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MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCURE, DEAN MACPHERSON LAUNCHES THE EPWP LISTENING TOUR IN QGEBERHA-EASTERN CAPE

Article by: Lesego Moretlwe Pictures by: Maanea Maselesele



In a bid to reform the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Hon. Dean Macpherson is conducting nationwide community and EPWP participants' engagement sessions through the Ministerial EPWP Listening Tour. The Minister launched the EPWP Listening Tour on 28 October 2024 at Bethelsdorp in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape. The purpose of the tour was to engage with community members as well as EPWP participants as they share their experience about the EPWP.

Stating the purpose of the EPWP Listening Tour, Minister Macpherson said "Today marks an important milestone for the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure as we launch our

Some participants acknowledged that the EPWP is providing skills and work opportunities through which they earn an income and therefore reduce poverty and unemployment within their households. In conclusion, Minister Macpherson said "the EPWP remains an important tool to instil hope, provide work, and bring dignity and skills development to communities in need. It also plays a crucial role in addressing service delivery challenges, from road maintenance to grass-cutting and, in some places, even library services, he added. The Minister was joined by the Mayor of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, Gary Van Niekerk, Ward Councillor Jonny Arendse.

The Programme is currently in the first year of the implementation of the EPWP Phase 5 which is aimed at creating 5 million work opportunities by 2029.

Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) here in Bethelsdorp, Gqeberha, Eastern Cape. It is the first time since the EPWP programme was launched in 2003 that we will embark on a nationwide listening tour to hear from communities themselves about their experiences with the Programme as we begin to rethink its contribution to better serve communities" Minister elaborated.

About 500 Gqeberha community members gathered at Bethelsdorp Community Hall to share their experiences about the EPWP and to listen to the Minister. Among the others, the community and EPWP participants pleaded for fair and transparent recruitment process, increased term of employment, increased wages, increased provision of Personal Protective Equipment, working tools, etc. The Minister welcomed the Community members and participants' shared experiences.

In his response, the Minister said, "this is why we are here today: to understand the challenges that you face with EPWP so that we can be inspired about how to improve on it. I firmly believe that the solutions to some of our biggest problems are often found in the communities that face them. The Minister further said "We need to reform the Programme to ensure that recipients are better-paid through permanent jobs that EPWP can be either a gateway to or in partnership with the private sector".



MINISTER DEAN MACPHERSON HOST THE SECOND SESSION OF THE EPWP LISTENING TOUR IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Article and Pictures by: Roslyn Mahlaole



Subsequent to the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Listening tour in the Eastern Cape Province, Minister Dean Macpherson took a tour to KwaZulu-Natal where he hosted the second leg of the tour at uMngeni Local Municipality in Pietermaritzburg. Among others, the Minister was accompanied by the Mayor of uMngeni Local Municipality, Cllr Christopher Pappas, and the Municipal Manager, Mr Mzi Hloba.

The Minister and other dignitaries were greeted with clapping of hands and praises by community members, EPWP and Community Work Programme participants who came in large numbers. The tour's objective was to converse with EPWP and community work participants to share their experiences with the Programme.

Among the issues highlighted were allegations of jobs for pals, political patronage, and a request to boost stipends. However, participants appreciated the Programme and the training they received.

In his closing remarks the Macpherson said he will use the experiences, ideas and opinions shared, to reform of the Programme. He further stated that he will also ensure that EPWP become a vehicle for skill transfer and a stepping stone towards getting employment or start small businesses. Through the listening tour, which will be rolled out nationwide in the coming months, the Minister aims to hear from communities about their experiences with the EPWP to bring attention to issues encountered within the programme. The tour and engagement with communities will also shape the Minister's vision to reimagine the EPWP.