



**Publication:** Herald, The - Main  
**Title:** Bhisho rejects DA's proposed commission of inquiry for Bay  
**Publish date:** 12 Oct 2023  
**Page:** 4

**Reach:** 10949  
**AVE:** R 21057.66  
**Author:** Ntsikelelo Qoyo

● **Government cites high costs, says state's investigative agencies capable of probing corruption allegations**

# Bhisho rejects DA's proposed commission of inquiry for Bay

**Ntsikelelo Qoyo**  
qoyon@theherald.co.za

The Eastern Cape provincial government has rejected the DA's call for a commission of inquiry to investigate alleged corruption in the Nelson Mandela Bay metro, saying it would be too expensive.

Acting premier Siphokazi Lusithi, who was standing in for Oscar Mabuyane, informed the Bhisho legislature of the government's decision during a plenary sitting on Tuesday.

Speaking to The Herald yesterday, co-operative governance and traditional affairs MEC Zolile Williams said the state's investigative arms were up to the task and must be given a chance to deal with corruption allegations.

Last month, the DA called for the establishment of a commission to look into what it described as "state capture" within the metro, saying the city's own entities tasked with combating corruption had fallen short.

The DA said the failure of the municipal public accounts committee (MPAC), internal

audit committee and disciplinary board to investigate alleged corruption in the metro over the years — and most recently in the past few months — had prompted the party to make the call.

It wanted the proposed commission to be investigate several allegations of interference in the procurement of service providers, the appointment of municipal officials, disciplinary-related matters, legal disputes or cases, and irregularities in supply chain management processes.

It also pointed to issues with the Mandela Bay Development Agency, allegations of corruption in the electricity and energy department, and claims that expanded public works programme (EPWP) appointments had been manipulated.

Williams, however, said a commission could not be established to investigate EPWP and general employment issues.

"Our view is for information to be provided to the ... investigating arms of the state [such as the Hawks, SIU and public



**NO GO:** Co-operative governance and traditional affairs MEC Zolile Williams. Picture: SITHANDIWE VELAPHI

protector] to investigate any corrupt practices that may be alleged to be taking place in Nelson Mandela [Bay] municipality," he said.

"Matters of employment of EPWPs cannot be reason [enough] to establish a commission when government departments like [co-operative

governance] can investigate such matters."

Williams said the department would launch its own investigations if there were allegations of wrongdoing relating to EPWP or general appointments in the municipality.

"I believe that for now, state entities are still equal to the

task in respect of the allegations raised by the DA," Williams said.

"A commission of inquiry is a very expensive exercise.

"Anyone who suggests that corruption surpasses the cost of establishment of a commission is thumb-sucking and speaking to the gallery.

"For now, we believe the three arms of the state must be used to deal with any form of alleged malfeasance."

He said the claims by the DA were proof of the ongoing instability caused by coalitions in the Bay, which was why a Section 12 notice needed to be implemented to change the governance structure of the metro.

"The sooner the DA accepts that [the] Section 12 amendment is the way to go, the sooner we can resolve the issues of Nelson Mandela [Bay] in a stable political environment," Williams said.

Late last year, Williams gazetted a Section 12 notice, a move that would do away with the metro's mayoral committee and introduce a collective executive.

However, the DA challenged the notice and the issue is before the court.

In a statement on Tuesday, DA MPL Vicky Knoetze said the decision to veto the proposed commission of inquiry was proof that the premier was only paying lip service to fighting corruption.

"When it comes to taking action, there is simply no political will to deal with those abusing state resources for personal gain," Knoetze said.

"The metro is the economic hub of the province and we need to pull out all stops to ensure investors have a corruption-free environment.

"If the premier was serious about fighting corruption in all its forms, he would be using all the tools at his disposal, including this commission of inquiry.

"The DA will not leave it there.

"We will now be writing to the national minister of [co-operative governance], Thembi Nkandimeng, to request her intervention into the abuses that are taking place in Nelson Mandela Bay."