

## PROGRAMME NOT MEANT TO CREATE PERMANENT JOBS

PUBLIC Works Department spokesperson Mbulelo Baloyi told *The Witness* that from the department's R1,7 billion for this financial year, R4,7 million had been allocated to the EPWP integrated grant.

The money is distributed to municipalities across the province as they are responsible for implementing the programme.

"It must be emphasised that all provincial departments and municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal have been allocated the grant, which they use to augment their baseline budget.

"This budget is expected to be used strictly for job creation and five percent of it can be used for beefing up capacity to implement, manage and report on the programme," he said.

As part of co-ordination, Public Works offers technical support to all

participating public bodies, giving them advice on how to comply with EPWP requirements and expand job creation.

Baloyi said some of the challenges they face include concerns raised by many people, including councillors, about the manner in which recruitment and selection of participants is taking place.

"As a result, all public bodies have been encouraged to customise the national and provincial recruitment guidelines and take them to municipal councils for adoption and then make them known to everyone for implementation.

"A couple of municipalities, such as uKhahlamba and Ugu municipalities, have done their draft guidelines and they are currently awaiting council adoption. Amajuba and uThukela districts have already approved their re-

ruitment guidelines," Baloyi said.

He added that there was also a perception that the EPWP must employ people permanently and pay them according to the national minimum wage.

"The EPWP remains, [however] a social net programme that provides temporary relief to poor, unemployed and unskilled people. The programme was also exempted from paying the national minimum wage rate since it is regarded as a public employment programme, not meant to create permanent jobs," he said.

Addressing the issue of irregularities around the programme, Baloyi said investigations had taken place in eThekweni Municipality with steps being taken against officials involved in the transgressions. No other investigations have been made known to the department at this stage.