

DA calls for independent audit

The Democratic Alliance (DA) will write to KwaZulu-Natal Public Works MEC, Peggy Nkonyeni to call for the launch of an independent audit into the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) in the province. The move comes after the recent Auditor-General (AG) report which revealed that not only is the programme fraught with irregularities but the department has completely lost control. It also comes as EPWP workers who form part of Durban Solid Waste (DSW) embark on yet another strike, claiming that promises made to them by eThekweni Municipality regarding permanent employment had allegedly not been kept.

The DA regards the current EPWP programme in KZN as completely chaotic while being little more than a tool for the ANC to reward its own supporters with 'jobs for pals' and a desperate attempt to boost the province's shocking employment figures. Sadly, EPWP only creates short-term relief for workers not real jobs, while the numbers submitted to the AG by the department also don't add up. To begin with, the department appears to have no idea how many people are employed as part of the programme. It also seems to be 'fudging' the numbers in a bid to sell the EPWP as a success story.

According to the AG, "The reported achievement (in EPWP) of 6 157 for the target of 6 000 is not reliable as the department did not have an adequate performance management system."

He then went on to say that the department, in many instances, failed to provide appropriate audit evidence, pointing out that the number of people employed varied wildly, with some departmental reports even claiming that as many as 8 312 people has been employed under the EPWP. The AG's report also shows that the department did not fully spend the National Government Grant intended for EPWP. This while the department claims, without any proof, that it has exceeded its targets. Apart from writing to MEC Nkonyeni, the DA will also write to National Public Works Minister De Lille, to request that she appoint a task team to ensure that the province spends its national grant as per the department's regulations. The DA believes in creating real jobs. We also believe that the EPWP can work if managed correctly.

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on Public Works**