

Excited students awarded bursaries

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THE excitement on 18-year-old Junior Nkuna's face was visible at the prospect of studying at Wits University when he received a bursary from the Department of Public Works on Friday.

He was one of 40 recipients of the bursaries awarded by Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi at a ceremony held at Saint George's Hotel in Centurion. All recipients were identified from schools adopted by the department in a programme which started in 2013 and which was initially set up by the department to promote maths and science.

The students will go to institutions of higher learning when they open in the next few weeks.

They will study in different fields such as engineering, analytical chemistry, construction, project management, quantity surveying, architecture, actuarial science and property management.

Nkuna said he was happy that he would eventually start a journey towards the career of his dreams. He will be studying towards a Bachelors degree in civil engineering.

"I was so happy when I received a call from the department. I was excited to have been chosen to receive a bursary," he said.

He would be going into a four-year course. He promised he would work hard to achieve his goals. The awarding of the bursaries coincided with a programme to acknowledge the good work done by previous bursary beneficiaries. Among the 33 former beneficiaries who attended the



Minister of Public Works Thulas Nxesi and Mpumalanga MEC for Transport Sasekani Manzini hand over a bursary to Junior Nkuna of Mamelodi High School.

event was 29-year-old quantity surveyor Matlotlo Molepo, who was applauded by Nxesi for her dedication in the building and construction sector.

Together with the others, Molepo was employed by the department after completing her studies. She expressed gratitude to the department for giving her a chance to follow her dreams by funding her universities studies.

Nxesi said the bursary scheme was part of the department's seven-year plan to develop the department in line with the National Development Plan. He said they wanted to transform the built environment profession to reflect the demographics of in the industry, which only had 25% black

professionals and less than 10% females across all races.

"While we are on the subject of equity, I also need to know that effort is being made to attract and support learners and students living with disabilities," said Nxesi. The programme was made in conjunction with Unisa, the University of Pretoria, the Outlook Foundation and the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement.

Nxesi said it was important to recognise that money spent on the students was an investment in their lives and the economy. Last year the department funded 163 to study at various universities and 59 of them had completed their studies.