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SAMANTHA GRAHAM-MARÉ, MP

SHADOW DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

11 September 2020

Dear Mr President

Ref: Allegations against Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Patricia de Lille

Mr President, I am writing this letter to seek clarification from you on why you have failed to take decisive action against the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), Patricia de Lille, following the emergence of a raft of allegations of impropriety against her in the discharge of her duties as Minister.

Today, South Africans wake up to new allegations of how Minister de Lille allegedly approved leases to farms owned by the Department without following proper supply chain processes.

DPWI staff accuse the Minister of working with her Special Advisor, Nadine Fourie, to pay a construction company R40 million to refurbish a Department of Environmental Affairs research facility, Sanae IV in Antarctica, despite the service provider ostensibly having overcharged the Department by R39 million before.

In addition to the abovementioned allegations, the Minister has also been accused of the following:

- She has ducked and dived responsibility for the R37 million spent on the now infamous 'Washing line' Beitbridge Border fence. She allegedly flouted procedures and disregarded the law when she issued an emergency directive for the border fence two days before the State of Disaster was announced and emergency procurement protocols were enacted.
- A National Treasury report found that *"it would seem the Minister had a contract, supplier or contractor in mind"* when she issued a variation order to seemingly ensure that a specific contractor, Magwa Construction was appointed.
- In papers filed with the North Gauteng Division of the High Court, Minister De Lille, admitted to identifying a service provider for "special" media services in her department but said that she did not instruct anyone to break the law.
- The Minister's Special Advisor, Melissa Whitehead has been fingered in a SIU report for advising the Minister to issue directives without ensuring that the directive complies with the prescripts and legislation applicable to the emergency procurement process. The report

recommended that Whitehead be charged with gross negligence for interfering in the administration of the DPWI.

Mr President, you cannot continue to bury your head in the sand while Minister De Lille abuses her authority, breaks the law and cripples the functioning of an entire government Department through gross mismanagement.

Your own actions this week in retracting her delegation to discipline her Director-General is already a move in the right direction and an indication that your trust in her ability to act without fear or favour is compromised.

If you want South Africans to take you seriously in your avowed fight against corruption, your actions should match your words. You have a Minister who has plunged the DPWI into a crisis and has arrogantly refused to take responsibility for her actions. Unless you take decisive action against her, your fight against corruption will never be taken seriously.

Minister De Lille's actions have proved that she is not fit to hold public office, least of all a Cabinet post. She should be dismissed immediately.

Yours Sincerely,

Samantha Graham-Maré

DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure

(Submitted electronically without signature)