



**MINISTRY
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

MEDIA STATEMENT

28 September 2026

Minister Groenewald Delivers Keynote Address on Day One of the 16th Funda Mzantsi Championship

Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Pieter Groenewald delivered the keynote address during the official opening of the 16th Funda Mzantsi Championship currently taking place in Eden Place Hall in George, Western Cape.

The annual Champions is held in collaboration between the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), National Library of South Africa's (NLSA) Centre for the Book, George Municipality and Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), with the aim of improving and promoting the culture of reading and literacy skills amongst South African communities.

All participants from various community book clubs, university students, school pupils, including a total of 296 offenders will lock horns in an effort to identify the winners in Book Review, Reading, Debate and Spelling Bee.

In his keynote address, Minister Groenewald encouraged the audience to honour the power of words. He indicated that the Championship is a direct contribution towards inclusive and supportive communities. The Minister acknowledged the improvement in literacy levels amongst offenders and thanked communities for contributing towards the social reintegration of offenders through their participation in the Championship.

He further reminded the audience that DCS does not only detain inmates but rehabilitate them. "We believe in restoring dignity and providing offenders with a chance to transform their lives" He appreciated Funda Mzantsi for providing the opportunity to give hope which in many ways, aligns perfectly with DCS goals.

Minister Groenewald wished all participants success for the remainder of the week. He applauded all participants for their courage and commitment towards a course that will impact their lives positively.

The championship will draw closing curtains and announce the winners on Friday, 02 October 2026 through the promotion of accelerating access to information for all.

ENDS.

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