



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE MEC

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MEDIA STATEMENT

KZN PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCOOPS ‘*BEST INNOVATIVE DEPARTMENT IN GOVERNMENT AWARD*’ IN THE PROVINCE FOR FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND GROUNDBREAKING ASSET VERIFICATION AND TRACKING SYSTEM

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has clinched the prestigious ***Best Innovative Department In Government*** award for its recently unveiled leading live asset tracking and verification system. The recognition took place during the Premier’s Excellence Awards last night in Durban; an event held to honour exceptional public servants within the KZN provincial government.

To further understand the significance of the award, it will be remembered that KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is a custodian of all provincial government assets, including buildings, land and infrastructure, however, the department had not fully known what assets it has on its books. Over time this created multiple challenges including assets being abandoned, neglected as far upkeep is concerned, hijacked, unknown asset locations, all the while paying billions of Rands in rates for them which was a waste of taxpayers’ money.

These issues were among those prioritized as urgent by MEC Martin Meyer when he came into office with well-known examples being the around 300 hijacked houses in Ulundi that now harbour hitmen and criminal elements.

Under the departmental leadership of Head of Department, Dr Vish Govender, a directive was then issued that KZN Public Works and Infrastructure begin an audit of all assets which it owns, marking the tedious but necessary undertaking of physically visiting and logging all assets and comparing these against existing records for the purpose of updating them.

For Dr Govender, this was not only a welcomed challenge, but a chance to prove that any government entity can be turned around with the right kind of leadership at the front.

After several months of this undertaking, KZN Public Works and Infrastructure understood that it owned 10 067 assets. Once this process was done the next step was to create a system which would not only be up to date, but live.

It is this groundbreaking system that would make KZN Public Works and Infrastructure the only department in the country to have ever completed a full asset audit and to have a live tracking system.

With the system department officials can:

- See where in the province assets are located, including district, address etc
- Ascertain the condition of department properties
- Determine the legal status of department properties
- Determine which assets are abandoned, unused, or illegally occupied
- Determine the occupancy details of the assets

The system was launched and publicly demonstrated last year during a joint event attended by the departments of KZN Agriculture and Rural Development as well as KZN Economic Development and Tourism where KZN Public Works and Infrastructure handed 11 commercial land plots to KZN Agriculture and Rural Development for the purpose of community skills development.

The parcels handed over were among those identified by the system as unused land plots, proving its efficiency soon after completion.

MEC Martin Meyer has applauded the exceptional and hardworking team of dedicated official of KZN Public Works and Infrastructure.

“When I took office, I told the department that if there is a phrase that I never want to hear it is ‘this is how it has always been done. Getting an award for innovation shows that this department does not do things the way they have always been done. We have certainly rewritten the book, and we are finding new and better ways to do things”, said MEC Meyer

“It is not to say that all our issues are resolved in such a short space of time but as a department, KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is now in a much better position to serve, to account, and to make real change to the lives of the people of this province. I look forward to many more other initiatives as we continue to rebuild this NEW KZN Public Works and Infrastructure”, the MEC concluded.

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