

## **The DPWI has paid for the tertiary education of over 500 young South Africans**

By Andile Xulu

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), through its Bursary Programme, has since 2014, paid for the tertiary education of 524 young South Africans pursuing a degree in a built environment course. The DPWI Bursary Programme forms part of the Department's Skills Pipeline Programme, where pupils who excel in mathematics and science are encouraged at a secondary school level, to start considering careers in the built environment. The programme aims to bridge the gap between delivering the mandate of the department and the shortage of professionals in the architectural, construction and engineering fields.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2023, DPWI hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> annual bursary awards ceremony, where Minister Patricia de Lille awarded this year's chosen group of matriculants. The event that was held in Menlyn, Pretoria, saw 72 recently matriculated pupils from all parts of the country, receive their bursary to pursue their studies in the Architectural, Construction or Engineering field. The value of each bursary is estimated at R165 000 per student per year, depending on the students' entire years living, learning and travelling costs. This amount covers among others: tuition, accommodation, meals, textbooks, laptop, books, excursions and monthly stipend.

During her address, Minister Patricia De Lille, said to the learners; "Use this opportunity wisely, walk this journey with us to become the best engineers and architects who will soon be a part of building an important project for our country and for our people." Minister Patricia de Lille elaborated by saying investing in the education of young people is one of the most important investments that the Department can make to secure more skilled professionals to help build South Africa.

The minister continued to say; "72 learners have received bursaries, but many out there have not been as fortunate. Grab this opportunity with both hands and align with it. It is not going to be easy but continue with your hard work. If you are prepared to work hard, you can achieve anything."

One of the bursary recipients, who gave the vote of thanks, on behalf of all the recipients, is Ms Aphiwe Ngwane, from Zwelonke Secondary School, in KwaZulu-Natal. She expressed gratitude to the department for this opportunity. “Your work and dedication to us (the recipients) is truly amazing. We are truly honoured to be here receiving your full support, indeed ***umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*** (a Zulu phrase when loosely translated into English, means ‘*a human being is a human because of other human beings*’. It is an expression that points to a sense of belonging to a collective);” said Aphiwe.

Mr Sbu Khanyile, one of the schools principals, who attended the ceremony also gave a thank you note to the department. The principal from Lamontville Secondary School praised the department for the beautiful work done throughout the provinces. “Thank you for those annual winter camps, thank you for all the bursaries that you have given out thus far. Thank you for visiting our schools in the whole of South Africa, and congratulations to the class of 2022;” he said.