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MINISTER of Public Works and Infrastructure Patricia de Lille with some of the beneficiaries of her department's bursary scheme yesterday. | THOBILE MATHONSI African News Agency (ANA)

MILESTONE

Bursaries for deserving matriculants

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AT least 70 matriculants yesterday received bursaries to study for careers in the built environment industry from Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Patricia de Lille.

The awarding of the bursaries formed part of the department's Skills Pipeline Programme, part of the government's efforts to bring more skilled professionals into the public sector and specifically the built environment.

The department annually awards bursaries to learners in need of financial assistance, who display excellence and have been accepted for courses in built environment for their tertiary education. It has a bursary programme whereby learners are encouraged at school level to consider careers in the built environment.

Addressing them, De Lille said: "There is no doubt that your last three years at school were challenging, with the added factor of Covid-19, however, today you can be proud of yourselves because you have reached this milestone.

"Your education is one of the most important investments you can make for yourself to secure your future and be part of building our beautiful country.

"I have seen some of your results; I want us all to applaud these young men and women for their fantastic results, with some achieving between 90% and 100% for their matric final exams in maths and physics. Achieving those results in those subjects is no easy feat and I want to congratulate you on a job well done."

She told them they were at the event because the government had made an investment in them.

"I want to encourage you to grab this opportunity with both hands.

"Continue to work hard now in your tertiary education so that you can become (a) successful part of our country."

She reminded the audience about the key aim of the bursary programme, which was to remove financial barriers by providing funding for disadvantaged students.

People in attendance also learnt that the programme further aimed to

increase the number of built environment professionals from previously disadvantaged groups, to represent the demographics of the country and ensure transformation of the built environment sector.

It serves as feeder to the department's Internship and Young Professionals Programme, and later forms a pool of qualified built environment professionals, to serve the state in the delivery of infrastructure projects.

The bursary accommodates the areas of electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, marine engineering, property studies/real estate, actuarial science, quantity surveying, construction project management, landscape architecture, architecture and town and regional planning.

It covers tuition, accommodation, meals, textbooks, project and compulsory study resources and a monthly allowance.

The department has awarded bursaries to 452 students since the programme was launched in 2014 in an investment of R160 million into the lives of the students.