



BUILDING | BETTER | COMMUNITIES

EPWP NEWSLETTER



JUNE / JULY 2026



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From the Editor

Welcome to this edition of our EPWP newsletter.

The launch of EPWP Phase V in 2024 marks an important milestone in the evolution of the Expanded Public Works Programme. As the programme continues to create work opportunities for unemployed South Africans, Phase V introduces a renewed focus on ensuring that these opportunities are not only accessible but also meaningful, empowering participants with the skills, experience and support needed to transition into sustainable livelihoods.

A key priority of EPWP Phase V is the reform of the programme to improve the quality of work opportunities. This means placing greater emphasis on skills development, accredited training, work readiness and pathways to long-term employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship. By strengthening these elements, EPWP aims to create lasting socio-economic impact that extends beyond the duration of a work opportunity.

Another significant area of reform is the improvement of recruitment guidelines. Transparent, fair and accountable recruitment processes are essential to ensuring that EPWP opportunities reach the intended beneficiaries. Strengthened recruitment guidelines will enhance public confidence in the programme, promote equity, reduce opportunities for abuse, and ensure that all eligible community members have an equal opportunity to participate.

The success of EPWP Phase V depends on the collective commitment of all stakeholders, including government departments, municipalities, implementing bodies and communities. Through collaboration, innovation and accountability, we can build a programme that not only provides temporary employment but also equips participants with the tools to achieve sustainable economic opportunities.

We hope this edition provides valuable insights into the progress of EPWP Phase V and the ongoing efforts to strengthen the programme for the benefit of all South Africans.

Enjoy the issue!!!

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PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE MINISTER HON. DEAN MACPHERSON OUTLINES THE EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME (EPWP) REFORM AGENDA

Article by: Maanea Maselesele, Pictures by Caroline Mokotedi

The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson has on, 05 June 2026 hosted a community engagement session at Buffalo Flats area in East London, Eastern Cape. This engagement session focussed on the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) as a service delivery initiative aimed at providing work opportunities and skills development interventions towards creating sustainable employment opportunities for the Programmes' participants.

In his keynote address, Minister Macpherson emphasised the EPWP reform agenda and its benefit for communities and individuals participating in the Programme. He emphasised that the Listening Tours are not only about listening but it is also about finding solutions, hence the initiative of the newly launched EPWP Working on Infrastructure Programme which emanated from listening to the communities and finding solutions to challenges raised.

Through the nationwide listening tour, the Minister aims to hear directly from community members about their experiences with the Programme, address challenges and gather insights that will inform the Minister's vision for a re-imagined EPWP, focussed on long-term socio-economic empowerment within communities.

Furthermore, Minister Macpherson indicated that 'We cannot exclude people from opportunities because of their age. While youth unemployment remains a priority, South Africans over the age of 40 also deserve access to opportunities created through programmes

such as the EPWP," he said.

Community members shared their experiences of the programme and raised concerns relating to limited skills development initiatives, delayed stipend payments, shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) lack of working tools, and equitable access to opportunities. Participants also called for stronger collaboration between municipalities and Non-Profit Organisations to improve Programme delivery.

The Minister welcomed the feedback and noted that the insights gathered through the session would help shape a reimagined EPWP that is more responsive to community needs.

The engagement was graced by the presence of senior officials from all spheres of government. The delegates included Nkosi Nompumelelo Ndlazi from the Eastern Cape Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Chief Director: EPWP Infrastructure Sector Mr Ignatius Ariyo, Chief Director: EPWP Partnership Support Mr Musa Ntshani, DPWI Western Cape Regional Manager Ms Nolzwi Hlengwa, and Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality Ward Councillor Lucille Benfield.

The Councillor Benfiel and Inkosi Nompumelelo Ndlazi shared the same sentiments in expressing their gratitude about Minister Macpherson's initiative to visit the community and engage them on issues of service delivery, particularly on EPWP. ■



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE LAUNCHES YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME AND LEARNERSHIPS

Article and pictures by: Brian Dlamini

On 12 June 2025, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (KZN-DPWI), led by MEC Martin Meyer, launched a Youth Empowerment Programme and Learnerships under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The launch ceremony was held at the KZN DPWI Auditorium, Oliver Tambo House, in Pietermaritzburg.

The initiative aims to equip 60 young people with practical skills to enhance their employment opportunities and contribute to economic development in the province.

The programme consists of three learnership streams:

- 15 learners enrolled in Clothing, Textile, Footwear and Leather, a programme that will run for eight months
- 15 learners enrolled in Furniture Making (Upholstery), which will also run for eight months.

- 30 learners enrolled in the National Certificate: Information Technology – Systems Support, a programme scheduled to run for 11 months.

Speaking at the launch, MEC Meyer emphasised the importance of skills development and youth empowerment in addressing unemployment and creating pathways to sustainable livelihoods. The learnerships are designed to provide participants with both theoretical knowledge and practical workplace experience, preparing them for opportunities in various sectors of the economy.

The EPWP Programme manager in KZN, Mr Sduduzo Simelane, wished the learners well on their new journey and urged them to seize this opportunity with both hands as the future of this country is in the hands of young people. ■



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE WELCOME PARTICIPANTS INTO THE APPRENTICESHIP AND LEARNERSHIP PROGRAMME

Article and pictures by: Khanyisa Moagi



As part of the youth month commemoration, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) in Limpopo has hosted a welcoming ceremony for a total of 210 Expanded Public Works Programme- National Youth Service (NYS) learners into the Apprenticeship and Learnership Programme.

As the department continues to celebrate youth month, in commemoration of 50 year's anniversary of the 1976 youth uprisings, Ms Lefentse Ratsela, Director for the NYS programme highlighted quality training as well as skills and exit pathways as some of the key deliverables for young people for the duration of the EPWP Phase 5 implementation.

MEC Rachoene of Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo, alluded that "Today we welcome through our partnerships with both MERSETA and the Construction SETA, who have collectively contributed R26.9 million for our 210 cohort of trainees , Our gathering takes place during Youth Month, a period that holds deep significance in our country's history. It is a time when we honour the courage, determination, and sacrifices of the young people of 1976 who stood up for their rights and for a better

future. Their actions continue to inspire us to create opportunities that empower young people and enable them to participate meaningfully in the development of our nation."

Given an opportunity of how they feel about being part of the programme, Mr Kholofelo Sassa said "We really appreciate the opportunity, because of thousands applied but we are the chosen ones. Ms Sassa also advised participants to not lose focus and grab the opportunity with both hands because it is going to help open doors for them ". The learners will be placed in trades such as : Community House Building , Electrical , Plumbing, Carpentry, Diesel Mechanic, Painting , Welding & Bricklaying. ■



EPWP PARTICIPANTS ATTEND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMEMORATION IN STELLENBOSCH

Article and pictures by Maanea Maselesele



The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) National Youth Service (NYS) participants have recently attended the Youth Engagement Human Rights Commemoration event, led by Minister Dean Macpherson, at Eikestad Hall, Cloetesville, Stellenbosch. Participants were recruited from the City of Cape Town and placed at the Parliament Accommodation Precinct project.

During his keynote address, the Minister emphasised the importance of the EPWP in delivering dignified and sustainable

training opportunities that empower participants and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

One of the participants, Ms. Amahle Lawu, shared her experience and encouraged fellow young people to join the Programme:

"I stood here today to express my gratitude to the EPWP for providing me with plumbing skills I once thought were only for men. The Programme offered meaningful projects in the built environment, and I encourage young people to take advantage of these opportunities when they become available."

The project, which commenced in September 2025 and is scheduled to be completed in September 2026, provide participants with practical skills development opportunities in the construction sector.

Through this initiative, the participants are offered training in the following areas:

- Building and Civil (Painting, Carpentry) – NQF Level 3
- Plumbing – NQF Level 4

The event brought together stakeholders from across the Built Environment Sector to showcase the impact of collaboration towards advancing youth empowerment. ■

EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME EMPOWERS PARTICIPANTS TO LAUNCH BUSINESSES

Article and pictures by: Tumelo Sekwele



The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) has recently held a week-long "Start and Improve Your Business" (SIYB) training for 30 participants working as cleaners at various government facilities, including hospitals and schools. The training took place from 23-27 March 2026 in Harrismith, Free State.

This forms part of the Minister's priority areas in the current phase of the EPWP, which seeks to enable participants to launch their own businesses ventures upon exiting the Programme.

The training was facilitated by Ms. Moshidi Makhubela and Mr. Kabelo Selaocwe who are both Deputy Directors for Enterprise Development in Head Office and Free State regional office respectively.

The training covered the following modules:

- Greening your business
- Staffing
- Costing

Sources of funding

- Financial management
- Marketing
- Start-up capital



BUILDING SKILLS, CREATING OPPORTUNITIES: EPWP-NYS PARTICIPANTS GRADUATE WITH PRIDE

Article and pictures by: Roslyn Mahlaole and Tinyiko Mdluli

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Johannesburg Regional Office, in partnership with GVK Siyazama Construction hosted a National Youth Service (NYS) Exit Graduation Ceremony for the second group of NYS participants on 12 June 2026 in Johannesburg.

A total of 26 NYS participants received both theoretical and practical training in various construction-related disciplines, including mechanical engineering, plumbing, bricklaying, electrical engineering, and civil engineering. The training equipped participants with valuable technical skills and workplace experience, enhancing their employability and entrepreneurial prospects.

The event was held to honour and celebrate the achievements of NYS participants who successfully completed their skills development training at the 85 Anderson Street Project in Johannesburg. As part of Youth Month commemorations, the ceremony not only celebrated the skills acquired by participants but also acknowledged their dedication, perseverance, and commitment throughout the implementation of the programme.

As part of the Programme's exit initiatives, two participants have been placed at a Water Treatment Centre under the Department of Water and Sanitation. These learners are expected to be permanently employed by the department at a later stage.

The graduation ceremony was attended by senior DPWI officials, including Chief Director for Infrastructure sector, Mr Ignitius Ariyo, Johannesburg Regional Manager Ms Jabulile Mabaso, and EPWP Programme Manager, Ms Beauty Kutumane, among other distinguished guests.

The programme has already produced positive outcomes, with two participants securing employment opportunities as chemical engineers. This achievement highlights the impact of skills development initiatives in creating meaningful opportunities for young people.

In his keynote address, Mr Ariyo described the project as one of the Department's most successful initiatives and reaffirmed DPWI's commitment to youth empowerment through skills development programmes. "More skills development programmes will be launched soon to help reduce the unemployment rate among young people and create opportunities for sustainable livelihoods," said Mr Ariyo.

Speaking on behalf of the graduates, Ms Ash Leigh Hopper expressed gratitude to EPWP and GVK Siyazama Construction for providing an opportunity that equipped participants with valuable skills and opened doors to future career opportunities. The ceremony was further enriched by a motivational performance from Mr Hlubi Sonjica, who inspired and entertained attendees through poetry and words of encouragement.

In sharing the message of support, Ms Lungile Zulu, the NYS Deputy Director in Head Office, encouraged graduates to maximise the value of their qualifications and continue investing in their personal and professional growth. "Continue upgrading your qualifications, explore business opportunities, and use the skills you have gained to build successful careers and contribute to the economy," she urged.

The graduation ceremony marked an important milestone in the lives of the participants and reflected DPWI's ongoing commitment to empowering young people through skills development, employment creation, and sustainable economic participation. ■

EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME EMPOWERS 90 PARTICIPANTS AT SOUTH WEST GAUTENG TVET COLLEGE

Article by Kagiso Mootane

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), through its Community Work Programme (CWP), made a meaningful impact at South West Gauteng TVET College in Roodepoort by equipping participants with valuable skills for employment and community development.

A total of 90 participants benefitted from the Programme, gaining both theoretical knowledge and practical experience to enhance their employability. The training started from 02 March 2026 and concluded on 03 June 2026.

The participants were divided into three groups, and received training skills in areas such as Plumbing Hand Skills Programme, Domestic Water Drainage and Shielded Metal Arc Welding. These training programmes took place within specified period as follows: Plumbing Hand Skills Programme and Shielded Metal Arc welding training programme were conducted for 61 days respectively while, Domestic Water Drainage training was conducted over a period of 51 days.

The EPWP Training Manager in Pretoria Regional Office-Gauteng, Mr Tshifhiwa Nkhumeleni appreciated partnership between the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through National Skills Fund (NSF).

Sharing words of support, Ms Julia Mulima, Assistant Director: EPWP Training in the Pretoria Regional Office encouraged participants to fully utilise the opportunity and highlighted that the skills gained, particularly in Plumbing, Water Drainage and Shielded Metal Arc Welding can open doors for employment opportunities and empower participants towards sustainable livelihoods.

In conclusion, one of the participants Mr Tshidiso Pule, shared his experience about the Programme, stating the valuable skills and hands-on experience he has acquired since participating in the EPWP. He expressed confidence in using the experience he has gained to seek employment and pursue his ambition of starting his own business.



EPWP PARTICIPANTS ACQUIRE NAIL TECHNICIAN AND DESIGN SKILLS

Article by Roslyn Mahlaole

A total of 70 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants have recently attended an empowering Nail Technician and Design Training Workshop designed to equip them with entrepreneurial and vocational skills. The five-day workshop took place from 9 March 2026 to 13 March 2026. During the training, participants were equipped with essential knowledge and practical skills in nail care and nail technology, including basic nail treatment, hygiene practices, and nail design techniques.

The training, included Classroom Assistants (CAs) and General Assistants (GAs) from various Districts across the North West Province. The practical skills provided was aimed at helping the participants to generate income and provide future employment opportunities.

By providing entrepreneurial and vocational training, the programme aims to empower participants to start small businesses and generate additional income opportunities beyond their current placements. The EPWP participants were contracted for a period of 12 months by the North West Department of Education, and their contracts came to an end on 31 March 2026.

Ms Kiddy Makena from the North West Department of Education said the department received the EPWP Integrated Grant, which enabled the creation of work opportunities such as Classroom Assistants and General Assistants.

“With the grant, we ensure that participants receive skills development opportunities. Today, these young people have been trained as Nail Technicians. EPWP is a lifeline, it gives young people pride and restores their dignity because the skills they acquire will help them establish small businesses. “I would like to thank the EPWP for opportunities offered to young people in our communities,” said Ms Makena.

Through initiatives such as this, the department continues to support participants by equipping them with valuable skills that contribute to self-employment, personal development, and economic growth within their communities. ■



EPWP COMMITS TO SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

Article by Oageng Mathenje



The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), in collaboration with the Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES), hosted a Public Employment Programme (PEP) Workshop under the theme, "Unlocking Work in the Waste Economy." The two-day workshop was held in Kempton Park, Gauteng, in March 2026.

The EPWP, in partnership with Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality and the City of Cape Town, provides cleaning, recycling, and gardening services to communities. These initiatives form part of the Environment and Culture Sector's mandate to improve and protect the environment while creating meaningful work opportunities.

The workshop brought together various stakeholders to explore innovative approaches to waste management across cities, surrounding areas, and provinces. Participants were introduced to practical ways in which waste management can be utilised to create employment opportunities and contribute to South Africa's economy.

The workshop forms part of the EPWP's mandate to provide work opportunities and skills development, with the aim of reducing poverty and increasing employment. The City of Cape Town currently has 5,000 EPWP participants enrolled in accredited training programmes in advanced agricultural practices to strengthen their skills and improve future employment prospects. ■

Across eight provinces, more than 330,000 square metres of land within informal settlements and townships have been cleared and transformed into productive landscapes, contributing to cleaner communities and improved environmental sustainability.

Barefoot facilitator, Ms Rehana Moosajee, emphasised the importance of improving waste management practices, saying: "Landfills around the country are filling up with waste that is not properly recycled or disposed of, leading to an overflow of materials that could otherwise be reused or recycled. While many organisations are contributing to reducing waste, there is still a significant gap that needs to be addressed." Ms Moosajee concluded.





EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME EMPOWERS YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH BUILDING AND CIVIL PROJECT COMMUNITIES

Article by: Roslyn Mahlaole

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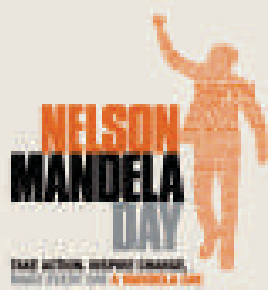
LET'S GET INVOLVED

NELSON MANDELA DAY

18 JULY

#

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**IT IS STILL IN OUR HANDS TO
COMBAT POVERTY AND INEQUITY.**

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