

Ministers enjoy luxuries

BEING a cabinet minister in South Africa is a great job. It comes with a salary of more than R2 million per year and a car allowance for something fairly fancy.

But, if you are a minister, you don't really need a car because you are allowed to purchase two vehicles for official work: one in Cape Town and another in Pretoria. You also get 30 business class flights a year within South Africa.

You don't need a house because the state provides you with one while you are serving in cabinet. Taxpayers pay for domestic workers to clean the house or houses, and also pick up the tab when renovations are needed.

This week, we learnt through Parliament that the Department of Public Works has spent half a million rand for braai entertainment areas at ministers' homes.

We all know that's unacceptable. On the one hand, our ministers enjoy luxuries most of us can only dream about. On the other hand, there are too many public buildings that are in dire need of repairs and where the half a million rand would have been better spent.

So why don't our ministers feel the same way? They turned a blind eye to these excesses when they should have been the first ones to put a stop to them.

It did, after all, happen in their own backyards. This is no better than former president Jacob Zuma pleading ignorance of the improvements made at his Nkandla home, at taxpayers' expense.

Educate and correct racists

USING the k-word can now send you to prison, as estate agent Vicky Momberg found earlier this year.

She used the word repeatedly after a smash-and-grab incident in Johannesburg in 2016.

The racial slurs were directed at people, including police, who were trying to help her.

A magistrate found her guilty of *crimen injuria*, making Momberg the first person in South Africa to be jailed for racist language.

Despite the courts having sent out such a stern warning, there are clearly some who did not get the message.

Adam Catzavelos is one of them.

The businessman was on holiday overseas when he took to Twitter to insult black people.

The outburst that followed resulted in his family releasing a statement.

They distanced themselves from what Catzavelos said and announced he was fired from the family business.

But the ease with which Catzavelos used the k-word points to it not being his first time.

Had his friends and family shut him up in the past, he might have realised how hurtful the word was and not used it.

And therein lies a message for us all: let's not tolerate the racists we come into contact with, especially those closest to us.

Call them out on their behaviour, and educate and correct them.

If they persist, it is worth considering that people are known by the company they keep.