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# Now outcry at Premier's home perks

*Winde's rent, water and electricity covered*

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WESTERN Cape Premier Alan Winde has been accused of doing what his party rails against – government office-bearers living free of rent, water and electricity bills.

Moreover, it appears that the Guide for Members of the Executive has been flouted in that the Department of Public Works has been paying more for the premier's municipal services than the regulations allow.

For Winde's electricity usage at his official Leeuwenhof residence, the Department paid about R10 000 a month despite government regulations clearly stipulating that it only contributes R5 000 a month towards members' municipal services.

Winde racked up a R56 008.08 electricity bill in five months in 2021/22. Among other perks, he doesn't pay for gardening upkeep, maintenance, computer equipment, wifi and TV subscriptions at the state-owned estate, which is valued at R177 million.

Winde's party, the DA, has led the outrage against President Cyril Ramaphosa's amendments to the Ministerial Handbook, allowing ministers to live free of the rent, water and electricity bills at state residences, while ordinary citizens struggle. The amendments were scrapped this week.

However, the winds of outrage now blow against the DA's own.

As Premier, Winde earns a R2.3m annual salary and, according to provincial government information, he lives in a mansion whose R1.7m bill is serviced by the taxpayer.

In the Western Cape legislature, Transport and Public Works (Infrastructure) MEC Daylin Mitchell told then-GOOD MPL Brett Herron that:

- Winde resides free of charge with his family in the Leeuwenhof state-owned property valued at R177.4m.

- Municipal services such as electricity, water, sewage and waste/refuse removal "are provided to the Leeuwenhof estate".

- Transport and Public Works provides estate maintenance, including the gardening.

"The annual operating costs in terms of municipal services and property rates in respect of the Leeuwenhof Estate amounts to R1 410 528 (rounded up) in the 2020/21 financial year and in the current 2021/22 financial year

to date R1 224 947 (rounded up)," Mitchell said in a parliamentary reply.

As it is dated October 1, the reply focused on the first five months of the 2021/22 financial year and listed the costs as follows: Electricity, R56 008.08; water, R14 668.66; sewage, R4 923.62; waste/refuse removal, R1196.88; and property rates, R1148 715.00.

Though the 2019 executive members' guide states that members may occupy one state-owned residence for free, it adds that:

- Public Works is responsible for the costs associated with the provision of water and electricity to a state-owned residence, provided that such cost is limited to R5 000 a month for each state-owned residence.

- And any cost in excess of R5 000 a month for each state-owned residence will be borne by the relevant member.

The Public Service and Administration members' guide, which came into effect in April 2022 does not specify any cap on spending for a residential member.

GOOD Party secretary-general Brett Herron said: "The outrage is right. But what is wrong is to ignore the hypocrisy of the DA, which rightfully raised this issue, but which governs the Western Cape Province with a handbook that also provides its members with perks and benefits."

He said it doesn't matter if it is members of the ANC, DA or GOOD that are benefiting, the perks are "unjustifiable".

He said the Winde family can afford to pay for the use of the mansion and the municipal services they consume.

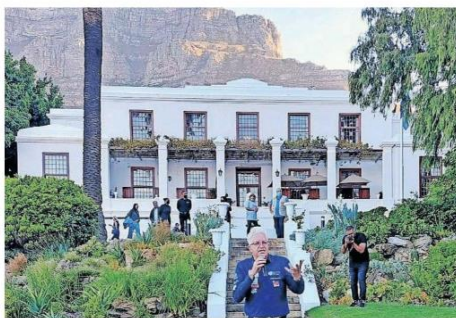
"But they live there completely free. We often hear political leaders refer to the 'user pays' principal. It's a bit outrageous that those who can afford to pay don't need to.

"Everyone should be required to pay for what they use," Herron said.

Winde's spokesperson Regan Thaw referred queries to DA MP and party spokesperson on public service and administration, Dr Leon Schreiber, who had not responded at the time of writing.

Queries sent to Public Works and Transport had gone unanswered at the time of writing.

The GOOD Party recommended that the whole system of perks for politicians and public officials be reviewed.



PREMIER Alan Winde at his official home, Leeuwenhof Estate, in Gardens.