

from the Desk of the

# Minister

## Dean Macpherson



### DEAR TEAM PUBLIC WORKS,

I am writing to you today with renewed hope and optimism about the future of this department. I am grateful for the many messages you have shared with me about how morale has been lifted, how people are excited to come to work, and how there is an appreciation for a new culture of hard work—one where big ideas are embraced, and mutual respect is the order of the day.

Indeed, I agree with you that in just seven months, we have laid a strong foundation within the department to ensure we can deliver on our key mandates of building and maintaining social infrastructure.

Furthermore, as mentioned in my State of the Nation reply, we are implementing innovative approaches that will see neglected and underutilised state-owned properties meaningfully contribute to the communities in which they are located.

All this work contributes to our overarching vision to turn the department into the economic delivery unit of South Africa by using it to transform the country into a construction site that will ignite economic growth and help create thousands of new jobs.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure is undoubtedly in better shape today than when I first took office, and this is all thanks to you—our committed and loyal staff.

### USING PUBLIC ASSETS FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

One of the key policy changes we have implemented is the use of public assets for the public good.

For too long, state-owned properties have remained vacant, falling into disrepair and attracting criminal activity.

In response, we have begun by making 31 properties available for requests for proposals, valued at R1.4 billion.

This initiative is projected to unlock up to R10 billion in private investment, generate over 165,000 jobs, and bring in approximately R200 million in rental income to the department.

Gone are the days when public buildings became an eyesore in communities. This is just the beginning of a reinvigorated Department of Public Works.



public works  
& infrastructure

Department:  
Public Works and Infrastructure  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## #LetsBuildSA

## TACKLING CORRUPTION AND INEFFICIENCY

Since taking office, we have taken a firm stance against corruption and mismanagement, whether within the department or in the entities for which we are responsible. We have launched several investigations into failed projects, including the stalled Telkom Towers Precinct in Tshwane, where close to a billion rand has been spent, yet the buildings remain unusable.

The independent PwC investigation into the R800 million Oxygen Plant tender at the Independent Development Trust (IDT) will further uncover whether any corrupt activities occurred and whether any officials need to be held accountable. This past week, we also launched the next phase of the skills audit among the senior levels of the department to ensure that we have the necessary expertise to execute our mandate.

## TACKLING THE CONSTRUCTION MAFIA

We have declared war on the construction mafia, developing a coordinated plan to bring an end to construction stoppages once and for all. The Durban Declaration, signed in November last year, is a historic partnership between the department, the South African Police Service, and the National Treasury to dismantle these criminal syndicates, which have disrupted service delivery and stalled projects for far too long.

This is imperative if we aim to attract additional infrastructure investment into our country, which will help achieve our goal of reducing overall unemployment. Reports indicate that, in the few months since the declaration's signing, there has already been a decline in construction stoppages, which shows that we are moving in the right direction.

At the same time, our department has made significant progress in securing properties and preventing occupations, crime, and asset degradation. We have secured eviction orders, including at the Castle of Good Hope, to ensure that public properties serve all South Africans instead of attracting criminal elements.

## ATTRACTING INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Through Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), we launched a first-of-its-kind project preparation fund worth over R180 million, which will help prepare infrastructure projects across the South African government worth more than R1 billion. This will ensure that we get more shovels into the ground and cranes into the sky—sooner—truly turning South Africa into a construction site.

We have already received an overwhelming response to this initiative, which is proof of the appetite for project preparation funding to see more construction projects implemented successfully. Additionally, through the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission, we are starting to roll out the Adopt-a-Municipality programme, where we will partner with local governments to maximise infrastructure spending and efficiency. We are piloting the project with four municipalities, with the aim of expanding the initiative nationwide, pending its success.



## OUR VISION FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

As shared in my State of the Nation reply, the foundation we have laid over the past seven months has built up to this moment, where we seek to accelerate implementation and service delivery in the department.

Over the next year, we aim to:

- Make significant progress in our plan to attract an additional R100 billion in private sector infrastructure investment by, among other initiatives, positioning ISA as the hub for all major infrastructure projects.
- Establish Special Projects Units within the department, which will help us fast-track infrastructure projects and revive stalled projects such as the Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance in the Eastern Cape.
- Begin work to redevelop small harbours, which fall under our department, by releasing requests for proposals to turn them into economic hubs.
- Reform the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) to ensure that it becomes a skills transfer mechanism and a pathway to permanent employment.

## A SHARED COMMITMENT

I must emphasise that none of this will be possible without the hard work and dedication of everyone in this department. I am grateful for the continuous feedback you provide me. What we are attempting to do is not easy, but it is most definitely worth it. Over the past seven months, I have been amazed by the level of commitment and dedication to public service within the department.

But I have also realised that there are those who want this department to fail—those who spread fake news and sabotage the work we are doing. We must guard against these forces and remain fully committed to our vision of building a better South Africa. We must stand together and protect what we have achieved over the past seven months.

As mentioned, the work we are doing demonstrates to South Africa that our department is not one of plans and slogans, but one of action. By working together—brick by brick, project by project—we are building a better South Africa for all our people.

In the months ahead, I look forward to working with you to achieve that goal.

**BEST REGARDS,**  
**DEAN MACPHERSON**  
**MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE**