

# DPW Spends R53 million on Tertiary Education

By Sharone Ndhlovu

The Department of Public Works (DPW) continues to help increase the number of young people entering the built industry by providing higher education bursaries to deserving learners. To date, R53 million has been spent by DPW to assist learners in the built environment and engineering fields.

The Department – through its Human Capital Investment (HCI) unit, which assists graduates with career development skills hosted a bursary award ceremony in January 2018 in Pretoria, to hand over bursaries to 30 students. DPW awarded each learner a bursary worth R130.000 per year to cover tuition fees, accommodation, meals, transport, stationary and a monthly allowance.

In three years, 246 bursaries have been awarded to students, and of these, 103 have been awarded to female learners. Furthermore, 30 of the previous year's DPW bursary holders that have now graduated are expected to join the Department in 2018 for an Internship Programme, which will provide learners with practical work experience and give them a head start in the professional environment.

Bongane Sithole from the class of 2017 is one of the top learners who obtained 7 distinctions in his subjects including Mathematics and Physical Science from Inkomazi Secondary School in Mangweni, Komatipoort, Mpumalanga. Bongane was raised by his grandmother. He has explained how life wasn't easy while growing up and that he is the first person in his family to be going to university. "I am very glad and thankful for the bursary," said Bongane who is going to Wits University to study Electrical Engineering and conclude his studies with Masters.

DPW's Young Professionals Programme helps assist bursary holders get adequate practical experience after the completion of their studies. The candidates are also given professional help that will assist them to be registered as professionals in their respective fields and get absorbed in the Department as employees.

Public Works Minister Mr Nkosinathi Nhleko said the programme should be understood to be a contribution from his Department towards building the nation and that he hopes more and more state and non-state role players will continue working with the Department to further help other children through educational programmes such as the Young Professionals Programme.