

Publication: Herald, The - Main

Title: Minister vows to root out corruption in public works jobs programme

Publish date: 29 Oct 2024

Page: 4

Reach: 10949

AVE: R 13870.96

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Minister vows to root out corruption in public works jobs programme

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Public works and infrastructure minister Dean Macpherson wants to end corruption and abuse within his department's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) so deserving people can benefit.

Macpherson visited the Bethelsdorp community in Gqeberha yesterday.

It was part of a nationwide listening tour to learn of challenges.

Residents shared how many were excluded from jobs by ward councillors because they were affiliated with rival political parties.

Other complained that councillors gave jobs to the same people instead of on a rotational basis as prescribed by law.

They also complained some earned more than R30,000 a month from the programme.

Addressing the residents, Macpherson said the programme was ripe for reform due to sex-for-jobs scandals, patronage and corruption.

"I want to change EPWP into something that people get meaningful skills from that they can use to climb the opportunity ladder and build a long-term future and dignity," he said.

"We are at the beginning of this change.

"I will strive to root out the corruption and abuse I've learnt about perpetrated against people who work hard for a minimal wage."

Kwazakhele resident Noxolo Maysike said she had

'Often people get jobs while the rest of us didn't know the opportunities were available'

been deliberately excluded from EPWP jobs because she was a popular DA community leader.

"Is there any way we can remove job applications for EPWP posts to be stamped by a councillor?" she said.

"I have about five application forms I submitted at the councillor's office but every time I follow up my form is nowhere to be found.

"They seem to neglect that I'm a mother with responsibilities like anyone else and it's painful to watch."

Kamma Heights resident Funeka Ndaza said she received confirmation of an EPWP job but was told she and others would start working next year.

"I sent emails to the relevant people asking and got no response. We now see a group working on the same site we were told we would work.

"We are worried it will be a different story next year."

Malabar resident Albertina Pit said people from other wards got jobs in their ward.

"Often people get jobs while the rest of us didn't know the opportunities were available.

"We need the minister to ensure that the recruitment process for EPWP jobs is transparent and rotational as it's meant to be."



MEETING THE PEOPLE: Public works and infrastructure minister Dean Macpherson visits the Bethelsdorp community yesterday
Picture: WERNER HILLS