our Democracy, ensuring structured citizen input in legislative reform processes. Parliament should also revisit its decision to increase political funding thresholds in August 2025, which undermines transparency by raising disclosure requirements and donation limits.

10.10 Prevent state capture relapse

To guard against a relapse into state capture, Parliament must ensure follow-through on the State Capture Commission and NACAC recommendations, demanding clear Cabinet timetables for structural reforms, including the establishment of a permanent anti-corruption agency, reform of SOE boards, and creation of a whistleblower fund. Scopa-style inquiries should be extended beyond the RAF to entities such as NSFAS, Prasa and Eskom to scrutinise contracts and financial management. Furthermore, pre-appointment hearings or post-appointment vetting of CEOs, CFOs and boards of major SOEs should be institutionalised to strengthen leadership accountability and curb opportunities for capture.

Conclusion

This report reaffirms that the duty to scrutinise, monitor, and evaluate executive action lies at the heart of Parliament's role as the people's watchdog.

The introductory sections set the tone for evaluating whether the 7th Parliament has turned this mandate into practice and whether it is enforcing accountability, ensuring consequence management, and bridging the gap between deliberation and delivery.

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The analysis of parliamentary oversight and accountability demonstrates how Parliament fulfils this mandate through committees, oversight visits, constituency engagement, questions to the executive and law-making. Each of these mechanisms was examined not in isolation, but as interconnected processes that together determine Parliament's strength as an accountability institution. The section on parliamentary committees highlights that committees remain the true "engine rooms" of oversight, yet their impact is weakened by capacity constraints, uneven workloads, and political interference. Some committees displayed energy and rigour, while others lagged, pointing to inconsistent institutional culture.

Oversight visits across sectors illustrated Parliament's increased field presence and commitment to verification. However, they also revealed a recurring pattern which is exposure of failures without enforcement of consequences. Similarly, the analysis of constituency work and attendance shows that while MPs are busier than before, with over 1 100 meetings recorded in the first year, activity does not necessarily equate to accountability. The *ParliMeter* data confirms wide variation in attendance, participation and follow-up across parties, reflecting the need for professionalisation and performance monitoring.

The questions and answers section offers one of the clearest indicators of parliamentary engagement with the executive. The 2024–2025 period reflects a strong and evolving culture of parliamentary oversight in South Africa. Members of Parliament submitted 6,762 questions across Written, Oral, Presidential and Deputy Presidential categories. While overall responsiveness remains high, structural bottlenecks persist in large departments. The report recommends quarterly departmental scorecards, formal escalation procedures for chronic delays, replication of efficient practices from high-performing portfolios, and digital tracking systems to improve transparency and accountability.

Public participation and legislative monitoring further illustrate this challenge. While Parliament has expanded consultation and digital access, many legislative processes remain delayed with many bills still awaiting presidential assent by end-2024. This weakens citizens' faith in Parliament's ability to translate participation into policy impact.

The legacy reflection section connected these findings to unresolved crises inherited from the 6th administration: corruption, governance failures, audit regressions and service delivery collapse. Without consistent follow-through, each new Parliament risks repeating the mistakes of its predecessors. The BRRR analysis strengthens this point, showing that while financial oversight is improving, Parliament still struggles to hold departments accountable for mismanagement or poor performance.

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The findings from the IDPs provided a broader lens through which to assess institutional progress. Parliament has made gains in professionalisation, openness and digital transformation, and increased efforts in public participation and oversight visits by portfolio committees, but culture change and enforcement mechanisms remain weak. Meaningful oversight depends on the relationship between public monitoring, transparent data and political will.

Taken together, the evidence across all sections paints a portrait of a Parliament in transition: more open, active and data-driven than before, yet still constrained by the same old habits of delay, limited consequence and uneven follow-up. The GNU has created space for dialogue and shared responsibility, but it has also diffused accountability across too many hands.

To realise its constitutional promise, the 7th Parliament must move from scrutiny to enforcement. It must invest in member capacity, then institutionalise consequence management and ensure that every oversight finding translates into measurable reform. This will include strengthening follow-up mechanisms, ensuring compliance in executive responses, professionalising internal systems, and embedding digital monitoring tools.

For oversight to be credible, it must produce change that citizens can see and trust. The 7th Parliament now stands at a crossroads: we want to see it transform procedural oversight into a noticeable impact on government systems and delivery, and to demonstrate that in South Africa's democracy, no one, including Parliament itself, can escape accountability.

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Glossary

13

Budgetary Review and Recommendations Report (BRRR)	The BRRRs are a parliamentary tool through which committees assess the performance and finances of departments, making recommendations to improve accountability and efficiency.
Cabinet	The Cabinet consists of the President, the Deputy President and the ministers. This is set out in section 91 of the Constitution. The Cabinet does not include deputy ministers.
Coalition governance	A system of government formed when no single party has a majority, requiring parties to share executive power through negotiated agreements.
Consequence management	The process of enforcing disciplinary, legal, or administrative action against individuals or entities that contravene laws, policies, or ethical standards.
Constitutional oversight	The duty of Parliament to monitor the executive's compliance with constitutional obligations, including the protection of rights and adherence to democratic principles.
Executive	The executive is the President, the Deputy President and the Cabinet (the ministers, but excluding the deputy ministers). This is set out in the Constitution, in sections 85 (executive power) and 91 (the Cabinet).
Fruitless and wasteful expenditure	Spending that produces no benefit for the state or the public, often resulting from poor planning or negligence.
Government of National Unity (GNU)	A coalition government formed after the 2024 elections, bringing together multiple political parties to govern collectively.
Irregular expenditure	Spending that occurs in contravention of applicable legislation or procurement regulations, often flagged in audit findings.
Irregular procurement	The awarding of contracts or tenders in violation of prescribed procurement rules, often leading to corruption risks.
Legislative oversight	The process by which Parliament scrutinises government activities, policies and spending to ensure alignment with laws and national priorities.
Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP)	The MTDP is the five-year implementation plan of the GNU that outlines South Africa's key priorities, programmes, and targets for the period 2024-2029. It serves as the government's strategic roadmap for achieving the long-term goals of the National Development Plan (NDP 2030), translating its vision into measurable actions and outcomes. The MTDP replaces the former Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) used by previous administrations and provides a coordinated framework for all departments and spheres of government to align their plans, budgets, and performance indicators with the GNU's development priorities.
National Development Plan (NDP)	The NDP 2030 is South Africa's long-term strategic framework aimed at eliminating poverty and reducing inequality by 2030.
National Health Insurance (NHI)	A government policy, now set out in the National Health Insurance Act no 20 of 2023, to establish a national public fund for universal access to healthcare, reducing dependence on private medical insurance.
Oversight visit	A parliamentary mechanism where committees physically inspect government projects, facilities, or services to verify performance and service delivery on the ground.
ParliMeter	An online parliamentary oversight dashboard co-developed by OUTA, PMG and OpenUp, providing real-time data on MP attendance, bill progress, and committee meetings.

Public participation	The involvement of citizens, communities and stakeholders in parliamentary processes, including through consultations, hearings and submissions, to enhance inclusivity and democratic legitimacy.
Public Protector	A constitutional Chapter 9 institution tasked with investigating maladministration, abuse of power, or misconduct in state affairs.
Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa)	A parliamentary committee responsible for overseeing the spending of public funds and ensuring financial accountability.
State capture	Systemic corruption where private interests significantly influence a country's decision-making processes to their private advantage, undermining democratic institutions.
Whistleblower protection	Legal and institutional safeguards for individuals who disclose corruption, maladministration or abuse of power.

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
AGSA	Auditor-General of South Africa
APP	Annual Performance Plan
ATNS	Air Traffic Navigation Services
BRRR	Budgetary Review and Recommendation Report
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
Cogta	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DA	Democratic Alliance
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DTIC	Department of Trade, Industry and Competition
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EU	European Union
FF+	Freedom Front Plus
GNU	Government of National Unity
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDP	Indicators for Democratic Parliament
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
Inseta	Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority
JCA	Joburg Crisis Alliance
KAS	Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MKP	uMkhonto weSizwe Party
MP	Member of Parliament
MYPD6	The sixth Multi-Year Price Determination
NACAC	National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NECOM	National Energy Crisis Committee
NHI	National Health Insurance
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme

PA	Patriotic Alliance
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
Prasa	Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa
OUTA	Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse
RAF	Road Accident Fund
RTMC	Road Traffic Management Corporation
RTP	Retail Tariff Plan
Salga	South African Local Government Association
SAPS	South African Police Service
SARS	South African Revenue Service
Samsa	South African Maritime Safety Authority
Sanral	South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd
Scopa	Standing Committee on Public Accounts
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SIU	Special Investigating Unit
SOE	State-owned entity
STB	Set-top boxes
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UN	United Nations

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