

Publication: MahikengMail - Main

Reach: 14500



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AVE:R 38230.39

Publish date: 17 Jul 2026

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Safety concerns raised after Agriculture Department occupies TEB Office Park

MAHIKENG MAIL - MAHIKENG: Serious questions have emerged over the safety of office accommodation identified for the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, after the Provincial Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development conducted an oversight visit to the TEB Office Park in Mahikeng.

The concerns come after a building that had stood vacant for several years was earmarked to accommodate departmental staff, despite South African occupational health and safety legislation requiring comprehensive structural, electrical, fire, plumbing and environmental assessments before any workplace can be occupied.

The Committee was informed that the Department of Employment and Labour had previously issued several compliance notices against the former Agri Centre building in July 2024, followed by a contempt notice in October after many safety deficiencies remained unresolved.

Although remedial work was undertaken at the Agri Centre between December 2024 and January 2025, including roof repairs, removal of damaged ceilings and carpets and electrical assessments, occupational health and safety concerns persisted.

As a result, the Provincial Executive Council instructed the Department of Public Works and Roads to source alternative office accommodation, leading to the relocation of head office staff to TEB Office Park on 1 June 2026.

However, following complaints, inspectors from the Department of Employment and Labour conducted another inspection on 26 June and issued contravention and

prohibition notices after identifying several shortcomings, including malfunctioning lifts, inadequate emergency exits, the absence of a structural integrity report and outstanding air conditioning compliance certificates. These findings prompted the department to temporarily relocate employees to Kgora district offices and Local Area Offices while the issues were addressed.

The Portfolio Committee, chaired by Sipho Dial, expressed concern that employees should not be expected to occupy buildings that do not fully comply with occupational health and safety standards.

In terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993, employers have a legal obligation to provide a safe working environment, while the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act requires buildings to meet prescribed structural and safety standards before occupation.

The Committee has resolved to summon the Department of Public Works and Roads, the Department of Employment and Labour and other relevant stakeholders to account for the outstanding compliance issues and has pledged to intensify oversight until all safety concerns have been resolved and employees can return to a workplace that is fully compliant with the law.



The Provincial Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

Wishing Team SA well at spelling BEE World Cup

MAHIKENG MAIL - MAHIKENG: The North West Department of Education extends its heartfelt best wishes to Team South Africa as they prepare to represent the nation at the Spelling Bee World Cup, taking place in Shanghai, China, from 13 to 20 July.

The department is especially proud of Mbulelo Tolom, a 12-year-old Grade 7 learner from Klerksdorp Primary School in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, who has earned a place in the national team.

Mbulelo is one of six outstanding learners who will proudly represent South Africa on the global stage, showcasing their exceptional spelling abilities and academic excellence.

Last year, Mbulelo Tolom won the 2025 South African National Spelling Bee Finals held in Sun City. By winning the national title, he earned the opportunity to represent South Africa at the African Junior Championship Spelling Competition, which was held in Zimbabwe. Team South Africa won the first position, followed by Nigeria in second and Zimbabwe in third.

The participants in the competition won the spelling competition from school, cluster, Local Education Area, District and National level. The Spelling Bee Competition promotes literacy, reading, language skills, and academic excellence among learners.

The MEC for Education in the North West, Viola Motsumi wished Team South Africa every success as they prepare to compete at the Spelling Bee World Cup.

"On behalf of the North West Department of Education, I would like to wish Team South Africa the very best as they compete at the Spelling Bee World Cup in Shanghai, China. I encourage our learners to remain calm, confident and believe in their abilities."



Mbulelo Tolom.