



public works  
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Enquiries: James de Villiers 082 766 0276

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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **MINISTER MACPHERSON WELCOMES CITY PRESS CORRECTION OF FALSE AND MISLEADING TRAVEL ARTICLE**

- Public Works & Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson has welcomed City Press' swift correction of an article that falsely claimed he ignored legal advice over his partner's travel to Brazil and incorrectly stated the total cost of the working visit, when the confirmed expenditure was R350,000.
- The Minister says the false reporting forms part of a coordinated fightback campaign to derail the clean-up underway at the Department - similar to tactics used during the IDT saga - and follows reports that his office has been the target of communication interception, prompting a formal request to the State Security Agency to investigate.
- While welcoming the correction, the Minister has called on City Press to publish the correction across all social media platforms and indicate prominently in the article that it has been amended, and cautioned that inaccurate reporting - particularly where a detailed rebuttal was provided beforehand - inadvertently serves those working against clean governance at the Department.

The Minister of Public Works & Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, welcomed City Press' swift correction of an article published on Sunday morning which falsely reported that he ignored legal advice over his partner travelling to Brazil, and incorrectly stated the costs associated with travel. The article now correctly reflects that the Minister had no knowledge of the alleged disagreement within departmental officials, that total travel of the working visit to Brazil alongside his partner amounted to R350,000, and that no fruitless or wasteful duplicate bookings were made, while associated social media posts of the article has been deleted.

The Minister said he views the sensationalist false reporting by the journalist and City Press - which follows a Press Council order against the journalist and publication for incorrect reporting in relation to the Independent Development Trust (IDT) - as part of the coordinated fightback campaign by individuals at the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure to derail

the clean-up campaign the Minister embarked on, which includes the suspension and resignation of senior personnel, lifestyle audits and disciplinary action. This follows reports in the Sunday Times today that the Minister and his senior officials have been the target of communication interception and eavesdropping, and that the State Security Agency (SSA) have been requested to investigate,

“Similarly to the tactics used in the fightback campaign used when we tried to clean-up the IDT with the use of fake news article and social media bots, City Press published a blatantly false article and headline which was widely shared on social media and which inadvertently favours those who are against the clean-up campaign we have embarked on at the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure. This follows reports that my and the DG’s office is being spied on, confirming my suspicion that a campaign is underway to stop the work we are doing within the department,” Minister Macpherson said.

“Political parties such as Action South Africa - which has previously fallen victim to fake news around the IDT and called for my suspension - again jumped to support the false reporting, thereby helping to defend those standing in the way of clean-governance. While the correction to the article will not undo the serious damage already caused by the blatantly false reporting, I welcome City Press’ efforts to correct the article. I, however, remain extremely concerned how this reporting was allowed to take place in the first place which clearly favours those who seek to undo the work we are trying to.”

The Minister said while the article has now been corrected, in line with the South African Press Code, he requests that the correction be published on all City Press’ social platforms, and indicate promptly in the article that it has been corrected and amended. He added that while he welcomes the scrutiny and vibrance of South African media, journalism should take care to verify all allegations before publishing as to avoid inadvertently assisting those involved in wrong doing.

“As a democratic South African, I remain fully committed to transparency and accountability, and welcomes legitimate scrutiny of our work. However, journalism that presents factual inaccuracies as established fact - particularly after a detailed rebuttal has been provided – serves to support those who are against the clean-up efforts underway in the department. I will therefore continue to hold the media to the same standard of accuracy and accountability that I holds myself and the Department to.”

**Enquiries:**

James De Villiers

Spokesperson to the Minister

082 766 0276