



67 MINUTES: WHERE HANDS MET SOIL AND HEARTS MET PURPOSE

Article by Tseke Masemola, Pictures by Caroline Mokotedi

The 2025 Mandela Day message was clear as the atmosphere emphasised "Your past may shape your story, but it does not define your future." On 18 July 2025, the Minister of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) honoured Nelson Mandela Day through a powerful visit to The Life-Changing Garden at the MES Safe Space in Bellville, Cape Town.

DPWI Minister Dean Macpherson was supported by the acting DDG: Corporate Services, Carmen-Joy Abrahams, DDG: Intergovernmental Relations, Adam Mthombeni, Chief Director: Gender, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Dr Mveleli Gqwede, and the Head of the Property Management Trading Entity (PMTE), Siza Sibande. The visit symbolised the department's continued commitment to community development under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). From planting fresh produce, to assisting in plastic and tin waste sorting, and exploring organic composting projects, the DPWI leadership showed their dedication to building practical solutions for vulnerable communities.

Minister Macpherson praised MES, describing them as "heroes of the community." He applauded their efforts to uplift individuals recovering from addiction, and those struggling due to homelessness, saying "We value the work you are doing, serving others should be the first priority."

MES's partnership with DPWI extends far beyond charity and indicates significant systemic support. Through community gardening, soup-kitchens, and sustainability projects, the initiative offers a second chance to those who have been abandoned and felt neglected in their time of need. This year's Mandela Day call to "Identify those in need around you" is in fact a challenge to recognise, to impact, and to restore. This reminding us that true service means standing alongside the vulnerable, not above them.



Issued by Chief Directorate: Communications & Marketing

Editor: Nolwazi Ndhlovu, Design & Layout: Tseke Masemola