

## **The Department of Public Works needs plans, not dreams**

By Madeleine Hicklin MP - DA Member on the Portfolio Committee of Public Works and Infrastructure

Chairperson,

In conducting proper oversight into whether the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) is following its mandate of whether and how allocated budgets were employed to achieve stated policy objectives, we find the department has fallen very short of its mandate.

In dealing with Outcome 4 - offering decent employment through inclusive growth - the DPWI during Quarter 3 struggled to make any real progress as it only looked at reaching an additional 1.1 million people.

Countrywide, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is supposed to provide an important avenue for labour absorption and income transfers to poor households in the short to medium term. It has, unfortunately, not done that and has underperformed dramatically. An underperformance which, at this rate, will sadly see South Africa drowning in youngsters looking towards the EPWP Programme as a career path, not a stepping stone to inclusion and upliftment in a formal work environment.

While President Ramaphosa, in his State of the Nation Address of 20 June, asserted, that: *"The ANC had done much to meet people's basic needs, to reduce poverty and to transform a devastated economy"*. I am asking you for the evidence - tangible evidence.

Minister de Lille, what we need is a comprehensive job-seekers database; opportunity centres that work to transfer skills, sustainable economic growth and equal opportunity for all our youth - as advocated by the Democratic Alliance (DA).

Instead, the evidence shows that our economy is not growing, and not enough jobs are being created. Our devastated country currently has over 9 million unemployed people - mainly our youth!

In a DA-led City of Johannesburg, evidence shows in excess of 189 000 net jobs created in one year. Similar evidence can be found in the DA-led Western Cape and in the DA-led municipality of Tshwane. These job increases have resulted from proactive job creation, not pipe dreams with no substance.

Minister De Lille, the five-year DPWI's current target shows a national overall shortfall of over 1.6 million work opportunities in this budget year. This was mainly due to your inability to provide adequate training and because of 'limited funding' provided by your department.

Quarter 4 has even more ambitious targets - which will, no doubt, not materialise under the current dream of this department as it stands.