

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE ASSEMBLY : FRIDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2016

This past Sunday after reading the Sunday Times I was quite despondent! We are living in very difficult times in this country and the paper on Sunday was just bad news from front to back cover! From the “fees must fall” campaign, to the efforts of the powers that be to get rid of the Minister of Finance at such a crucial and vulnerable time for our economy, state capture, corruption - things are pretty gloomy. You boys know that I am fundamentally an optimist and believe in this country and its future, so this was a big challenge for me to find some kind of silver lining in the midst of the doom and gloom! I also encourage you to read the website www.sagoodnews.co.za which features many positive stories about South Africa. Of course every fortnight in Assembly we enjoy the Bishops Good News which is always uplifting.

My inspiration came in the form of a video sent to me by my younger brother who runs our family farm in the Eastern Cape. I must apologise for the relatively poor quality of the video but I think you will get the gist of it. (Please follow this u-tube link for the video <https://youtu.be/bw953gtR5ic>).

What an amazing story. Just to recap on the video. The scene is a shearing shed on a farm in the Eastern Cape. The farmer has a relatively small herd of sheep, 1100. He hires a shearing gang called Sowenza Shearers owned by Isaac who you saw in action in the video. Let me repeat the amazing skill and stamina of Isaac. He shears a sheep in 52 seconds and shears 240 sheep a day. Those of you who have tried to shear a sheep will know what backbreaking and physical work this is. His skill is absolutely superb, no accidental cutting of the sheep and you can see how well he handled them in a potentially traumatic experience for the animal. He has been the world champion twice and SA champion seven times.

This story of this amazing man with his fantastic skill in rural Eastern Cape inspired me and has certainly helped me lift a bit of the negativity of the week gone by. It is a reminder that this country has such a wonderful and rich variety of people with amazing skills, many of whom we never hear about, such as Isaac. If only we could learn to appreciate, celebrate and embrace the rich diversity of people and skills we have for the greater good of our nation - we would be unstoppable! Have a wonderful weekend and good luck for the weekend sport!