

# Rats rule the roost in parly

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DENISE WILLIAMS 22/04/13

RATS are taking to the parliamentary arena, causing widespread anger and fear.

At 100 Plein Street, one of the buildings in the parliamentary precinct, rats are scouring the floors and wreaking havoc as they chew on telephone wires. They have even welcomed a staffer with droppings on the desk.

Last Friday, offices on the first floor in the media section of the building were decked out with poison and traps to curb what has been described by many as an infestation.

There have also been reports that the rats have set their sights on the decision-makers, with some targeting Tuynhuys, the official Cape Town residence of President Jacob Zuma, and the Marks building, where the MPs are housed.

However, MPs contacted said they were generally happy with the cleanliness of their building.

ANC MP Raseriti Tau said there had been some complaints over the cleanliness of the ablution facilities but concerns were always addressed.

The thought of a burgeoning rat population sent shivers down COPE MP Dennis Bloem's spine.

"I'm very scared of a rat. I'm telling the honest truth. If I have seen a rat the first thing I must do is leave [parliament] so that they can do away with it. If it is the truth [that there is an infestation] I will be one person that will get very much worried," he said.

IFP Chief Whip Koos van der Merwe quipped: "The only rats I've seen are some ANC MPs."

Department of Public Works spokesman Thami Mchunu said they were not aware of a "so-called" rat infestation.

"A few years ago we embarked on a programme of installing cardboard rat traps inside buildings and external tamperproof traps at various areas around the parliament complex. These are serviced every four weeks. The previous infestation problem was eradicated," he said.