



**Issue Date: 27 January 2025**

## **STATEMENT**

### **MINISTER DEAN MACPHERSON WELCOMES TIMESLIVE'S RETRACTION OF JJ TABANE OPINION PIECE**

*(Note to editors: TimesLive's retraction and apology of the opinion piece can be found [here](#).)*

- The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, has welcomed TimesLIVE's unreserved apology and retraction of an opinion piece by Onkgopotse JJ Tabane.
- In the opinion piece, Mr Tabane accused the Minister - without evidence - of bribing a journalist to write negative stories about the IDT, which was amplified by parties like ActionSA, the EFF and GOOD.
- Minister Macpherson urged journalists and publications to remain vigilant during a time when efforts to combat corruption within the department face significant resistance, ensuring they are not inadvertently used to shield corrupt individuals.

The Minister welcomed the retraction and apology issued by TimesLIVE for an opinion piece by Onkgopotse JJ Tabane titled, "[The stink in public works smacks of Nkandla](#)", published on the morning of 21 January 2025. In its apology, TimesLIVE admitted there was "insufficient evidence" to support the serious allegations made by Mr Tabane, which included claims that the Minister bribed a journalist to write negative stories about the Independent Development Trust (IDT) and interfered in the operations of the IDT.

Despite the time it took to address and correct the false claims, Minister Macpherson expressed his gratitude to TimesLIVE for thoroughly investigating the Ministry's concerns, which revealed that Mr Tabane could not provide evidence to substantiate his accusations.

"I welcome today's correspondence from TimesLIVE, in which they unreservedly apologised for publishing a defamatory and untruthful opinion piece by JJ Tabane. Unfortunately, several political parties fell for this fake news and issued statements, thereby amplifying these baseless allegations. I will, however, not be deterred from cleaning up the department and rooting out corruption, even in the face of fabricated stories designed to unite individuals and parties intent on obstructing my work," said Minister Macpherson.

The Minister further noted that he is seeking legal advice on how to hold Mr Tabane accountable for the false accusations. He emphasised the importance of journalists, editors, and commentators carefully scrutinising the information they publish, particularly in an environment where both the media and social media are increasingly used to defend compromised individuals.

"We always knew there would be a strong backlash as we began challenging corruption networks within the department. Publications and journalists, therefore, have a responsibility

to ensure they are not used to shield compromised individuals and protect them from accountability,” the Minister concluded.

### **Enquiries**

**James de Villiers**

Spokesperson to the Ministers

[james.devilliers@dpw.gov.za](mailto:james.devilliers@dpw.gov.za)

082 766 0276

**ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE**