

# E Cape cabinet reshuffle



MLIBO QOBOSHIYANE (rural development and agrarian reform)



NANCY SIHLWAYI (social development)



THANDISWA MARAWU (roads and public works)



SAKHUMZI SOMYO (finance, economic affairs and tourism)

## FOUR TOP MECs FACE AXE

Ngcukayitobi confirms plan to recall top officials, but matter needs Masualle’s input

By ZINE GEORGE  
Political Editor

**A** CABINET reshuffle will fire four Eastern Cape MECs “as a matter of urgency”. The ANC’s provincial executive committee took the decision to fire rural development and agrarian re-

form MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane, social development MEC Nancy Sihlwayi, roads and public works MEC Thandiswa Marawu and finance, economic affairs and tourism MEC Sakhumzi Somyo at a meeting held in Calata House on Monday afternoon. The government changes weaken premier Phumulo Masualle as power within the ruling party shifts in favour of Oscar Mabuyane, the ANC’s provincial chairman. This was after ANC provincial secretary Lulama Ngcukayitobi broke the news that the party’s national executive committee (NEC) had resolved to affirm the pre-October provincial executive – but also instructed it to continue with the cabinet shake-up agreed on a month ago. It wants Masualle to serve his full term as premier until the 2019 gen-

eral election “for the sake of unity”. Masualle – and at least five of his MECs – have been at loggerheads with the PEC since the highly contested elective conference in East London in October ended with Mabuyane elected as chairman. The Daily Dispatch understands that the fifth MEC, Dr Phumza Dyan-tyi – who was among those who deserted the contested October conference and gathered at a parallel venue after a fight broke out – is to retain her health portfolio. Addressing a press conference yesterday, Ngcukayitobi confirmed the plan to recall certain MECs, but said they would have to discuss it with Masualle at a meeting “which would be held by the end of this week”. “It is going to happen, henceforth we are going to have a discussion

between ourselves [the PEC] and the premier. Once we deal with that, the premier will be able to pronounce the changes,” said Ngcukayitobi. The five MECs tried in vain to capitalise on the tumultuousness of the conference – with delegates throwing chairs at each other resulting in the hospitalisation of some – as a basis to nullify the outcomes.

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But their attempt to oust Mabuyane and his PEC from Calata House was quashed when the NEC rejected a report of a team tasked to investigate the chaos that recommended that the PEC be disbanded. The Sbu Ndebele report was too inconsistent, the NEC ruled. Ngcukayitobi refused to divulge names of those in the firing line, saying it was “an internal matter”. But a source who attended Monday’s PEC meeting confirmed the four would be fired. “The PEC wants the four fired and replaced with new blood while other MECs will be swapped to other portfolios,” said the source. Asked whether the PEC was disappointed that it had been instructed to work with Masualle – who had been identified as among those to be

replaced – Ngcukayitobi said at no stage did the PEC declare the provincial government “in a state of collapse”. “We did not say that. “We said there are areas which have not done what they are supposed to do. This is an opportunity to self-correct and ensure that the premier is given an opportunity to correct those particular matters, working with the PEC of the Eastern Cape.” The Dispatch has previously reported on other changes rumoured to be in the pipeline. These include moving transport MEC Weziwe Tikana to human settlements and the incumbent Helen Sauls-August to public works. Cogta MEC Fikile Xasa may move to rural development and agrarian reform, and sports, recreation arts

and culture (Dsrac) MEC Pemmy Majodina moved back to social development – a portfolio she held between 2009 and 2014. MPL Xolile Ngatha is expected to replace Xasa. The new “brooms” would be Mabuyane – recently sworn in as an MPL so he could be assigned to finance and his deputy Mlungisi Mvoko to economic affairs, environment and tourism – and deputy speaker Bulelwa Tunyiswa, said to be destined for Dsrac. The Dispatch also understands that Marawu could replace Tunyiswa as deputy speaker. Ngcukayitobi said once they had discussed the changes with Masualle by the end of this week, a report would be submitted to the ANC’s national officials “as a matter of urgency” and the changes would be put into effect.