

# Vehicles for no more than R700k among ministers' new 'sacrifices'

CARS worth no more than R700 000, a R5 000 per month cellphone allowance, flying economy and no security upgrades to private residences: these are some of the "sacrifices" ministers, premiers and MECs will be making, according to the new ministerial handbook.

The changes will be made considering the "stagnant economy", Public Service and Administration Minister Senzo Mchunu said yesterday, as he presented the ministerial handbook to members of the media.

A new ministerial handbook has been a long time coming. Work started on it when the late Collins Chabane was still minister of Public Service and Administration. The previous handbook was published in 2007.

After a draft handbook was presented to the cabinet in June this year, President Cyril Ramaphosa reportedly demanded further cuts.

"In line with the need to be circumspect on the fiscal constraints we find ourselves in and to ensure fiscal prudence, the cabinet referred the guide for members of the executive back to a committee of ministers comprising the ministers of Finance, Public Works and In-

frastructure as well as the Public Service and Administration to revisit certain aspects in the guide for members of the executive to curb costs, while not compromising government operations," read Mchunu's statement.

The changes to the handbook include the following:

The cost of vehicles is limited to R700 000, inclusive of VAT, mainte-

nance plans and security extras. Previously, ministers were allowed vehicles worth 70% of their annual salary. Ministers are still allowed two vehicles — one for Cape Town and the other for Pretoria. Premiers and MECs are allowed only one vehicle. Members of the executive

and their spouses travelling by air must travel in economy class for all official domestic travel as well as international travel where the travel time is less than two hours.

The state shall not bear any costs in respect of security upgrades done at the member of the executive's private residence. Mchunu said previously this cost was pegged at R100 000.

en; MEC — 12 to five. Mchunu said staff who were already contracted would continue until their contracts expired, then the post will not be filled.

In respect of water and electricity, the state's contribution will be limited to R5 000 per month per state-owned residence. No contribution will be made in respect of private residences. Members shall be responsible for all the costs relat-

or adult family member. Mchunu said Treasury would sign off on a circular for officials, limiting their flights similarly.

Additional flight tickets for members' private use is reduced from 30 to 20 single economy class tickets for use by the member or the member's spouse; departments shall not be responsible for the cost of gratuities and reading material for both the member and spouse;

The continued benefits for members upon relinquishing office is reduced to one calendar month; a member is permitted to occupy one state-owned residence free of charge and where a member occupies a second state-owned residence, then the member is required to pay a rental and is personally responsible for the related tax implication.

Mchunu said it was envisaged similar changes would take place to cut these costs in the public service and public sector in general, including mayors, executive committees, directors-general and state-owned entities.

Public Service and Administration director-general Richard Levin said the department was working with Treasury to determine what savings these measures would amount to. — News24.

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The rental for cellphones, as well as the cost of official calls, is subject to an annual limitation of R60 000. Staff in support of a member's office, excluding household aides, has been reduced as follows: minister — 13 to seven; deputy minister — nine to five; premier — 12 to sev-

ed to domestic workers in the personal employ of the member.

Travel by a spouse for official domestic trips is now limited to six domestic economy class travel trips per financial year if the member is required to attend official duties accompanied by a spouse