

did you know...

1. The State of the Nation Address is one of the most important events on South Africa's parliamentary and national calendar?
2. The State of the Nation Address is also commonly known as the "Opening of Parliament".
3. During an elections year, two State of the Nation Addresses are delivered; One, before the final session of the outgoing Parliament, and the other, after the elections when the new Parliament has been formed.
4. Parliament is located in Cape Town.
5. The State of the Nation Address takes place at a Joint Sitting of Parliament's two houses, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces.
6. It is one of the rare occasions when the three arms of State, the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature come together for an occasion.
7. During the speech, the President talks about the government's achievements of the past year and its programme for the coming year.
8. As part of the ceremony, Civil Guards of Honour are lined along the red carpet to welcome the President.
9. Members of the public, representing each of the Provinces, are selected to participate in the Civil Guard of Honour.
10. Learners are selected to participate in the Junior Guard of Honour.
11. The Address by the President is debated by the two Houses of Parliament after the State of the Nation Address.
12. The political parties have an opportunity to state their opinions and raise questions after the President's Address.
13. The President has an opportunity to respond to matters arising from the debate on his opening address.
14. The State of the Nation Address is broadcast live on television and radio to encourage public involvement.
15. Certain ceremonial traditions take place including a mounted police escort and a military escort.
16. Before the President enters the National Assembly Chamber to deliver his address, he takes the national salute on a podium outside the National Assembly building.
17. A flypast by the South African Air Force and a 21-gun salute takes place while the President takes the salute.