

EDITION 406 AUGUST 2019

WWW.LEADERSHIPONLINE.CO.ZA

RSA R29.95

Leadership

SA'S #1
AWARD
WINNING
BUSINESS
MAGAZINE

INTERVIEWS • INSIGHTS • INTELLIGENCE

Barbara Creecy

Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries is finding the right balancing act



Economy and the Environment

Finding the right balancing act

Climate change poses significant social, economic and environmental risks and challenges globally, and for developing countries like South Africa, the impacts of climate change have a more substantial effect. The task of balancing the acceleration of economic growth and transformation with the sustainable use of environmental resources is no small feat, but it is a task that newly appointed Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Barbara Creecy is excited to take on.

“The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries is guided by the Constitution, working to ensure every citizen’s right to an

environment that is not harmful to their health and well-being. The concept of sustainable use is an important one, and the idea is to protect the environment, and not that we don’t use it to realise important socio-economic goals. We must utilise our resources in a way that provides for the livelihood of future generations. The historic mandate of the department included biodiversity management, waste management and a range of regulatory compliance issues including climate change, air quality and of course, our oceans and coasts. Forestry and Fisheries have recently been included to the department’s scope,” says Creecy.

More than two million South Africans are directly dependent on natural resources and the natural environment for their income. These

figures include the almost 900 000 employed in the agriculture sector, the 600 000 people who depend on fisheries and activities linked to our oceans, and nearly 400 000 who rely on various aspects of the biodiversity economy. These figures do not include the hundreds of thousands of people employed in the value chains associated with these industries.

“In light of the pervasive environmental and climate challenges we’re experiencing not just in South Africa, but the world over I am very excited with my new appointment. This department is tasked with solving some of the key issues currently facing the globe, and aside from climate change we also have environmental degradation, threatened biodiversity, and economic and social security issues as a

result. This is a very important portfolio, one that poses complex challenges when it comes to how we are going to deal with poverty, equality, and unemployment in relation to how we would want to build a sustainable growth trajectory for the future,” she says.

Those living under conditions of poverty and vulnerability are also the hardest hit by drought, floods and extreme temperatures. These people will also have the least capacity to adapt to climate change.

“For me, it is vital that we get general public agreement and proper understanding of climate change and environmental degradation and the challenges those pose not just to the environment and our wildlife but also to us as citizens. For us to respond effectively, it is going to be essential for us to bring everybody on board. These problems are so complex that it is not possible for just one department to solve them. We need all spheres of government as well as civil society to contribute to the solutions,” Creecy says.

“There are a whole range of areas where we need to see a behaviour change from

our citizens. Single-use plastics are just one example. We understand the challenge they pose to our oceans, and if we want to solve this problem, it is important to make sure people understand the issue, it is then much easier to get their co-operation. We, as the department, want them to stop buying their coffee in plastic containers, for example.”

Plastic Bag Regulations and the plastic bag levy are two mechanisms the government has used to influence consumer behaviour and reduce littering, but this has not proved sufficient.

“The department is currently assessing single-use plastic products—plastic carrier bags, straws, earbuds, crockery and cutlery – and we will be conducting various stakeholder engagements in this regard. But we want to see consumers challenging their favourite stores, we want to see the retailers challenging their suppliers, and we want to see suppliers coming up with real and sustainable solutions. With the proper coordination and consumer action, voluntary change can be a sustainable and cost-effective solution.”

The South African plastics industry is, however, taking these challenges seriously as they look at local innovations to give these products a second, sustainable life amongst others in the building, construction and furniture-making industries.

Putting the youth to work

“We all very concerned about the enormous difficulty young people face when trying to enter the labour market, and that applies not just to people’s level of formal education but also when it comes to gaining the necessary working experience. Our department, in many instances, works in the most marginalised rural areas across the country, working with extremely vulnerable communities where there are very few opportunities for young people to access the labour market,” she says.

This year the department’s Environmental Programmes will create 67 953 work opportunities. With emphasis placed on assisting young people in rural areas to enter the labour market for the first time, 65% of all opportunities will be set aside for those under the age of 35.

“One of our key focus areas is clearing alien vegetation, which is a huge problem. Another program focuses on fires, dealing with both fires that occur in the wild and those that would occur in informal settlements. We employ young people for both of these programs, and we also have young people working in protecting activities and protected areas,” Creecy explains.

“These are all vast programs but going forward we need to look at how to link these youngsters more directly to acquiring skills so that when they finish working in these programs, they are able to access permanent employment opportunities.

“We do find that fire services are happy to recruit them, as well as Sanparks and other provincial conservation agencies. There’s a whole value chain that opens up to them, including tourism.”

The department is currently working on different areas of bioprospecting, including using indigenous plants for cosmetic and pharmaceutical purposes. This project works specifically with women in an effort to uplift and upskill them, while also working towards a common goal of making these industries more sustainable.

“To optimise the economic, development and job creation potential of our indigenous plant wealth, initiatives like the BioProducts Advancement Network South Africa (BioPANZA) are aimed at working with industry, and conservation to ensure rural women in particular benefit from both the intellectual property rights of indigenous knowledge systems and the cultivation and harvesting of indigenous plants,” says Creecy.

The department has also set ambitious targets to transform the biodiversity economy during this sixth administration. As part of the national stimulus package, they are supporting 107 projects with infrastructure such as game fencing, water reticulation, game donations, training and capacity building for new and emerging game farmers.

“There is also a lot of work going into transforming the wildlife industry. Traditionally private lodges would not be owned and managed by black people, so transformation is a priority for us,” she says.

Preserving natural wealth for future generations, the department is also hoping to introduce two new national parks, the first being a new, 140 000-hectare national park around the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) in



More than two million South Africans are directly dependent on natural resources and the natural environment for their income



“We all very concerned about the enormous difficulty young people face when trying to enter the labour market”



“We must also consider our energy security and understand that we can’t indirectly contribute to job loss in our efforts to tackle climate change”

“South Africa has been declared one of 30 driest countries in the world. We know from WWF that more than 50% of our water resources come from 700 catchment areas. Our wetlands and estuaries also play a crucial role in flood management. Accordingly, we are working with other affected departments and entities on a joint Wetlands Framework to improve wetland protection, management and conservation in an integrated manner.”

When it comes to food security, climate change will also play a significant role. Scientific evidence suggests that a rise in temperature would impact very seriously on the agriculture sector, and this is a consequence that South Africa simply cannot afford.

“This country is a signatory of the Paris Agreement which nationally determines our contribution to carbon gas emissions. We need to see declining emissions but getting there is a complex process for all concerned. We must also consider our energy security and understand that we can’t indirectly contribute to job loss in our efforts to tackle climate change. This transition does, however, have the potential for new technology and new economic growth areas, but we must look at how to invest now the appropriate research and development to open up those industries and increase jobs,” Creecy says.

Promoting the Aquaculture Focus Area has become crucial as the country’s fish stocks become more limited. The initial target of 24 projects has been exceeded, and there are now 37 aquaculture projects with 26 in production. These aquaculture projects include marine species and inland freshwater fish. Over 16 Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) have been empowered.

“Approximately R1.2 billion has been invested in Operation Phakisa aquaculture projects of which government has invested R260 million and 2 030 direct jobs have been created. The Aquaculture Development Bill is also currently in the Parliamentary process, and we hope that this will further advance the aquaculture sector,” she says.

“I’m hoping that we can look for ways to enhance coastal communities. These projects are, however, very complex and capital intensive because our seas are so rough. These projects are happening next to the sea in tanks, which makes them much costlier.”

Following on a recent Fisheries forum with all of the relevant stakeholders, Creecy has also

the Northern Cape. This new park will provide a combination of science, nature, education and recreational experiences that will offer new opportunities for employment and empowerment to local communities.

Water and Food Security a priority

The Working for Water Programme is aimed at improving our water security through the control of invasive plants in our catchments and

wetlands. According to Creecy, recent research estimates that the protection and clearing of these catchment areas can increase our water supply by as much as one-sixth, at a fraction of the cost of projects such as desalination.

“The programme has cleared and maintained almost 3.5 million hectares of land. This year work is being intensified in both our key catchment and wetland areas with 190 wetlands scheduled for repair,” she says.

decided to review the FRAPP 2020 process which will see the re-issuing of licenses for 12 of the 22 fisheries.

“I invited all stakeholders to come to this meeting as we are in the process of taking over this portfolio. From what we understand so far, it a very complicated area involving a whole range of interest groups and stakeholders, from the big players through to the small and medium players, and of course the coastal communities. We understand that it has already been a long process aimed at trying to transform the sector, but we still have a situation where have the insiders and outsiders—those wanting to participate but are unable to- and of course you also have the problem where communities are the last to benefit,” she says.

“The forum gave all those involved grounds to raise concerns and issues with me. The small fisheries and coastal communities were the most vocal. I decided to put a halt on the process so that we can make sure that statutory bodies are established, and the necessary research is done. We can’t give licences until we essentially know what is under those waves.”

Creecy says that there were also concerns raised by the industry around the rules of the process, insisting that those rules must be open and transparent.

“In the past, the department has faced extensive litigation, so they must be appropriately established, the process must be both fair and open, promoting transformation and ensuring more sustainable solutions to the issue of livelihoods for the many coastal communities involved.

The Oceans Economy

South Africa has a coastline of approximately 3 000 km, which extends to around 3 900 km when including Marion and Prince Edward Island in the Southern Ocean.

It boasts a vast ocean space of 1.5 million square kilometres, larger than the land surface, and this provides massive potential for economic opportunities.

“I think the South African government has decided that the oceans economy is a critical area of focus in terms of meeting our growth and employment objectives. South Africa is very strategically located geographically and politically both in terms of our location in world trade routes and in terms of our natural resources, which provide a lot of opportunities. The thinking is that by 2033, this sector of the

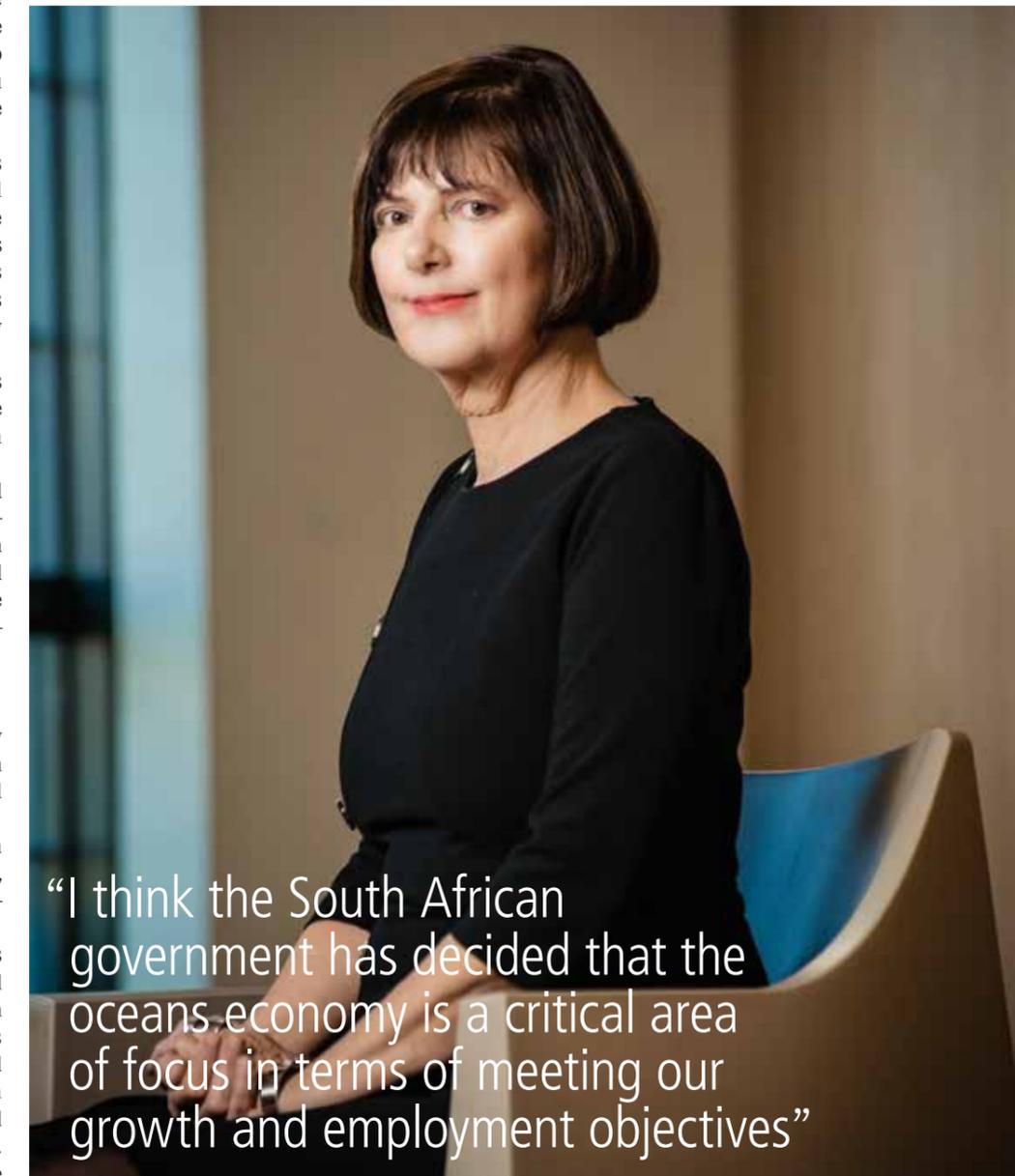
economy will generate R177 billion in terms of GDP and create one million jobs,” she says.

In March 2014 Cabinet approved the piloting of the Malaysian Big Fast Results (BFR) methodology (named ‘Operation Phakisa’ in South Africa) which was first implemented by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) to unlock the economic potential of South Africa’s oceans.

The planning phase of the Oceans Economy Operation Phakisa took place in Durban during

July and August 2014 and resulted in the production of detailed delivery plans. Now firmly in the implementation phase, which involves monitoring and project managing the implementation of these plans, the department has established an Oceans Economy Secretariat to coordinate and manage the application.

The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation has the responsibility for monitoring and reporting, and Delivery Units have been established in focus area departments to ensure



“I think the South African government has decided that the oceans economy is a critical area of focus in terms of meeting our growth and employment objectives”

that the detailed plans are implemented, and issues are addressed or escalated for resolution.

“Six growth areas, with lead departments in each area, have been prioritised to contribute to unlocking the economic potential of South Africa’s oceans, based on their potential contribution to economic growth and job creation, namely: Marine Transport and Manufacturing led by the Department of Transport; Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration led by the Department of Mineral Resources; Aquaculture guided by the Department of Agriculture; Marine Protection Services and Ocean Governance guided by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries; Small Harbours Development led by the Department of Public Works; and Coastal and Marine Tourism led by the Department of Tourism.

Cross-cutting strategies support these six focus areas in the areas of skills development and capacity building led by the Department of Higher Education and Training through the establishment of the South African International Maritime Institute (SAIMI); and Research, Technology and Innovation conducted by the Department of Science and Technology.

The oceans economy contributed R54 billion to GDP in 2010 and 316 000 jobs in nine ocean sectors. Preliminary projections over the next five years indicate a GDP contribution of R143 billion, i.e. 4.5%, with approximately 799 213 new posts to be created, assuming steady growth in these sectors.

Despite the weaker South African economic outlook, Operation Phakisa has to date secured investments of R294 billion and created 7351 direct jobs in six ocean sectors - excluding value chain jobs - since October 2014.

“These investments have been mainly in infrastructure development, mainly in the ports, marine manufacturing—boatbuilding, aquaculture and scientific and seismic surveys in the oil and gas sector, with some jobs in coastal and marine tourism, small harbours development and marine protection services and ocean governance.

“The empowerment of women, the youth and small, medium and micro enterprises will remain a focus in the implementation of initiatives within the oceans economy,” Creecy says.

The Marine Transport and Manufacturing focus area has secured a total of just over R92 billion in investments from government and the private sector, creating 4 589 jobs to date. This includes the R561 million spent by the

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) since the commencement of Operation Phakisa on upgrading the current ship repair facilities in our national ports.

Completed projects include the Saldanha Offshore Supply Base Berth, the Durban Outer Caisson, the Durban Concrete Repairs, and the Port Elizabeth Boat Hoist and Lead-in Jetties. The Electrical upgrade and Crane Rails for East London Dry Dock have been completed. The TNPA has also provided for an additional R2.7 billion over the next two years for further upgrades, and several projects are in the tender phase.

“In addition to job creation, thirteen SMME’s have been created and sustained. The Cape Town Cruise Terminal had been completed and is being managed and operated by the V&A Waterfront in the Port of Cape Town and the tender for the Durban Cruise Terminal had been awarded. This will enhance coastal and marine tourism even more and create much-needed jobs in these communities,” she says.

“In addition, the building of specialised super tugboats at our shipyards as part of an R1.522 billion project demonstrates our capacity and capability to build specialised vessels locally. Eight of the nine tugboats have already been delivered as part of this project, and 500 jobs have been created.”

The South African Navy’s complex and specialised hydrographic survey vessel to map the seafloor is also currently being built by Southern African Shipyards, with an investment of approximately R1.8 billion for the project.

Two companies, Amsol and Damen Shipyards, have completed the offshore diamond mining vessels for De Beers to the tune of R150 million and these vessels are operating on the West coast. Damen Shipyards were also awarded the tender to build three inshore patrol vessels for the Navy.

Smaller players have been awarded tenders to build workboat ferries for the Navy, highlighting our capacity and capability in building these specialised vessels,” she says.

The new Sunrise Energy Liquid Petroleum Gas Facility, in the Port of Saldanha Bay, through a concession issued by the Transnet National Ports Authority, has also commenced operation. The construction of the Offshore Supply Base Berth at the port has been completed as part of the establishment of Saldanha Bay as an offshore oil and gas and marine manufacturing support hub.

“To further enhance the maritime sector, the Comprehensive Maritime Transport Policy has been finalised and is currently being implemented. The South African Oceans Economy value proposition to create awareness of South Africa’s oceans economy and opportunities for investment and maritime business is being actively promoted in Africa and across the world.

In the Offshore Oil and Gas focus area, 16 exploration rights, six production rights and two technical cooperation permits have been issued, including transformational targets. The establishment of an Incident Management Organisation for joint government and industry response drills, in cases of oil spillage or accidents, is far advanced.

“The recent discovery of offshore gas in the Outeniqua basin will also certainly contribute to the gas and energy demands of South Africa,” she says.

The Marine Protection and Oceans Governance focus area has created jobs through the National Oceans and Coast Water Quality Management initiative, which includes the National Pollution Laboratory (NPL).

“The NPL was established, hosted and operated by the Walter Sisulu University (WSU) Mthatha Campus, and water quality sampling has commenced.

“In October last year cabinet approved a network of 20 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that are representative of South Africa’s rich coastal and ocean biodiversity, and our department has been entrusted to proceed with the gazetting process.

“This will increase ocean protection within the South African Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) from 0.4% to 5.4%.”

The Marine Spatial Planning Bill has been sent to President Ramaphosa for approval, and this will form the basis for decision-making and orderly access and management of the ocean space, with the aim to reduce user conflict in future.

The Oceans and Coastal Information System (OCIMS) has already proved to be an invaluable tool, providing vessel tracking which has resulted in the apprehension of vessels involved in illegal activities in South African waters, as well as the early detection of harmful algal blooms, or red tides.

“This has had a positive impact on the West Coast Rock Lobster industry. New applications for this tool are currently being developed

—including sea rescue and coastal planning to address climate change impacts,” Creecy says.

The Coastal and Marine Tourism detailed plans are currently being implemented. The goal is to grow a world-class and sustainable coastal and marine tourism destination that leverages South Africa’s competitive advantages in nature, culture, and heritage, with the potential to contribute over R21.4 billion to GDP and create 116 000 jobs by the year 2026.

“Projects are being implemented across six identified nodes, namely Durban and surrounds; the UMkhanyakude District including uMhlabuyalingana and surrounds, also in KwaZulu-Natal; Port St Johns to Coffee Bay in the Eastern Cape; East London, Port Elizabeth and surrounds; Cape Town and surrounds in the Western Cape; and the West Coast and surrounds in the Northern Cape,” she says.

“The Blue Flag Beaches programme continues to promote our coast and currently creates 200 jobs a year with an investment of R164 million over three years. Transformation in the boat-based whale watching and shark cage diving industries has also improved from an initial 8% to 85% trading permits allocated to BBBEE applicants.”

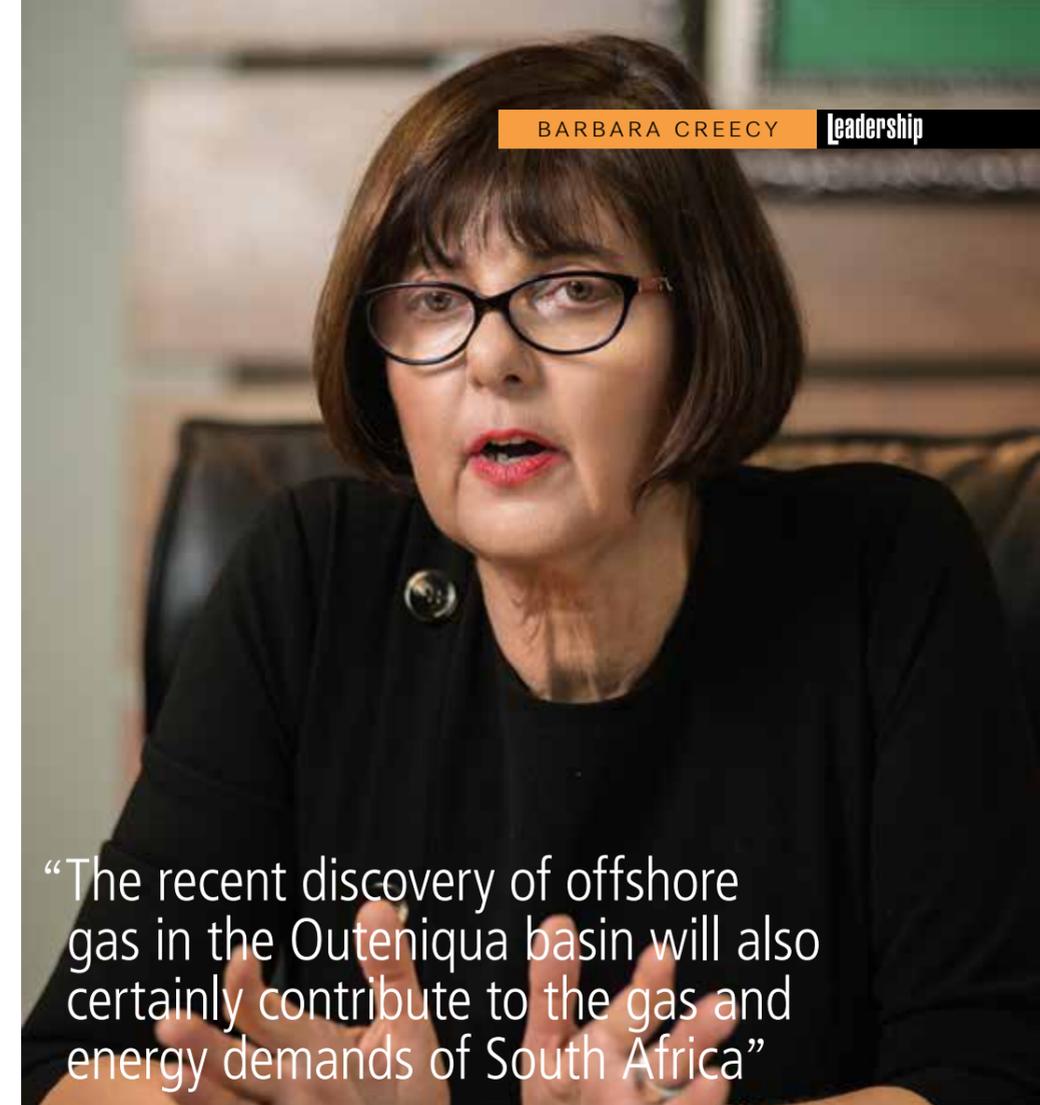
Skills development and capacity building also remain high priorities for government and skills audits have been conducted in the various oceans economy focus areas. Training interventions have been implemented, varying from artisanal training to specialised training, utilising local and international institutions.

“When it comes to research, technology and innovation, we will continue to integrate innovations and technological advances where appropriate in the oceans economy initiatives so that we are prepared for the Fourth Industrial Revolution,” says Creecy.

Women taking the lead

“South Africa as a country now enjoys an environment where 50% of our cabinet is female, and significant steps have been taken to increase the number of women as public representatives. If you were to compare SA with Norway, Sweden, or Denmark, I think it would be fair to say that we are doing better when it comes to gender equality in government. There are other African countries performing as well as us, but certainly not all,” she says.

“As a woman in a position of leadership, I think it’s important never to give up. There will be people who will want you to fail, and some



“The recent discovery of offshore gas in the Outeniqua basin will also certainly contribute to the gas and energy demands of South Africa”

will try and put you down. Forge ahead and keep focused on whatever it is you want to achieve.”

Creecy is one of the longest-serving Members of the Provincial Legislature. She joined the legislature in 1994, and until 2004, served in different portfolios including Deputy Chief Whip as well as Chairperson of the Social Development and Education Committees. In 2004 she was appointed MEC for Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture. After the General Elections in 2009, she moved to the Education portfolio.

Before her current appointment, she served as the MEC for Finance in Gauteng where she was responsible for Gauteng Provincial Treasury, Department of e-Government and an agency called Gauteng Infrastructure Financing Agency.

With over 20 years of experience behind her, Creecy believes that it’s crucial for government to re-establish a service-based leadership, putting people first and remaining accountable.

“I think we have seen a slide away from leadership that is service orientated and accountable to the public. We must be open

and transparent in how we govern, and I think that servant leadership and selfless leadership are important. We need to be re-energised to tackle problems and find new ways to tackle them,” she says.

“I also think that as South Africans we are often hypercritical and hard on ourselves, but it’s critical for us as leaders to articulate our vision of where we want to go, I think that we are sometimes so overwhelmed by immediate problems that we lose sight of where we are going in the long term. And when you don’t know where you are going, any road will take you there. We need to restate the vision of the NDP, creating a society where people don’t go to bed hungry, millions more young people have jobs, and 10-year-olds read for meaning. This is what the government has been about in the past, and it needs to go about being that again. We can achieve this through perseverance, energy and dedication.” ▲

Amanda van den Barg