

■ INVESTIGATION

# De Lille's sister resigns, citing 'ethical reasons'

*Public protector probes nepotism claims as minister proclaims her innocence*

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PUBLIC Works Minister Patricia de Lille has landed in hot water after her sister, Cynthia Jeffreys, resigned just 11 weeks after her appointment.

It came amid a nepotism investigation by Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane.

De Lille responded to a Parliamentary question from DA MP Samantha Jane Graham who asked De Lille whether proper processes were followed in the appointment.

In the initial question sent to De Lille, Graham asked whether she had "appointed a certain person (name furnished) to a position within her department; if so, (a) were proper pro-

cesses followed in the appointment, (b) what total number of other applications were received for the position, (c) what is the specified person's job title, (d) does the specified person have the requisite skills and competencies for the position, and (e) what is the nature of the relationship between her and the specified person?"

De Lille said proper processes were followed in accordance with the Public Service Regulation of 2016. She also said that no other applications were received for the position. De Lille said the post had not been advertised.

"Recruitment of personnel is based on merit and the experience that they bring into the job. It is not a requirement for HR recruitment to establish whether candidates are related to any



Patricia de Lille

of those already in employment," De Lille said in her reply.

De Lille added that since then Jeffrey's had resigned from her position, stating ethical reasons.

De Lille's spokesperson, Zara Nicholson, said: "She (Jeffreys) was also only assisting for three months in the minister's office while the office was busy recruiting staff as Jeffreys has Parliament secretarial experience having worked for the DA before."

In August it emerged that Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane was investigating De Lille for, among other things, allegations of nepotism after receiving a complaint about the hiring of Jeffreys.

De Lille maintained that she would co-operate with the public protector.