

■ PUBLIC SERVICE

MAYIBONGWE MAQHINA
mayibongwe.maqhina@inl.co.za

Politicians' perks cut as austerity bites

PUBLIC Service and Administration Minister Senzo Mchunu has revealed that the revised ministerial handbook will slash some of the perks and benefits enjoyed by members of the Cabinet, premiers and MECs.

Mchunu said this when he briefed the public service and administration portfolio committee last week.

The revision of the ministerial handbook has been in the making for over nine years now.

The minister said President Cyril Ramaphosa had formed a task team

consisting of his department as well as Finance Minister Tito Mboweni and Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Patricia de Lille to review the ministerial handbook.

"That process got completed about a month ago or so. We handed the outcome of our work to the president for consideration and the president applied his mind," Mchunu said.

However, he pointed out that there were five issues which needed further consideration by the task team.

Mchunu said they had recommended two categories of staff be employed at ministers', premiers' and MECs' offices, adding that this included employees an office-bearer could hire to assist with his or her duties, and permanent officers seconded to their offices by the department.

"For the first category it will be nine staff to the office of ministers, unless the president changes it," he said about ministerial staff appoint-

ments.

Staff numbers for deputy ministers, premiers and MECs were reduced. Mchunu said only four permanent staff for ministers would be permitted.

He said they had considered the fiscal situation and what was desirable, and decided the cost set aside for ministerial vehicles would be R700000, and that no more travel claims would be entertained.

Mchunu said ministers and their deputies would be expected to travel

on economy class on their domestic travel, but this relaxed to business class on international travel.

He said the government would only pay R5000 for services at ministerial houses. "If you use more than R5000, the member will take responsibility."

Security upgrades at private residences of ministers would be discontinued. "We no longer talk about security upgrades in private residences. It's totally removed." Ministers were previously allowed up to R250000 in security upgrades for their houses.

And former ministers and deputies wouldn't enjoy unlimited tickets for flying any more either.