

**SPEECH BY DAN PLATO**

**OPENING OF THE KHAYELITSHA THUSONG CENTRE**

**3 NOVEMBER 2009**

Premier of the Province of the Western Cape, Helen Zille

Dr Ivan Meyer, MEC for Social Development

Minister in the Office of the Minister President of Bavaria, Mr Siegfried Schneider

Councillors

Thank you for all coming here today to celebrate the opening of this wonderful building. We need to appreciate everything that it provides, and I want to see it being used to its maximum potential.

South Africa has the potential to be an international sporting powerhouse, and it starts here, in a place like this. Sport has always been one of the ways youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds can aspire to international fame and fortune, and many of the world's greatest sports heroes started out at local sports centres very similar to this one.

Sport is going to be a very important part of life in Cape Town in the year ahead of us, and I think it is an opportunity to encourage everyone to get involved in it, even if you know you will never go to the Olympics.

Investing your time in sport will always pay off in terms of health, quality of life and community bonding.

I think it is also important for us as government to recognise how much money we could save on other large expenses by encouraging people to play sport. If it is used properly, this centre can contribute to building a community where there is less sickness and disease, less crime, less substance abuse, and where motivated youth are more likely to make a contribution to their society.

Thank you very much to our partners in the project, the Western Cape Department of Social Development and the German Government, who have helped to make this centre possible.

I want to call on the people of Khayelitsha to look after what they have been given. You often see beautiful big projects like this which fall apart because they are not maintained, or which are vandalised. This centre belongs to you, the people of Khayelitsha, and it is your responsibility to make sure that it benefits everyone in your community for many years to come.

Thank you.