



Samwu members singing and chanting outside the newly built Tshwane House, demanding permanent jobs.

PICTURE: BONGANI SHILUBANE

# Samwu workers stage protest in city

THABISO MAIMELA

THE City of Tshwane does not have any relationship or employment contract with South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) workers who staged a protest outside Tshwane House yesterday.

City of Tshwane spokesperson Lindela Mashigo said the workers, who were formerly part of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), embarked on the protest and demanded to see management without having asked permission.

"We were not informed of the protest and the issues they were

coming to raise. Had they done so, we would have been present to hear their grievances. Currently, there is no relationship between the city and the workers. The city is, however, open to discussions with the workers' representatives," he said.

Workers who formed part of the Vat Alles operation marched through the city and later protested outside Tshwane House, demanding permanent jobs and claiming they had not been paid.

Samwu representative Annah Ntuli said this was not the first time workers had not been paid, despite reporting for duty.

"Our workers have been doing their work despite non-payment and we have decided enough is enough. We are here because city representatives who had agreed to meet with us did not even bother to show up."

Ntuli said the union opted to take the legal route to force the city's hand and address issues of workers who had been unfairly dismissed.

John Phaahla said he is struggling to make ends meet, especially regarding rent and account payments. "I am battling to pay my rent every month or even keep up with account payments. I need a permanent job so I can support my chil-

dren, as I am the only breadwinner."

Mashigo, however, stressed permanent jobs have to be available before they can hire anyone. He said for this to take place, a work study needs to be conducted to analyse what skills are required.

He added that regarding to the issue of non-payment, workers must present themselves at work.

"We can't just pay people. There is a process where a worker clocks in and those sheets are taken by the regional executive director, who then forwards them to the relevant finance representatives to pay out the money."