

ANC scores one out of seven for promises kept since elections – The Citizen, 8 August 2019

23

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Africa Check’s [Promise Tracker](#) keeps tabs on election commitments by ruling parties in [South Africa](#), [Kenya](#) and [Nigeria](#).

South Africa’s ruling party, the [African National Congress](#), won [57.5% of the vote](#) in the 2019 national election. We tracked seven promises it made five years ago, in its 2014 election manifesto, and found it had kept just one.

Africa Check chose the seven promises based on their potential impact on citizens’ lives and whether there was data available to track them. Our findings are therefore a snapshot – not a complete assessment – of the party’s performance in making good on its promises.

The one promise the party has kept is to “open two new universities to students in the next five years”.

In February 2014, [Sol Plaatje University](#) in Kimberley in the Northern Cape province and the [University of Mpumalanga](#) in Nelspruit opened their doors to students.

Here we summarise the six promises the party did not keep. Read the full versions on our [promise tracker](#).

Note: We asked three ANC officials – by phone, WhatsApp, SMS and email – for comment on our findings, but had received no response at the time of publication. We will update this report if the party does respond.

Promise tracker timeline

Note: The ANC’s 2014 manifesto was released on 11 January and the election held on 7 May. Government reporting keeps to financial years. We tracked the party’s five-year progress in keeping its promises from 1 April 2014, the start of the 2014/15 financial year, to 31 March 2019, the end of the 2018/19 financial year.

1. Promise: [Between 2014 and 2019] the ANC will massively expand public works programmes to create 6 million work opportunities.

Verdict: Broken

A “work opportunity” is paid work on any of South Africa’s expanded public works programme (EPWP) projects. The programme [aims](#) to provide “poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed”.

Work opportunities can run for any period of time, but typically last a few months.

A total of 4,522,288 EPWP opportunities were created in the five years from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019, according to the department of public works and infrastructure.

But if the same person gets work on different projects, each period of employment is counted as a work opportunity. This could mean fewer than 4,522,288 people benefited from the programme.

The ANC missed its target by close to 1.5 million work opportunities (15%).

2. Promise: We will eliminate the backlog of title deeds.

Verdict: Broken

In 2014, the backlog to transfer government-subsidised property to beneficiaries was estimated to be 900,000 to 1.5 million.

This was updated to 818,057 in the department of human settlements' revised strategic plan for 2015 to 2020. The backlog was made up of 83,628 title deeds from before 1994 and 734,429 from after 1994.

From April 2014 to March 2019, a total of 279,821 backlog title deeds were issued, according to the department of planning, monitoring and evaluation.

The number for April 2018 to March 2019 (61,557) is preliminary.

In its 2019 manifesto, the ANC again promised to “address” the remaining backlog.

3. Promise: An additional 1.6 million homes will be connected to the electricity grid [between 2014 and 2019].

Verdict: Broken

A total of 1,285,178 households were connected to the electricity grid in the five years from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019, according to the department of mineral resources and energy.

Connections installed from April 2018 to March 2019 are provisional. The confirmed number will be published in the department's annual report, which it said was being finalised at the time of writing.

The provisional total for the five years is 314,822 (20%) short of the promised 1.6 million additional households.

4. Promise: [Between 2014 and 2019] a further 1.3 million homes will be installed with solar water heaters, bringing the total to 1.75 million homes, covering more than 7 million South Africans.

Verdict: Broken

At the start of 2014/15, 400,046 solar water heaters had been installed.

To keep this promise, the government should have installed at least another 1.3 million solar water heaters by the end of the 2018/19 financial year.

Department of energy (now mineral resources and energy) annual reports record that only 36,190 solar water heaters were installed, and only in the first two of the five years.

The number for 2018/19 – the final year – is not available. The department has failed to respond to Africa Check’s enquiries since January 2019.

In January, the national treasury told Africa Check that “thousands of units” had been manufactured but were being stored in warehouses. “The department is best placed to provide reasons for the delays. It is envisaged that these units will be installed in households over the medium term.”

In April, former energy minister Jeff Radebe [said](#) 87,206 units had been procured and 200 installed during a pilot project.

In July, Bavelile Hlongwa, the deputy minister of mineral resources and energy, [said](#) it had “taken a few years to turn around the programme, which was beset by a number of challenges”.

We rate this promise as broken because even if the 87,206 procured units had been installed in 2018/19, the department would still not be close to the target in the ANC promise.

5. Promise: [Between 2014 and 2019] the ANC will establish a National Health Insurance Fund.

Verdict: Broken

The National Health Insurance (NHI) Fund would buy services from healthcare providers and deliver them to the public, who would not have to pay at the point of care.

It has not been set up in the five years since the start of the 2014/15 financial year.

The department of health’s [annual performance plan for 2019/20 to 2021/22](#) says it will be established in 2020/21.

Dr Anban Pillay, deputy director-general for the NHI, said the delay was due to the legislative process and the related need for consultation, which was “extensive” in South Africa. The NHI Bill has to become law before the fund can be established.

Pillay told Africa Check that the target date for establishing the fund was not set in stone because it depended on the parliamentary process, over which the department had no control.

In its [2019 election manifesto](#), the ANC again promised to “create a publicly administered NHI Fund”.

6. Promise: The number of people on antiretrovirals will be doubled from the present 2.4 million to 4.6 million by 2016.

Verdict: Broken

Some 3.8 million HIV-positive people were on antiretrovirals at the end of March 2017, according to the department of health's [2016/2017](#) annual report.

This is about 770 000 (17%) short of the ANC's promised target.