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EXPENDITURE

Move to 'in house' state funerals

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PUBLIC Works and Infrastructure Minister Sihle Zikalala said the government would start a process in the 2023/24 financial year to procure its own materials for state funerals.

Zikalala revealed this while responding to parliamentary questions from EFF MP Mathapelo Siwisa, who asked about materials used during state funerals in order to avoid acquiring the services of external service providers.

Siwisa also wanted to know about the items that had been purchased so far and the costs.

In response, Zikalala said the tender for procurement of materials lapsed.

He said the items procured already were chairs, tables, sound systems, air conditioning and mobile tents.

The items were bought at a cost of R1 629 388.82

He explained that the process to procure the state's own material for state funerals was started in 2022, but there were delays due to challenges with bid committee sittings.

Last year, former public works and infrastructure minister Patricia de Lille indicated that the funding spent on state funerals would be reduced in the medium-term expenditure framework.

Delivering a budget speech, she said under the prestige programmes for government functions, state visits and funerals, costs would reduce from R94 million in 2021/22 to R83m in 2023/24.

She said at the time the department was continuing to implement austerity measures, mainly for the

state functions, hence the decreasing budget over the medium term for this programme.

The expenditure on state funerals has been a topical concern amid reports that service providers managing state funerals were allegedly inflating invoices for services rendered.

Auditing firm PWC recently probed allegations involving the funerals of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and former minister Zola Skweyiya, which cost the state R76m.

The department previously said there was a process by the director-general in the Presidency to review the state funeral policy.