

# Business welcomes KZN proposal to spend big on transport

**KAVITH HARRILALL**

KWAZULU-Natal's business community welcomed Finance MEC Ina Cronjé's budget announcement that the government would invest billions in existing and new transport and logistics infrastructure, particularly roads.

The CEO of the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Andrew Layman, told *Weekend Witness* that the

flow of goods and services would benefit from Cronjé's spending plans.

"Of particular appeal is the increased allocation for the upgrading of provincial roads—a very large increase in year three of the MTEF [medium-term expenditure framework]—a strong focus on the Dube Trade Port with allocations that will facilitate its important development, [and] an allocation of R40

million to enhance the province's appeal as an investment and tourist destination," Layman said.

KZN-based economist Graham Muller told *Weekend Witness* that Cronjé should be praised for 'putting her money where her mouth is'.

"The minister is to be commended not only for talking about reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality through stimulating domestic

economic growth, but actually funding a number of key pro-growth initiatives, such as the ongoing expansion of the Dube Trade Port, investment in regional airports, the black-topping of key rural roads, the expansion of teacher and nurse training facilities, investment in tourism infrastructure ... and investment in irrigation infrastructure."

The chief executive of the

Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business (PCB), Melanie Veness, told *Weekend Witness* that the government was beginning to create an enabling environment for the business community.

"We're not sitting back ... in a global economy that is not conducive to trade. We're putting in the infrastructure in order to accelerate the process of opening up markets, making it easier to do

business," Veness said.

Layman and Muller welcomed Cronjé's intention to spend additional money on making Grade R accessible to all children, as well as the expansion of no-fee schools.

Muller said apart from one reference to solar energy, more emphasis could have been placed on investing in green-energy projects. He said this area was a weakness of the provincial economy.