

■ JOBS

# EPWP workers not in line for permanent contracts

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THE Department of Public Works yesterday reiterated its stance of not awarding permanent contracts to Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers.

The programme has been rocked by protests in recent years, with its workers demanding to be made permanent after finishing their tenures.

At a workshop for provincial councillors at the Durban City Hall yesterday, Public Works and Human Settlements MEC Ravi Pillay said the programme intentionally had a high turnover of workers because they wanted enrol new people. He also admitted that the department had a responsibility to look at better “exit strategies” for their beneficiaries.

He said the programme has benefited over 20 000 workers in the past year, a direct result of their labour-intensive strategy.

“We don’t want machines digging holes and trenches, we would rather see human personnel doing it,” he said.

Co-operative Governance and

Traditional Affairs MEC Nomusa Dube-Ncube said the programme had become indispensable to the city in terms of alleviating poverty.

“We have an economy that is not performing as we would like to see, but through the EPWP we have (had) 35000 beneficiaries,” she said.

Dube-Ncube added that 90% of beneficiaries who enrolled for the 18-month Early Childhood Development Learnership programme have been permanently employed.

The purpose of the workshop was to review phase III of the EPWP and to identify challenges and mistakes.

According to a Public Works report on the EPWP, the department found that it did not reach many of its targets as it was “unrealistic and many bodies did not have the capacity to implement and report EPWP projects”.

The report also recommended that the programme look outside the fiscus for funding and encourage more partnerships with the private sector.

Addressing the ongoing court cases about people who defrauded the EPWP system, Pillay said: “We want the legal process to be followed swiftly.”