

Winde praises innovative Citrusdal bridge for defying 200-year flood

An unlikely hero has emerged from the subsiding floodwaters of the Western Cape.

Issued by [Cape Chamber](#)

4 Jun



It's a bridge, still standing across a notorious stretch of the Olifants River outside Citrusdal despite a 200-year flood that destroyed almost everything else in its path.

Citrusdal, for once, didn't have to wait for a major road repair in the wake of the latest severe storm as the bridge held where countless others did not.

The engineering triumph has garnered high praise. But what few people realise is that it was not built off-site and transported into place by a project team with the specific intent of surviving the annual deluge. And the plan worked.

The success story featured at the Western Cape Economy Innovation Awards, during an address by Provincial Premier Alan Winde. "That bridge washes away every single year. This year, that bridge is still standing," Winde said during his closing remarks.

"It was built off-site and moved on-site."

He said the bridge illustrated the huge positive impact of innovation on the economic ecosystem. "We have to embed innovation in everything we do," Winde said.

The latest storm to batter the Western Cape left a trail of extensive infrastructure damage, displaced thousands of residents, and severely disrupted regional agricultural supply chains. In an area heavily reliant on citrus exports, the financial toll of damaged roads and washed-out crops during these recurring weather events poses an ongoing threat to local livelihoods.

Situated adjacent to the Olifants River, Citrusdal has suffered a repetitive history of being entirely cut off from the outside world when the river bursts its banks.

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