

## COMMENT

# Don't abuse taxpayers' money

South Africa's unemployment rate in the second quarter of this year was running at 27.2%, according to figures released by the Statistician-General, Risenga Maluleke. And after flip-flopping about whether or not the government intends to trim the public service, Deputy President David Mabuza

has finally concurred that the public service wage bill cannot be sustained, and the number of civil servants will have to be reduced.

While the government tackles this, one would assume that it would set an example by cutting down on needless expenditure. Not so.

The Minister of Public Works, Thulas Nxesi, and his deputy, Jeremy Cronin, have revealed how much the department spends on ministers' properties.

Ministers occupy 140 state-owned houses in Pretoria and Cape Town, whose market value is estimated at R1.3 billion. But it was the profligate amounts that the gov-

ernment spends on their upkeep that raises the hackles.

Reports reveal that the state spent up to R245 000 to clean curtains, and last month we reported how Public Works splashed R500 000 on installing luxury braai entertainment areas at three homes that are used by ministers and deputy ministers.

As ordinary consumers are being constantly asked to tighten their belts, perhaps those in power would set the example.

Abusing public funds is an insult to every taxpayer – rich, poor or marginalised.