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THE DA wants increased parliamentary oversight and transparency on the perks enjoyed by members of President Cyril Ramaphosa's executive, premiers and MECs in terms of the ministerial handbook.

The call comes as the official opposition intensifies its battle against the ANC's cadre deployment policy following this week's South Gauteng High Court ruling forcing the governing party to produce information and records of its deployment committee to DA MP Leon Schreiber.

Schreiber has introduced his proposed amendments to the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act to make provision for transparency and oversight when Ramaphosa makes a decision on allowances, benefits or tools of the trade for his deputy, ministers and their deputies.

The new amended act, if promulgated, according to Schreiber, must provide for regular reviews of all allowances, tools of trade and benefits of public office bearers that are stipulated in the guide for members of the executive, as the handbook is now known.

"In the case of the guide, there is also no requirement for the National Assembly, or the president, to consider relevant factors, such as prevailing economic conditions in the country or the comparative costs of different tools of the trade," he explained in his notice.

Schreiber added that in contrast to other remuneration decisions, there is no legal requirement for Ramaphosa to report changes to the guide to the National Assembly, nor is there any requirement to regularly review these allowances and benefits.



PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa in the National Assembly. | PHANDO JIKELO African News Agency (ANA)

In December, the *Sunday Independent* reported that Ramaphosa bowed to public pressure and partially stopped his ministers and their deputies from enjoying free electricity and water in their official residences at taxpayers' expense.

The president introduced the requirement that the costs of provision of electricity and water in the Tshwane and Cape Town official residences of members of his executive be covered

by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in April last year.

Ramaphosa was forced to announce that he was withdrawing the April 2022 amendment relating to water and electricity, pending a review after a public outcry. In November last year, acting Public Service and Administration Minister Thulas Nxesi announced that Ramaphosa had ditched the provision of free water and electricity for members of his executive but that



DA SUPPORTERS gather at Darling Street in the Cape Town CBD for their protest marching against loadshedding to the ANC's Cape Town headquarters in Adderley Street. | AYANDA NDAMANE Africa News Agency (ANA)

government would foot the bill only up to R5 000 a month.

"The department responsible for public works shall be 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 per month per state-owned residence," reads the guide, dated November 2022.

According to the latest guide, any costs above R5 000 per month per state-owned residence will be borne by the relevant minister or deputy minister.

The DA accused Ramaphosa of removing the R5 000 limit without informing the National Assembly or the public. Meanwhile, the DA on Thursday succeeded in forcing the

ANC to provide it with all the information and records sought by Schreiber, including minutes, WhatsApp conversations, email threads, CVs and all other records of its cadre deployment committee.

Judge Lötter Wepener declared the ANC's refusal of Schreiber's Promotion of Access to Information Act request in February 2021 unlawful and invalid and set it aside. He gave the ANC five court days to provide the information and records to the DA but the governing party has since indicated that it intends to appeal the ruling.

"The ANC may in due course consider conveying its full position on the matter should such a need arise after having obtained conclusive advice from its legal team," the party said.