

12 PWD officials off hook over Nkandla

By **BONGANI MTHETHWA**

TWELVE public works senior officials who were facing a disciplinary hearing relating to controversial R246-million security upgrades at former president Jacob Zuma's Nkandla homestead are off the hook – and for good.

Public Works spokesman Thami Mchunu has confirmed that the department settled all cases with the officials last year and that they were all back at work.

“They were settled through negotiations with employee representatives,” said Mchunu without elaborating.

This was also confirmed by Public Service Association's KwaZulu-Natal manager, Claude Naicker, who said: “They resolved it via a settlement agreement and the unions are not prepared to talk about it because of the non-disclosure clause.”

However, while all 12 officials are back at work, the cases against two of their colleagues are still pending. However, these are expected to be resolved soon.

A source with direct knowledge of the agreement said: “We won't be going back to the Nkandla issue anymore and that has been settled. I

cannot divulge anything because the employer can take me to task for that because it's been stamped in front of the commissioner.”

The disciplinary hearing centred on the 12 officials not following correct procedures regarding procurement, project management and supply chain management.

The hearings began in 2014 but were put on hold to hear a joint application by three media houses for access to the hearings.

In his judgment in 2016 Pietermaritzburg High Court Judge Piet Koen said denying the media access to the Nkandla disciplinary hearings was wrong, and he upheld the application by the media groups.

The Sunday Times reported over the weekend that should Zuma be convicted of corruption, the state could confiscate his Nkandla homestead for having been built with the “proceeds of crime”.

Zuma is facing charges of corruption, fraud, money laundering and racketeering relating to the arms deal two decades ago. The corruption case could reveal his financial affairs such as the donations and soft loans he received from friends, family and benefactors to fund his lifestyle and pay for Nkandla. — *DDC*