



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

DPW Bursary Awards Ceremony

**Velmore Hotel Estate, Centurion, Pretoria
13 January 2015**

Keynote Address:

TW Nxesi MP, Minister of Public Works

PROTOCOL

- Programme Director, Mr Thulani Ntombela
- The CEO of the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA), Ms S Pilusa – *our partners in the bursaries and schools programme*
- Representatives of the entities of Public Works – in particular the CBE (Council for the Built Environment) which has assisted in developing a skills strategy for the sector
- Professor Tinus Maritz of the University of Pretoria
- Representatives of the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (Pretoria) – *which has greatly contributed to our programme of teacher and learner development, motivation and awareness in relation to science and technology*

- Representatives of the Madzahisi Trading Enterprise (Giyani) – *which provided training in engineering design to nine learners during the three weeks after the matric exams. I need to emphasise the importance of this intervention – since students who did not take Engineering Design in school often experience challenges with this when they get to university.*
- Representatives of the Eastern Cape Department of Sports and Recreation – *which provided support for the province’s learners to participate in sport - reminding us of the need for a healthy body as well as intellectual development*
- The A/DG of the Department of Public Works, as well as the DDG: Corporate Services and officials of the Department – particularly from the Human Capital Investment Unit which has facilitated this occasion

- Representatives of the schools which partner with Public Works – including Ms Ramotsho, Principal of Regolotswe Secondary School in Itsoseng, and
- Most importantly, the successful students who are today receiving bursaries from the Department of Public Works – represented today by Nkosana Ngobeni, a learner from EPP Mhinga Secondary School

Welcome all. It gives me great pleasure to be a part of this important event. Clearly it is an important occasion for the 40 beneficiaries of the bursaries to be awarded.

But – to reiterate what I said last year - I also need to make the point that this initiative is part of a much bigger picture – our Seven Year Plan to rebuild the Department of Public Works – which includes 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 NDP; 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. (We cannot be complacent that only 25% of built environment professionals are black.)

I firmly believe that had we had an adequate complement of professional and technical staff – such as qualified project managers, quantity surveyors and engineers – then we would have avoided most of the irregularities and over-spending that we witnessed all too often in the past.

It follows, therefore, that as Public Works we have a clear and strategic long-term interest and commitment

to technical and professional training in the Built Environment – both to rebuild the professional capacity of the Department – and to contribute to scarce skills required in the Built Environment generally.

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

We need to remind ourselves - that money spent on the education of our children is not simply another expenditure and therefore a drain on the fiscus.

Rather, it must be seen as an investment in the lives of the learners, in the economy, and in the future well-being of the society as a whole.

Let us never forget the powerful words of our own Tata Madiba:

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Department of Public Works Schools Programme and Bursary Programme

In an attempt to address built environment skills shortages, Public Works adopted the Council for the Built Environment's Skills Pipeline Strategy. The strategy spells out three inter-linked intervention areas aimed at ensuring a seamless flow of professionals into the Department. These are:

- *The Push Strategy* – aimed at providing enough competent and skilled professionals in the built environment through supported and funded secondary and tertiary education programmes;
- *The Intermediate Strategy* – aimed at providing and training built environment professionals through supported candidacy and mentorship programmes to the level of professional registration; and

- *The Pull Strategy* – aiming at making the built environment an attractive profession through retention and continuous professional development.

The Push Strategy includes:

- the Schools Programme
- Bursaries
- Job shadowing
- Community outreach, and
- Career Exhibitions

The Intermediate Strategy includes:

- Internships
- Learnerships
- Artisan Training
- The Young Professionals /Candidacy Programme
- this is critical in combatting the loss of black graduates in the built environment professions simply because they do not get the necessary placements to attain professional status

- The Asset and Property Management Development Programme, and
- Life Skills Support Interventions

The Pull Strategy includes:

- OSD (Occupation Specific Dispensation) remuneration
- building Centres of Excellence
- Continuous Professional Development, and
- the appointment of retired professionals as mentors.

Under the Push Strategy, the Human Capital Investment Unit prioritizes the Schools Programme and awarding of bursaries.

The Schools Programme

In 2013 the Department initiated the Schools Programme by adopting fifteen (15) schools from Mthatha, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Polokwane,

Mmabatho and Kimberly Regional Offices. The Department of Basic Education (mainly District Offices) assisted in identifying schools.

The Programme targets less resourced schools situated in rural, farm and townships areas – but schools that are clearly well-managed and where learners are performing well.

One hundred (100) top performers comprising of grades 10-12 learners from the adopted schools are selected annually and introduced to the built environment disciplines and careers. The learners together with their Maths and Science teachers are further supported through intensive Maths and Science teaching and learning during winter school camps. Grade 12 learners who meet requirements for built environment disciplines and professions are earmarked to be awarded a Public Works bursary.

These learners have been orientated towards the various careers within the built environment through career exhibitions and during the schools camp.

The need for the Schools Programme was informed by the 2008 Skills Audit Report conducted by the Council for the Built Environment. The Audit analysed skills shortages within the Built Environment – which were mainly attributed to poor throughput rates in the education system. The Schools Programme therefore seeks to address these challenges and promote the teaching of Maths and Science as well as to open up access to the Built Environment professions.

CBE's Skills Audit – and more recent updates – indicates that still only a quarter of professionals in the Built Environment are black. One of the mandates of the Department of Public Works is to facilitate transformation in the Built Environment – and the Schools Programme is clearly in line with that mandate

to promote the training of black professionals in the sector.

The specific aims of the Schools Programme include the following:

- To promote Built Environment and property related careers by supporting maths and science learners
- To encourage learners to take up maths and science
- To support learners to grasp maths and science concepts through additional tutoring and targeted teaching and learning methodologies
- To address the lack of school resources that lead to poor performance of learners

- To support and equip Educators and the School Management Team with skills and techniques relevant to the schooling environment
- To promote parental participation in learner education, and
- To offer bursaries to outstanding performers.

The Bursary Programme

The Department received a R50million discretionary grant from the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA). The grant was to support the implementation of all capacity building programmes in the department: Internships, the Candidacy Programme, the Artisan Development Programme and the Schools Programme.

The Department used part of the grant in 2014 to award full time bursaries to students registered for

studies within the built environment. One hundred and forty four (144) bursaries were awarded during the 2014 academic year.

Out of the 144 bursaries, 50 bursaries went to the Schools Programme beneficiaries. Eighty three (83) bursaries went to students in their second, third and final year studies. Twenty nine (29) of these bursary graduates are joining the Department of Public Works to be part of the Candidacy and Internship programmes effective from 5th January 2015. The Candidacy Programme will also be funded by CETA through the discretionary grant.

I need to make the point that bursary holders sign a contract to join the Department's Candidacy Programme upon graduation from university and, thereafter, to work for DPW for a period equivalent to the number of years for which they received a bursary. This is mutually beneficial: the graduates move

immediately into the candidacy stage, whilst the Department receives much needed skills.

Also during 2014, eleven (11) bursaries were awarded to Further Education and Training College students in the Eastern Cape (King Hintsa and King Sabata Further Education and Training Colleges). The 11 bursaries will contribute to expanding the number of registered artisans.

Let me briefly report on the progress of those students who were awarded bursaries in 2014:

- There was a 75% success rate amongst the 50 bursary students drawn from the Schools Programme; and
- An 89% success rate amongst the additional 83 grant beneficiaries.

I believe it is important that the HCI does two things:

- Undertakes an analysis of what caused the minority to fail – and implements the necessary measures. Ideally we don't want anyone to fail; and
- HCI must look at continuing to provide remedial support where appropriate. As the Department, we don't want to leave any student behind – including those who may have failed. HCI will explore – with them – the possible alternatives that they can pursue.

Today the Department is awarding 40 new bursaries to learners who have completed matric and are provisionally accepted at various universities where they will pursue careers in the built environment in 2015. [This is in addition to the carrying over the majority of the bursaries awarded in 2014.]

Each learner will receive a bursary to the value of R120 000 to pursue full time studies in any of the following degrees:

- Quantity Surveying
- Engineering (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical)
- Architecture
- Landscape Architect
- Construction Project Management

The bursary will cover the following:

- Tuition
- Accommodation
- Textbooks
- Monthly allowance

Thirty one (31) bursaries are being awarded to learners currently participating in the departmental Schools Programme. The 31 learners come from the following adopted schools: Giyani, EPP Mhinga, Tshireleco, Amazizi, St James, Mpondombini, Rakgotso and Soshanguve South.

Nine (9) additional bursaries will be awarded to deserving students as a result of commitments made at Ministerial public appearances:

- *WF Nkomo Secondary School* - two (2) bursaries were committed during the departmental commemoration of the 2014 Mandela Day at WF Nkomo Secondary School in Atteridgeville. In addition WF Nkomo will be admitted into the Schools Programme. In fact, due to the lateness of this intervention, the school was unable to provide two learners - interested in the built environment – for 2015, but will do so for 2016.
- *Property and Construction Career Week* - Five (5) bursaries were committed, one to each of the following five schools that took part in the 2014 Property and Construction Career Week: Namedi Secondary School, Diepkloof; Fons Luminis Secondary, Diepkloof; Minerva Secondary School, Alexandra; Realogile Secondary School, Alexandra;

and Phomolong Secondary School, Tembisa.

(Again, not all schools were able to respond in time, whilst Fons Luminis Secondary provided two suitable candidates.)

- Two (2) more bursaries will be awarded to top performing learners taken from the national list of 2014 matric top performers. This is in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education.

I need to mention that the learners are not left to fend for themselves when they get to tertiary education. The Human Capital Investment Unit provides student support, care and counselling through its bursary care programme on a quarterly basis. Officials from HCI visit the students and arrange for interventions to support less performing students as per need.

The Department also hosts an SGB (School Governing Body) and Principals Forum and a University Readiness Workshop:

- The university-life preparatory workshop for the bursary awardees is aimed at preparing the prospective students for university life; and
- The forum for principals and chairpersons of School Governing Bodies from adopted schools – is designed to strengthen institutional support for the learners whilst still at school.

Let me just raise one issue with the Human Capital Investment Unit: last year I congratulated you that in awarding bursaries, you had been able to maintain a reasonable gender balance in what are, historically, male-dominated built environment disciplines and professions. I am concerned that we seem to be backsliding on this – with 28 male beneficiaries and only 12

female. Again we will need to analyse this, debate a way forward and put in place the necessary measures. Whilst we are on the subject, I also need to know that every effort is being made to attract and support learners living with disabilities.

Finally, let me address a few words to the students who will be awarded bursaries: Never forget that you are here today as a result of your own hard work and commitment.

Your future – as you negotiate the Higher Education environment – holds many opportunities, but also many challenges. Ultimately, success is dependent on you. You need to keep up the hard work – and avoid all the obvious temptations.

Support structures are in place – academic, spiritual and psychological – so if you do run into problems seek help as soon as possible. There are people there

whose job it is to support you – so make use of these facilities.

When I say work hard, take a balanced approach – also make time for sporting, cultural and other activities. So work hard – but enjoy your time in Higher Education as a time to develop as a person, holistically – personally, socially, spiritually, physically – as well as academically and professionally.

I wish you well for the future. Indeed, you are the future of the Built Environment professions in South Africa.

I thank you.