

Publication: Cape Argus Late - Main

Reach: 10459

Title: Public works committee demands transparency amid minister's absence

AVE: R 46215.25

Publish date: 12 Sep 2025

Author: SINENHLANHLA MASILELA
Sinenhlanhla.masilela@iol.co.za

Page: 4

CRUCIAL REPORTS

Public works committee demands transparency amid minister's absence

SINENHLANHLA MASILELA
Sinenhlanhla.masilela@iol.co.za

THE Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure has expressed its dissatisfaction over the absence of the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, during a crucial committee meeting.

His absence on Tuesday, along with the late submission of important documents, has frustrated committee members who were prepared to discuss significant issues related to accountability and transparency within the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI).

Despite his apology, the committee deemed his absence insufficient.

Macpherson was expected to deliver updates on vital matters such as the Immovable Assets Register and progress reports on the Telkom Towers accommodation and maintenance activities.

The committee, led by chairperson Carol Phiri, has been particularly concerned with its repeated requests for full access to forensic reports. During the meeting, members underscored the importance of having full visibility on the contents of the Telkom Towers Forensic report, which has not yet been provided to the committee, despite earlier requests.

The committee stressed that having complete access to the forensic reports

and documents within the department is essential to effectively fulfil their duties.

"Furthermore, the committee remains concerned that the Minister has not shared the Oxygen Plant tender forensic report, citing the sensitive nature of its contents. In addition to the Minister's absence, the committee is highly dissatisfied with the late submission of documents, which hampered its ability to properly prepare for the meeting," the committee said in a statement.

In response, the Minister's spokesperson James de Villiers, said Macpherson had apologised well in advance for his inability to attend the meeting.

De Villiers sent letters which the Minister had sent to the Committee communicating his unavailability and other matters.

In a letter dated September 4, the Minister wrote to the chairperson asking for a postponement due to prior engagements. He offered to avail himself on five different days throughout September including weekends.

"I have communicated my unavailability to Honourable Badenhorst who has agreed to postpone the meeting and will seek permission from the NCOP House Chairperson to hold the meeting at a different date.

"As per my previous communication to you, I have kindly asked that there be liaising with my office in advance on the committee's pro-

gramme hearings to ensure I can attend these but unfortunately this has yet to materialise," the letter read.

In a letter dated September 8, Macpherson explained that the department was late in providing him with necessary documentation for the Immovable Asset Register and the Telkom Towers to prepare for a presentation.

He said the Telkom Towers presentation was only submitted on the evening of September 7 and upon review, a number of material concerns were identified and returned for rectification.

"I have requested the director-general's office to initiate disciplinary processes against the officials responsible for the late submission," he said.

Regarding the Oxygen Plant tender forensic report, he confirmed to the committee that he received the report in order to conclude internal disciplinary investigations and proceedings.

However, he said if the report was to be made public at this stage, it would potentially jeopardise the disciplinary process.

"If these reports were to be made public, it could result in a trial by media which could affect both the criminal and disciplinary procedures. However, once these have been completed, I will ensure that the committee is provided with a copy of the report immediately," he said in a letter.