



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

MEC MEYER MARKS WOMENS MONTH BY ANNOUNCING THE ANNUAL BABITA DEOKARAN AWARD FOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS WHO EXCEL IN ETHICAL GOVERNANCE

Today, MEC for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Martin Meyer, has announced the annual Babita Deokaran Ethical Governance Awards for the department. The award will recognize officials within the department who have excelled in exercising practices and values which uphold and promote ethical governance, integrity and clean administration, regardless of rank, experience or position they hold in the department.

The award will also honour the late whistleblower icon, Babita Deokaran, whose bravery in exposing the deep-rooted corruption in the Tembisa Hospital multibillion Rands saga led to the tragic loss of her life. MEC Meyer made the announcement during his keynote address at the monument unveiling ceremony of Babita Deokaran held in Durban and attended by her family and various dignitaries.

The announcement of the Babita Deokaran Ethical Governance Award comes as KZN Public Works and Infrastructure has been extensively working to clean its house and rid itself of corruption related elements while promoting a culture of transparency, courage and accountability. Many of the department's interventions to fight corruption have led to the axing of officials, actions taken against contractors and termination of project contracts, with the most recent and notable being the R7 billion contract which KZN Public Works and Infrastructure successfully challenged at the high court.

MEC Meyer noted that a serious cultural shift must take place if corruption is to be eliminated. While unpopular at first, such a position soon garners the support of many who want to see honesty and fairness prevail as seen within KZN Public Works and Infrastructure.

The commitment to achieving a corruption-free KZN Public Works and Infrastructure has seen efforts which have included meeting with anti-corruption organizations like OUTA, Corruption Watch and others where the department fully exposed itself to these stakeholders for independent scrutiny and feedback into how well KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is doing in the fight against corruption and in creating a culture that promotes whistleblowing.

It is the belief of MEC Meyer that honouring icons such as Babita Deokoran through walking in the same path of her bravery, while protecting those who voice discrepancies and inaccuracies, will lead to a department as well as a province where clean and fair governance is the order of the day much to the benefit of ordinary residents who are the real victims when corruption is allowed to run rampant.

END.

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