

■ PUBLIC WORKS

Some ministers still owe rent on houses

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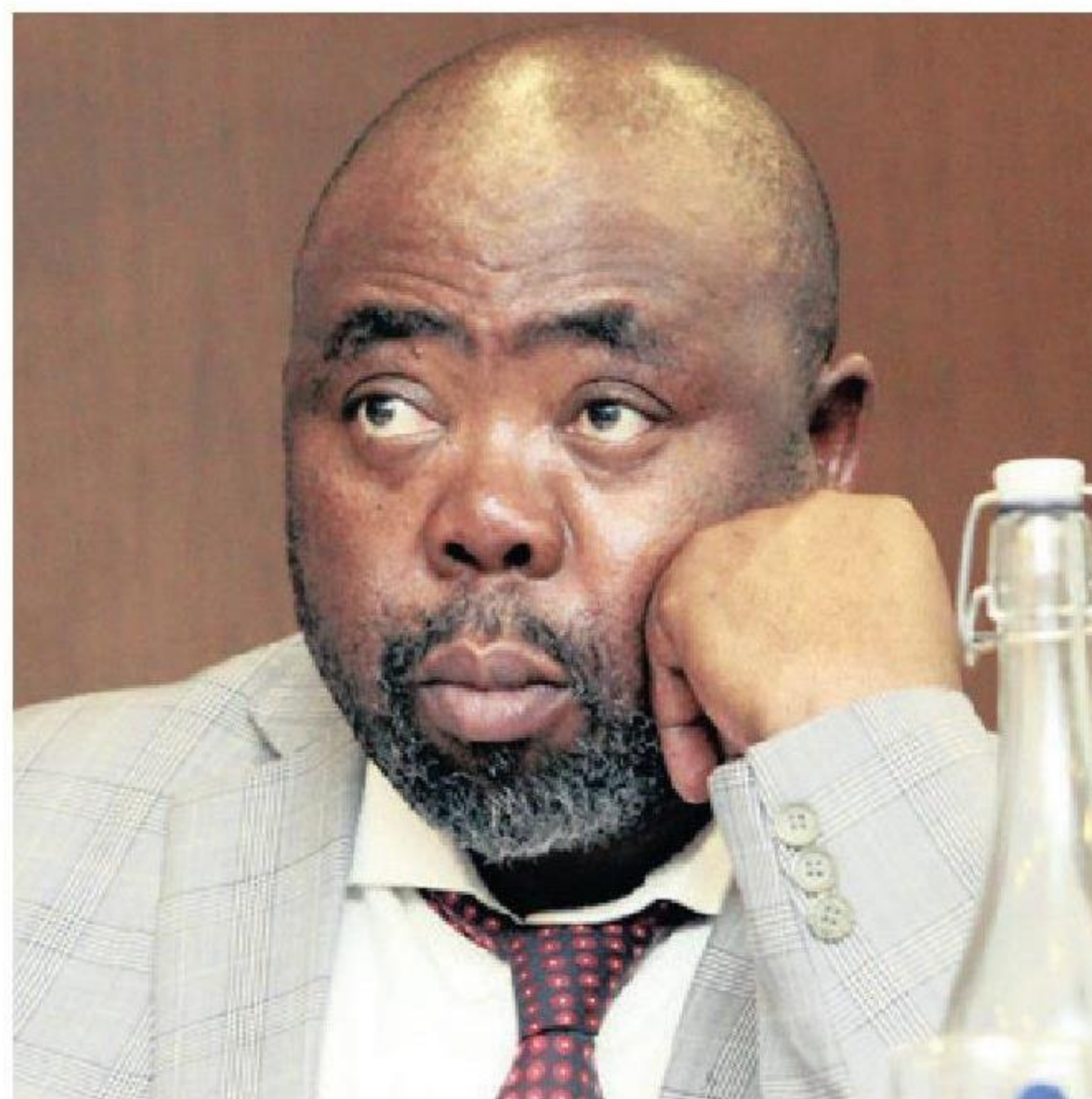
THE Department of Public Works has spent more than R45 million on the maintenance of ministerial houses in Pretoria and Cape Town since 2017.

Minister Thulas Nxesi revealed the expenditure in a written response to questions asked by the DA's Malcolm Figg.

"The total amount spent on maintenance on each ministerial house in Pretoria and Cape Town for the 2017/18 financial year is R14589975.93, and from April 2018 to date is R7991958.59," Nxesi said.

"The total spent on maintenance for ministerial houses in Cape Town in the 2017/18 financial year is R31261964.14, and from April 1, 2018, to date is R14433092.79."

Nxesi said the last renovations conducted were in the 2015/16 financial year, to three houses, and the total cost



Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi.

was R9391355.47.

"The works mainly comprised security measures including the construction of boundary walls, guard huts, installation of cameras and monitors, as well as the installation of electric fences." Nxesi also revealed that in

terms of municipal valuations, the total monetary value of ministerial residences in Pretoria was R116720199.50, and for Cape Town the total value was R824735471.

He said the current total amount outstanding in rental income for ministerial residences was R1214064.23.

Asked how the ministers ended up in arrears, he said they had found that there were a number of systemic flaws.

"The building up of arrears is largely not through negligence by the minister. It would therefore be unfair to name which ministers are in arrears, save to mention that the problem is being addressed with the departments concerned."

Nxesi added that he would also not name ministers who owed rent for ministerial houses due to security reasons.

The monthly rental cost for ministerial residences ranges between R988.90 and R1200.82.

Nxesi said there were challenges collecting rental for the residences.

"Once ministerial residences have been allocated, the Department of Public Works submits the documents indicating the amounts payable monthly to the client departments, whose responsibility it is to action the stop orders from ministers' and deputy ministers' monthly income.

"Despite numerous reminders, some departments fail to action the stop orders, leading to escalating debt."

He added that in the past he had engaged with ministers on the debt owed to the Department of Public Works, and said that had been done with relative success.

"Ministers are always willing to co-operate in terms of paying their monthly rentals. The challenge that we must resolve is a systemic one to ensure that the monthly rentals are collected without fail on an ongoing basis."