

Billions outstanding

Govt depts owe KZN municipalities R2,4 bln in rates and services

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Government departments owe KwaZulu-Natal municipalities R2,4 billion in rates and services.

This was revealed to the Democratic Alliance (DA) in an answer to written questions sent to the Provincial Treasury.

Most of the money owed can be attributed to the Department of Public Works, which owed R708,4 million in rates as at April 30.

The national Public Works Depart-

ment owed municipalities R206,6 million in rates while the Ingonyama Trust owed R340,8 million.

For municipal services, the outstanding amounts owed by KwaZulu-Natal government departments are as follows:

- Education — R378,7 million;
- Public works — R18,8 million;
- Human settlements — R16,5 million;
- Transport — R14,6 million.

The national Public Works Department owed municipalities R79,7 million for municipal services.

DA KZN spokesperson Chris Pappas said the party would be calling for representatives of the departments to appear before the provincial Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) portfolio committee.

“They need to explain why they are not paying for rates and services and what mechanisms are put in place to ensure they catch up on arrears,” said Pappas.

He added that the DA was concerned that municipalities had failed to include the departments in their revenue

enhancement plans, which are aimed at collecting outstanding debts from residents

“This while government departments owe tens of millions of rands and are not being targeted. Many of KZN municipalities have collapsed and service delivery is not being rolled out.

“The failure by provincial and national departments to pay their debt is clearly yet another contributing factor to the lack of viability of our municipalities.”

The DA Cogta spokesperson was re-

ferring to a recent initiative by municipalities such as uMgungundlovu District where they disconnected water supply to properties reportedly owing excessive amounts.

Msunduzi Municipality is running a similar programme where customers with outstanding debt get their electricity and water disconnected.

They are only reconnected once they pay at least 50% of their debt and make an arrangement to pay the rest of the outstanding amounts within three months.