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# Metro to save on salaries after auditing its workers

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Tshwane has frozen payments amounting to R2-million per month after completing a verification of its employees.

The verification process includes the expanded public works programme (EPWP) participants.

Tshwane audited 20 646 of its employees and 10 763 of the EPWP employees.

MMC for corporate and shared services Kingsley Wakelin said the process aimed to eliminate potential ghost employees, deterring future adverse audit findings. Wakelin said the strategy further demonstrated accountability to residents.

“Tshwane has frozen salary and stipend payments totalling over R2-million per month. The verification process took place over two months and required permanent and fixed-term contract employees to present themselves physically with proof of identity.”

Wakelin said the process achieved a 99.8% success rate, verifying the 20 602 employees, including those on suspension.

The verification found:

- 44 employees did not present themselves physically for verification,
- three were in hospital,
- seven were on extended sick leave, and
- one was incarcerated.

Wakelin said a separate verification for EPWP participants took place, confirming 10 763 individuals (95.8%). He said 496 EPWP participants could not be verified.

“Once unverified employees and EPWP participants were identified, Tshwane took immediate steps to halt their salary and wage payments and further resolved to terminate their employment and participation in the EPWP.”

Wakelin said further that as part of beefing up the control measures, the head of departments would continue to sign off on salary bills each month. “Tshwane intends to conduct employee and EPWP participant verification on an annual basis. This action confirms our commitment to clean audits and responsible use of the metro’s strained finances.

“We will continue to uphold good governance and make us (sic) a metro that works for all.”

During the metro’s administrative saga of 2020, it embarked on an audit and verification process to weed out so-called ghost employees.

This was according to head administrator Mpho Nawa who told the media that the metro’s group audit and risk department had flagged some employees suspected of being employed through fraudulent means.

It audited and verified all employees over six days, from August 14-19, 2020 in a bid to ascertain their exact number.

The process uncovered ghost workers who had been fleecing the people of Tshwane of their hard-earned money by unlawfully, illegally and fraudulently drawing salaries they did not deserve.

In total, 1 400 bogus employees illegally drawing monthly salaries from the metro were reportedly identified.

Nawa said the metro had informed its employees and union representatives of the process.