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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **KWAZULU-NATAL PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEC MARTIN MEYER APPLAUDS ESTABLISHMENT OF ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE DESK AS LONG-AWAITED INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE SOUND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ANTI-CORRUPTION INTERVENTIONS**

PIETERMARITZBURG- Between January and February 2025, three senior officials from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Infrastructure were dismissed after a guilty verdict was reached following vigorous internal disciplinary procedures. Furthermore, the department has also laid criminal charges against the officials with the South African Police Services to recuperate taxpayers' monies. The dismissals are a result of a multipronged approach, including a strengthened whistleblower hotline, improved internal risk mechanisms and ongoing campaigns on the zero-tolerance approach to corruption.

It is against this backdrop that the department intensifies efforts in the fight against unethical practices within the department, as it swiftly moves to improve internal systems pertaining to governance.

The Ethics and Governance Desk (EGD), which reports directly to the KZN Public Works and Infrastructure Office of the Head of Department (HOD), headed by Dr Vish Govender, has been established to promote sound and ethical leadership, improve governance structures, and ensure legislative and regulatory compliance.

The terms of reference and the scope of work for the desk is to among others:

- Develop and implement ethics and governance policies to guide decision-making and operational activities.
- Ensure alignment with provincial and national governance and ethics regulations.
- Monitor and enforce adherence to governance-related codes of conduct, policies, and legal mandates.
- Ensure the highest standards of ethical conduct in all departmental operations, decision-making processes, and service delivery mechanisms.
- Strengthen governance structures by aligning departmental practices with legislative requirements, policy frameworks, and best practices.

- Promote accountability, transparency, and integrity through proactive monitoring of compliance with ethical and governance standards.
- Facilitate risk management by identifying, assessing, and mitigating ethical and governance risks.
- Support the HOD and executive leadership with advisory services on ethics, governance, and compliance matters.
- Drive a culture of ethical leadership by fostering awareness, training, and institutional commitment to ethical governance.

MEC Martin Meyer has hailed the establishment of the Ethics and Governance Desk, saying this symbolizes a new dawn for the department as it adopts a tough stance on non-compliance, unethical conduct, and malfeasance.

“Ethical governance is the ultimate and essential component of public administration, ensuring that decision-making processes are open, accountable, and consistent with the values of integrity and good governance. The EGD will function as a central coordinating entity responsible for enhancing ethical behaviour, governance frameworks, risk management, and compliance measures in the department,” stated MEC Martin Meyer.

MEC Meyer also stated that he was confident that the establishment of this new unit will ensure that department regains its public trust.

“The EGD will improve service delivery, boost public confidence, and strengthen institutional resilience against fraud, corruption, and maladministration by incorporating ethics and good governance into the department's strategic and operational tasks “, he said.

MEC Meyer has also expressed full support for Dr Govender while expressing complete confidence in his capabilities to spearhead the EGD to its full effectiveness the same way he has done in spearheading other initiatives such as the Rapid Response Team which has successfully achieved commencement of blocked and delayed construction projects.

The Ethics and Governance Desk (EGD) will play a pivotal role in ensuring that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Infrastructure upholds the highest standards of ethical leadership, transparency, and good governance. Through strategic oversight, compliance enforcement, and risk mitigation, the EGD will contribute to an accountable, ethical, and efficient public sector institution.

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