

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA welcomes Limpopo's Premier plan to appoint local unemployed youth for road maintenance with call for five-year contracts**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the progressive move by the Limpopo Premier to address infrastructure maintenance, which remains problematic issue for the Limpopo Provincial Government, as potholes in roads seem to be a permanent challenge.

Although there is a huge backlog with the tarring of roads, the neglect of road maintenance aggravated the situation. Various neglected tarred roads, such as the road in Moletji Kgohlwane, are now worse than gravel roads.

Setting aside 300 positions for unemployed young people over a five-year period with a contract period of 12 months per person, will assist in addressing youth unemployment. The PSA, however, calls for the 300 positions to be filled on five-year contracts and not a 12-month contract period. The program has the potential to create a pool of skilled young people who will acquire proficiency in road construction and maintenance if they are given five-year contracts instead of 12 months, which is normally given to Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers. Giving these young people such extended contracts would result in development of critical skills that will in future save government vast amounts paid to consultants and through the tender system. It would be a missed opportunity if government embarks on short-term contracts.

The PSA urges the Premier of Limpopo to ensure that the implementation of this plan is corruption free and not favouring politically connected young people. The PSA further calls on the Premier to ensure that unemployed young people with relevant qualifications such as N6 Certificates in Civil Engineering and Project Management are prioritised. This opportunity will make it easier for them to fulfil their academic requirements to obtain diplomas, which will enable registration with professional bodies. In addition, the employed young people should not be given a stipend but proper salaries as the cost of living is spiralling, and young people are severely affected.

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