

# EPWP BULLETIN

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## Minister Macpherson Takes the 6th Leg of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Listening Tour to Chatsworth

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With the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) policy reforms beginning to take shape, the Minister of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, recently embarked on the 6th leg of the EPWP Listening Tour, coupled with a certificate handover ceremony in Chatsworth, Durban last week Friday.

The Objective of the listening tour was to provide community members and programme participants with direct platform to engage with the Minister on challenges experienced within the programme.

The Minister began the day with a visit to the Small Business Academy, where 26 apprentices are currently undergoing on-site training in preparation for their trade tests. Of these 16 are specialising in Electrical work and 10 Plumbing, all progressing towards accredited qualifications and improved employment opportunities. The second part of the programme focused on community engagement. Delivering the opening remarks, Councillor Sibusiso Khumalo from eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality welcome all attendees.

The Deputy Director-General (DDG) for EPWP, Carmen Joy Abrahams, outlined the purpose of the listening tour. She stated that the department wants EPWP participants to see and feel that they are making a meaningful contribution to improving service delivery through the programme's various interventions. Most importantly, she emphasised the department's commitment to hearing directly from participants about their experiences.

Addressing the community and EPWP participants, Minister Macpherson reaffirmed his commitment to reforming the programme by transforming into a long-term job creation initiative. He highlighted the importance of restoring dignity to participants and addressing challenges in the recruitment process, including manipulation and unfair practices. He further noted that the revised programme - particularly infrastructure-related work aimed to empowering young people will strengthen through partnerships between the Department, Technical and Vocational Educational and Training colleges, and the private sector.

The Minister also highlighted that the construction industry created 160,000 jobs in the last quarter. He commended the graduates for their outstanding achievements and praised the role of the National Youth Service (NYS) in empowering young people.

During the engagement session, MS. Nombulelo Mabika, a Chatsworth resident, raised concerns about the exclusion of local residents from EPWP projects implemented within their own communities. In response, the Minister issued a firm warning that communities must have fair access to EPWP opportunities without interference. He stressed that individuals and ward councilors from other areas should not interfere in opportunities intended for specific wards.

Manager for National Youth Service (NYS) at Durban Regional Office, Mr Velile Jiyane, applauded the 80 graduates for their commitment and determination to improve their lives during and after the programme. He also outlined the various areas in which participants gained experience during their tenure at the Durban High Court, including bricklaying and plumbing.

Participants, Ms. Siphumelele Radebe, from Ward 32 in eThekweni, delivered a heartfelt testimony. She joined the programme under the NYS apprenticeship initiative in 2023, working as an artisan plumber at the Durban High Court.

"The programme helped me earn a living through plumbing" she said.

She also completed Start and Improve Your Business (SYIB) training, which played a significant role in her personal and professional development and ultimately enabled her to establish her own business.

