

# DPW AWARDS BURSARIES TO 40 DESERVING LEARNERS

By Nolwazi Ndhlovu

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,” said Public Works Minister T W Nxesi in the words of the late Tata Nelson Mandela.

He was speaking during the annual ceremony held on Friday, 15 January 2016, in Pretoria, where he awarded 40 bursaries to deserving learners of the Matric class of 2015.

The R4.8m worth of bursaries was awarded to learners interested in studying for careers in the built and property industries. These learners were selected from schools across 7 different provinces that are participating in the DPW’s Schools Programme.

In his address during the event, Minister Nxesi said the Department of Public Works had a clear and strategic long-term interest in, and commitment to, technical and professional training in the Built Environment – both to rebuild the professional capacity of the Department and to contribute to scarce skills required in the Built Environment generally.

He said the task of building capacity becomes more urgent as the country embarks on a massive National Infrastructure Plan as part of the National Development Plan. “We need to remind ourselves - that the money spent on the education of our children is not simply another expenditure and therefore a drain on the fiscus. Rather, it must be seen as an investment in the lives of the learners, in the economy, and in the future well-being of the society as a whole,” said the Minister.

The recipients of the bursaries will pursue careers in Engineering, Quantity surveying, Property Valuation, Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Town Planning.

One recipient who is the shining star of the class on 2015 is Ms Zintle Mtsheke from a rural town in the Eastern Cape, who plans to study Chemical Engineering at the University of Cape-Town. She matriculated from Mpondombini Secondary School, and received 7 distinctions in isiXhosa Home Language, English 1st additional

language, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Life sciences and Life Orientation. Growing up having to survive on her grandparent's grant, she describes herself the luckiest girl in the world. "I feel so honoured and important. I cherish every moment and opportunity presented to me by the Department of Public Works. The hardest thing about being a young woman, is feeling comfortable, because people will always talk and undermine you. So young women need to learn to stand their ground, especially women pursuing careers in the built and property industries," said the aspiring Chemical Engineer.

"The DPW's Schools Programme displays the Department's commitment to the development of young people. It also helps the Department in fulfilling its mandate of being the state's handyman that maintains and manages the states immovable assets and infrastructure. This investment in the youth will help increase the scarce skills pool and properly equip the youth with resources that will help them become active economic citizens," said Minister Nxesi in a media statement.