

Inspectors fear sacking

Spokesperson denies retrenchments during ‘reclaiming’ of Public Works mandate

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PUBLIC works inspectors, already involved in a eight-year pay spat with their bosses at the KZN Department of Public Works, fear they may be sacked in a restructuring later this month.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, two of the 107 public works inspectors employed by the department told *The Witness* that they have been engaging with legal counsel and the Bargaining Council since 2009.

This after the department had failed to administer the works inspector salary code in the Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD), which provides a salary model for engineering and related functions, and recognises scarce skills in the government.

This meant that the inspectors —

many of whom have engineering qualifications — were being paid the same as ordinary administration staff, where the educational requirements to do their work are much lower than are required to be a public works inspector.

“Many staff members have lodged grievances.

“The department don’t acknowledge the grievance procedure, as is evident by the history of unresolved grievances, and they don’t adhere to any time frame in relation to the grievance procedure,” one of the public works inspectors said.

“Since implementation of the OSD for engineering and related industries, the inspectorate has parted with so many valuable inspectors with years of quality experience that could have contributed to our depart-

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ment’s vision of a thriving economy through infrastructure and property management,” he said.

Mbulelo Baloyi, media liaison officer for Ravi Naidoo, MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works, said a “structural review” would take place at the Department of Public Works this month, but there would be no retrenchments.

He said the review was necessary because the department’s mandate needed “reclaiming” due to changed legislative requirements on infrastructure delivery from National Treasury and the implementation of a so-called “Human Resource Repositioning Model”.

On a question about the pay dispute, Baloyi said the department is guided by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)

in relation to pay and grading of employees.

“General Public Service Sector Bargaining Council Resolution 9 of 2009 excludes works inspectors as a category of staff falling within the Occupational Specific Dispensation. However, the Department of Public Works adopted a DPSA Works Inspector Model in February 2011,” the department said.

Baloyi said the dispute is ongoing.

Public works inspectors manage and conduct physical inspection of buildings; manage construction and maintenance on projects and manage and oversee the works of contractors.

Baloyi said the department might employ additional inspectors this year, depending on the availability of funds.

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