

Masualle in provincial cabinet shake-up firing line

By **ZINE GEORGE**
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PREMIER Phumulo Masualle will know his fate next week, when the ANC's national officials receive a full report on the performance of the ANC-led Bhishe government.

This follows a meeting ANC Eastern Cape ANC officials held with the party's top leaders, including party president Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday.

ANC provincial secretary Lulama Ngcukayitobi confirmed the meeting, saying they were there to recommend a cabinet shake-up, but due to the other pressing national issues it could not be finalised and had to be shelved.

Ngcukayitobi said: "We met the national leaders at Luthuli [House] as expected. They gave us a hearing. The critical thing we were there to do was to present the status quo in terms of provincial government performance.

"The other issue which was unavoidable is the issue of [the provincial] cabinet reconfiguration.

"But because this was our first discussion with them, we had to therefore agree that we need to have a second discussion with them so that if there are clear proposals that we are coming up with, we come with those particular proposals to the national leadership. That is what needs to be done in order to rescue the situation," said Ngcukayitobi.

The Dispatch can reveal today that in the firing line is Masualle as premier, health MEC Phumeza Dyantyi, agrarian reform and traditional affairs MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane, social development MEC Nancy Sihlwayi, education MEC Mandla Makupula, roads and public works MEC Thandiswa Marawu, as well as finance and economic affairs and tourism MEC Sakhumzi Somyo, whose department is likely to be divided in two.

But Ngcukayitobi warned against speculating about names at this stage, saying that would be tantamount to prejudging issues. "We can't handpick individuals and say



GARNERING SUPPORT: Eastern Cape Premier Phumulo Masualle embarked on his pre-state of the province address engagements this week, visiting the community of Maqanyeni in Nyandeni local municipality. Among the delegation with Masualle is, left, Mlibo Qoboshiyane, MEC for rural development and agrarian reform.

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Picture: MANDLA NDUNA

this particular one will be affected and that one won't. It can affect the entire legislative leadership and government legislative. It's a real configuration.

"The intention is to have a buy-in and input from the national leaders because even the province is overseen by the national leadership.

"We can't conclusively talk about the input as the province and have specifics in terms of names and people because that matter will be concluded only when we have had that

particular discussions with national," added Ngcukayitobi.

"They said they will come back to us to confirm the actual date [of the meeting] because they are pressed by the current challenges at a national level. We hope that by Friday they would have come back to us with a date," he added.

Under scrutiny at the meeting, which the Dispatch understands will be held on Monday, will be a report Ngcukayitobi presented at the two-day ANC lekgotla which ended on

Monday, as well as Masualle's report on the state of provincial government. Ngcukayitobi said the report on finance revealed that as at the end of September last year, "there is likelihood of under-expenditure in almost all the departments".

The other critical issue of concern to the party is the failure to fill posts provided for in the budget.

"It means the provincial government is not operating optimally be-

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