



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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KZN PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE WELCOMES THE HALTING OF THE R7 BILLION UNLAWFUL GOVERNMENT PRECINCT TENDER BY THE HIGH COURT

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has welcomed the decision of the Durban High Court which sets aside the irregular awarding of the R7 billion tender during the previous administration to appoint a contractor to commence work on the government precinct.

The tender was for the construction of a government precinct which would house all provincial government departments under one central hub to improve efficiency and service delivery. Once fully constructed the single address multi-department office complex would save KZN Public Works half a billion Rands per annum in rental spaces which is currently occupied by various department staff.

Despite the promises of what the precinct could achieve it was immediately met with challenges with the project coming to a halt, meaning for many years government departments are not housed centrally, resulting in a hefty annual cost delay.

Upon coming into office under the current administration, KZN Public Works and Infrastructure MEC, Martin Meyer, immediately prioritized the matter which led the department approaching the Durban High Court which argued that the decision to award the tender was unlawful. Among the arguments the court heard that the tender was illegally awarded, and due processes were not followed.

The latest court ruling on the 5th of June in the latest matter involving the department is testament that MEC Meyer is working hard to rebuild public trust and to ensure that the department conducts itself in a manner that respects the law and safeguards the funds entrusted to it by the people of KwaZulu-Natal. The ruling vindicates that position, confirms that the original award was irregular, and affirms that corrective measures were necessary.

This outcome is part of a deliberate effort to rebuild public trust and confidence in the department by ensuring that every decision it takes is lawful, transparent and defensible. Setting aside an award of this nature is neither common nor easy- it required the administration to confront and correct a decision taken within its own department by the former head of department. That difficulty did not outweigh the department's duty to protect public funds and uphold the law.

"It is never comfortable to overturn a decision taken by your own department, but it is the right thing to do," said MEC for Public Works and Infrastructure, Hon. Martin Meyer, MPL. "We made a commitment to chart a new course for public works in KwaZulu-Natal, one built on lawful conduct, sound governance and respect for public money. This ruling shows that we are serious about that commitment. Where decisions of the past fall short of the standard the public is entitled to, we will act to correct them."

The ruling now allows the department to proceed with a fresh, lawful procurement process for the government precinct, ensuring the project advances on a sound legal footing and in the public interest.

The court verdict also lends confidence to the groundbreaking announcement the MEC will be making on ongoing costly leases when he delivers his upcoming budget for the 2026/27 financial year.

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