

DEAN MACPHERSON

*Dear Team*

### Public Works & Infrastructure,

This week, we commemorate both the first anniversary of my appointment and the official start of the new government year. It is a poignant reminder of how quickly time passes – and how easily opportunities can slip by if we fail to seize them.

As I've shared in numerous media interviews, being appointed Minister of Public Works & Infrastructure has been the toughest job I've ever held, but it has also been the most rewarding. My ministerial office will tell you I am often the first to arrive at the office and the last to leave – sometimes packing up as late as 21:00 after a day of reading reports and reviewing submissions.

But to be part of something bigger than myself – to have the opportunity to reshape the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure into the economic engine of South Africa, to use public assets for public good, and to turn our country into a construction site – is the greatest honour of my life. I firmly believe that over the past year, we have built a strong foundation within the Department, which now serves as a springboard to drive delivery across the country.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of the thousands of Public Works & Infrastructure employees across the country. That is exactly why I made improving staff morale and satisfaction a central part of our five-year strategic plan. You are the engine that keeps this department moving – and if you haven't heard it before: thank you. We see you, we appreciate you, and we value your contribution to the greater good.



public works  
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June was a month of continued momentum. Across the Department, key initiatives advanced, often quietly and without fanfare, but always with dedication. The month saw the conclusion of our Ghost Employee Audit – an effort to root out the unacceptable practice of individuals receiving salaries while doing no work. Several investigations into corruption allegations were also finalised, which I hope to release publicly soon for scrutiny.

If we are serious about rooting out abuse and corruption, we must instil a culture of transparency. That is why these reports will be made available for public consumption.

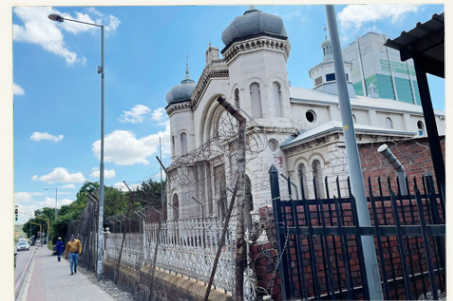
Our Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Listening Tour continued in Johannesburg, where we heard first-hand how the programme remains a critical lifeline for many communities. Yet many participants leave without the necessary skills to secure permanent employment or start a business. During the tour, I met with graduates of the EPWP National Youth Service Programme who had completed artisan training. Their stories were inspiring and underscored the urgent need to reform the EPWP into a real gateway to jobs and economic participation.

We also began a process to revitalise the historic Jewish Synagogue in Pretoria's Central Business District – the very site of the historic Rivonia Trial. By partnering with the Jewish community, we aim to honour South Africa's history while giving life to a derelict public asset. This initiative exemplifies how cross-sector partnerships can help us build a better South Africa.

## Public works seeks to root out 'ghost workers'

Staff will have to come to designated offices as part of a headcount verification process

**THANDO MASEKO** Political reporter  
The department of public works is infrastructure on began a process of verifying its workforce amid an audit of 'ghost employees' from its payroll as part of broader efforts to tighten fiscal discipline and improve governance.  
All staff are required to physically present themselves at designated offices as part of a headcount verification process.  
The initiative, which officials in the department said would be rolled out nationally, seeks to identify individuals drawing salaries without performing any work – a long-standing problem in the public sector.  
The purpose of this verification is to address the issue of ghost employees within the department. Please be advised that failure to comply may result in being classified as a ghost employee, which could lead to the suspension of their payments until compliance is achieved. A notice to employees on Minister's order.  
The verification process will be held on May 19 and 20.



Another key milestone was the release of our draft Integrated Social Facilitation Framework – a major step in reducing disruptions to infrastructure projects and addressing the so-called construction mafia. This framework, a direct outcome of the Durban Declaration signed at last year's National Summit on Crime-Free Construction Sites, formalises community engagement throughout the infrastructure project lifecycle. It is designed to prevent the intimidation and delays that have hindered progress on far too many projects. We've already seen strong interest in the draft, and I look forward to the comments received during the public participation process.

Midway through the month, as part of our Youth Month commemorations, I had the privilege of addressing the Council for the Built Environment's 'Youth in Infrastructure and Built Environment Expo' in Mbombela, Mpumalanga. Speaking to young people – many of whom are aspiring engineers, architects and artisans – reminded me why this work matters. We are not only building roads and bridges; we are building futures. We should all be inspired by their passion and optimism.





Let me also take a moment to congratulate the Department's Running Club and its members who completed the Comrades Marathon in June. During a certificate handover at our Pretoria headquarters – with many participants joining virtually – I shared how their endurance, grit, and resilience embody the values we strive to cultivate in our Department.

Later in the month, alongside Director-General Sifiso Mdakane and the Head of the Project Management Trading Entity, Siza Sibande, I travelled to Brasília to represent South Africa at the BRICS Urbanisation Forum. There, we engaged with global peers – including Ministers from Brazil and Indonesia – on urban planning, infrastructure financing, and delivery. These discussions confirmed that many of the challenges we face are not unique, and that partnerships with like-minded countries can strengthen our work here at home.

Back in South Africa, we continued our efforts to clean up and stabilise the Independent Development Trust (IDT). Thanks to your support, we restored a fully quorate board earlier this year. I am pleased to confirm that Cabinet last week approved the appointment of a new board, set to begin its term in July. This marks a crucial turning point for the IDT, and I want to thank all those involved in rebuilding governance and accountability at this critical institution.

## Upcoming Event:

As we begin July, I urge each one of us to keep our eyes on the bigger picture. The work we do is laying the foundation for long-term economic growth, job creation, and improved service delivery. Next week, we will present our Departmental Budget Vote to Parliament, where I will announce a number of groundbreaking initiatives as we accelerate the pace of our work.

We will also continue to build a department that is visible and responsive – one where South Africans can feel the tangible benefits of our work through quality infrastructure delivery and better public asset management. This includes releasing previously abandoned properties for use as shelters for victims of gender-based violence, opening requests for proposals on underutilised public assets, and engaging directly with communities on their infrastructure concerns.

By working together, we are building a Department we can all be proud of – one that serves the best interests of our country. Let us stay the course, maintain our momentum, and continue to prove that this Department can be South Africa's economic delivery unit.

Thank you, once again, for your service and commitment.

*Best regards,*

**DEAN MACPHERSON**

**MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**



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