



**public works**

Department:  
Public Works  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER SAYS CORRUPTION IN NKANDLA IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE SYSTEMATIC CRISIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

THE poor management controls, lack of capacity and corruption in the Nkandla Security Upgrade was a tip of the iceberg and another example of the systematic crisis in the Department of Public Works.

And President Jacob Zuma happened to be caught up in a cross-fire of this endemic problem that was marked by collusion between certain DPW officials and private sector.

Public Works Minister, Thulas Nxesi, made these statements when he addressed a bursary award ceremony for 82 students who were studying professional courses in the Built Industry.

Minister Nxesi said corruption knew no colour. "There is corruption in the public sector as well as the private sector. That is what happened in Nkandla".

He said the Department had many similar cases of inflating of prices during the construction of projects:

- The renovation of the Central Government Offices that house the DPW head offices in Pretoria started at R59-m in 2006, but ended costing more than R330-million in December 2011.
- The construction of a prison in Kimberley in the Northern Cape started at R100-million and ended at R1-billion.

- In Cape Town, 10 Ministerial houses were renovated at a total of R100-million.

Minister Nxesi said the Department was not just lamenting – it was taking stern steps against those implicated in alleged corrupt and fraudulent practices.

In the case of lease fraud in the Johannesburg regional office, the officials concerned were dismissed and a major Gauteng landlord faced several charges in court.

He said: “In the case of irregularities committed on the Nkandla project – and with the assistance of the Special Investigating Unit – we are preparing disciplinary and other measures to hold people to account and recover funds.

Minister Nxesi said when he was appointed two years ago his first job was to come clean and acknowledge that there were serious challenges.

“We then had to carefully analyse the problems and develop solutions. This was done – and the measures taken include a commitment to rebuild the professional capacity of the Department.

“We are currently undertaking renewal and remedial steps. We are setting up a new structure in DPW. We are recruiting appropriate skills. We are instilling new culture and work ethic.”

Minister Nxesi said he firmly believed that had DPW had an adequate complement of professional and technical staff – such as qualified project managers, quantity surveyors and engineers – it would have avoided most of the irregularities and over-spending that we witnessed all too often in the past.

“You will recall one of the comments of the Public Protector was that a Public Works Department employee – a professional Architect - had warned in 2009 that spending on the Nkandla security upgrade was spiralling out of control.

“Unfortunately it was a lone voice. Our vision now is to rebuild the professional and technical capacity at the very core of the operations of the Department of Public Works.”

Minister Nxesi said this was why Public Works had a clear and strategic long-term interest and commitment to technical and professional training in the Built Environment.

“We want to rebuild the professional capacity of the Department – and to contribute to scarce skills required in the Built Environment generally.”

This task was made more urgent as the country embarks on a massive National Infrastructure Plan as part of the National Development Plan.

Minister Nxesi also pointed that this initiative was part of a much bigger picture – our Seven Year Plan to rebuild the Department of Public Works – which included the following objectives:

- To rebuild the technical and professional capacity of Public Works and the state;
- To promote training and skills development in the Built Environment – in line with the needs of the National Infrastructure Plan and the National Development Plan; and
- To transform the Built Environment professions to reflect the demographics of the country – and in particular to facilitate access for learners from disadvantaged communities.

## **Ends**

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