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## Macpherson halts EPWP funds to Free State municipality

Public works and infrastructure minister Dean Macpherson has suspended expanded public works programme (EPWP) funds to the Matjhabeng municipality in the Free State pending investigations into politically connected individuals allegedly receiving inflated salaries through the programme.

City Press reported that the municipality's EPWP was paying inflated salaries to former councillors and sitting political office bearers, with others earning more than R31,000 a month — 10 times more than the average EPWP stipend.

The EPWP provides unemployed individuals with temporary employment opportunities while equipping them with skills to be employable.

Macpherson said the programme was not a "vehicle for patronage".

"The EPWP is a lifeline for many in communities around the country, and it would be unacceptable if any politician or official is found to have used the programme for personal benefit," he said. — *TimesLIVE*