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Macpherson unfreezes grants

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Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson has restored funding for Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) projects in the troubled Matjhabeng local municipality in the Free State.

Macpherson had frozen funding for EPWP projects after it was alleged that funds were being abused and that some officials in the municipality were being paid enormous salaries through these funds.

However, Macpherson said yesterday he will now release the funds, after investigations revealed that EPWP funds had not been misappropriated.

"When I first learned of the allegations, I moved speedily to ensure that public funds are protected and that an investigation be conducted as soon as possible," he said.

"I commend departmental officials for conducting the investigation within three weeks, which found all EPWP funds transferred to Matjhabeng are accounted for and that grant money was used strictly for its intended purpose – creating work opportunities for unemployed South Africans."

Matjhabeng is one of the most troubled municipalities in the Free State, with problems with service delivery, such as water and the maintenance of infrastructure.

 *I moved to ensure public funds are protected.*

Dean Macpherson
Public works minister