

■ SUMMIT

Building up women's power

MEC promises to assist emerging female construction contractors

NETWORK REPORTER

A WOMEN in Built Environment Empowerment Summit at the weekend rekindled hope for hundreds of women-led and owned construction companies that going forward they may be able to work closely with established contractors to break the barriers preventing them from participating in the sector in KwaZulu-Natal.

The summit, hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works, Peggy Nkonyeni, saw more than 250 emergent construction contractors converging in Ballito.

The theme of the summit was "Radical Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women through Infrastructure Delivery".

Women delegates urged Nkonyeni to reassess some of the existing conditions in bidding documents used when tendering for work, which they claimed shut out potential women-led and owned service providers, leaving established companies to monopolise winning tenders. These conditions contradicted the intentions of the provincial government's preferred procurement policies, delegates said, and flew in the face of achieving the objective of empowering women to contribute to the sector.

Nkonyeni said her priority was to achieve meaningful and maximum participation for women-led and owned construction firms.

"Emerging from this summit, I would convene a session that will be attended by established contractors as well as emergent contractors. The sole purpose of the proposed session



PEGGY Nkonyeni, KwaZulu-Natal's MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works, hosted the recent Women in Built Environment Empowerment Summit.

is to ensure that a working synergy is realised between the two diverse contractors," Nkonyeni said.

"We as the two departments shall facilitate that those who are established impart the knowledge and successes they, had while at the same time

they highlight the challenges they had to overcome and other inherent barriers existing in the built environment."

She said her departments would guide contractors to succeed in their enterprises.