

18 October 2022

Minister Patricia de Lille
National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure

Dear Min De Lille

WCPDF COMMENT ON THE EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME (EPWP) POLICY

As the Western Cape Property Development Forum (WCPDF), we hereby wish to submit the following comment on the EPWP Policy, as presented in Government Gazette No: 46917.

We recognise the efforts that have been made by government over the years in terms of addressing the alleviation of poverty through the creation of work opportunities such as the EPWP programme.

What we would now also like to strongly support is the recognition by government, as per the policy being presented, that the remuneration behind the EPWP programme needs to be brought in line with that of the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

However, our concern lies in the proposed frames being considered to bring EPWP wages in line: all four scenarios in the policy reflect a five-year phasing-in period and we would call for a revision of this timeframe to accelerate the process as far as possible.

Every labourer on every construction site has the right to earn a dignified wage; add to this the ever-escalating cost-of-living, transportation costs (when such transport is available), and the very real threats that now exist on sites to contractors and labourers alike (thanks to the on-going rise of the construction mafia) and we now have a near-untenable situation.

We are increasingly hearing accounts of private sector contractors on public infrastructure projects adding to the wages of the EPWP workers from their own pockets to keep them on site and motivated at least in some way.

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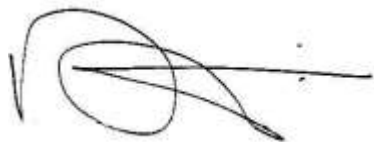
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We strongly urge the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to revisit the current timeline in order to bring what should have been an equitable wage already years ago at the very least in line with minimum wage as soon as possible.

We also urge the Ministry that this policy is for all those across all employable age groups. While we understand the emphasis when the policy was first implemented seemed to have been predominantly on youth, we see the new policy speaks to youth, women, those in the rural areas and the disabled. We believe it should be available to any and all who fall within the current criteria as stated in the policy (on page 46), namely those who:

- a. Are willing and able to take up the offered work;*
- b. Can be categorised as poor;*
- c. Are unemployed or underemployed and;*
- d. Live close to the project area.*

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Deon van Zyl', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

DEON VAN ZYL

Chairperson

Western Cape Property Development Forum

