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STATEMENT

MINISTER MACPHERSON ANNOUNCES PRIORITY PROJECTS – INCLUDING SARAH BAARTMAN CENTRE – TO BE COMPLETED BY SPECIALISED UNIT

(Note to Editor: A list of the stalled or delayed projects to be completed by the newly launched Strategic and Special Delivery Unit (SSDU) can be found [here](#), along with profiles of the top 10 failed projects to be tackled by the unit [here](#).)

- Public Works and Infrastructure Minister, Dean Macpherson, has announced 30 priority projects – including the Sarah Baartman Remembrance Centre – that will be completed by a newly launched Strategic and Special Delivery Unit (SSDU).
- The unit, comprising experts from across the Department, will provide the Minister with fortnightly progress reports to ensure that projects are completed as swiftly as possible.
- The Minister stated that, through the SSDU, he hopes projects such as the Sarah Baartman Remembrance Centre, which has become an indictment of the Department, can finally be completed and begin to contribute meaningfully to communities.

Following a visit to the Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance in Hankey, Eastern Cape, on Thursday, the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, announced 30 priority projects – including the Remembrance Centre – to be completed by a newly launched Strategic and Special Delivery Unit (SSDU) within the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI).

The Unit, which will be led by the Deputy Director-General for Construction Project Management and will include experts from across the Department, will provide the Minister with fortnightly progress reports to ensure that projects are completed as soon as possible.

The Minister said the SSDU is one of the concrete steps being taken following his rejection of a joint report by the DPWI and the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture in September last year, which revealed that ten years after construction began – and following the appointment of three separate contractors – the Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance remains wholly incomplete. With the SSDU now in charge of the project, a new contractor is expected to be appointed by next month, and the Centre will finally be completed.

“The Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance is a prime example of how the Department has failed in its core function of delivering social infrastructure to communities. Over a decade, three contractors have attempted to complete the Centre, yet it remains wholly incomplete. This culture of inefficiency within the Department is one we have begun to change, and I have no doubt that the measures announced today will ensure the Centre’s completion as soon as possible,” said Minister Macpherson.

“The life of Sarah Baartman remains an important reminder of our painful past, and it is imperative that we honour her memory with the dignity and respect she deserves. It is regrettable that, thus far, the work on the Remembrance Centre has failed to achieve this, and has instead become a financial burden on taxpayers. This is why urgent action is required to turn the situation around.”

Minister Macpherson said he looks forward to the work the SSDU will undertake in the months ahead to turn around previously stalled and delayed construction projects within the DPWI. This, he said, would help transform the DPWI into a centre of excellence, with the credibility necessary to help turn South Africa into a construction site.

Projects such as the long-delayed Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance, the stalled Tolwe Police Station in Limpopo, and the incomplete Park Road Police Station in the Free State are examples of the critical projects the newly established Strategic and Special Delivery Unit will prioritise. These projects, which have faced years of delays due to contractor failures, management challenges, and funding constraints, will now be fast-tracked under the SSDU’s focused implementation model to ensure they are finally completed and serve the communities they were intended to benefit.

“Over the past nine months, we have taken concrete action within the Department to reverse years of neglect. The SSDU builds on the work we are doing to turn the Department into the economic engine of South Africa – to ignite economic growth and create jobs. This shows that we remain fully committed to our vision of building a better South Africa.”

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