



# Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement Western Cape Provincial Parliament IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

Ref Number: 11/4/14

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Report of the Parliamentary Oversight Committee (POC) on its walkabout between the 4th and 7th floors of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament's (WCPP) precinct to examine the fire mitigating measures in place in case of a fire outbreak on each of the aforementioned floors, as follows:

## Delegation

### Members

Bosman, G (Democratic Alliance)

Botha, L (Chairperson)

Maseko, M (Democratic Alliance)

Plato, D (Democratic Alliance)

Fry, C (Democratic Alliance)

### Staff Members

Adams, Z (Procedural Officer)

Motsapi-Mrubata, M (Committee Assistant)

## 1. Introduction

The matter emanated from an incident where National Parliament experienced a fire outbreak which negatively affected the chambers of the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces on 2 January 2022.<sup>1</sup> The fire also negatively impacted on the oversight function of National Parliament.<sup>2</sup> Due to this occurrence, the Chairperson of the POC directed a letter to the Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament on 10 January 2022 to enquire the following:<sup>3</sup>

- 1.1. Whether the WCPP have a risk mitigation and management strategy in place; Whether there is a risk mitigation and management strategy aligned to the required fiscal and human capital resources of the Institution;
- 1.3. Whether the risk management and mitigation plans include Information Communication and Technology (ICT) recovery plans, facilities management, human capital considerations, and information and data recovery.
- 1.4. Whether the WCPP has a work place policy to manage the safety of employees in the event of a disaster specifically;
  - 1.4.1. Have Health and Safety Representatives been appointed and trained to respond to disasters?
  - 1.4.2. How frequently are emergency and disaster exercises practiced with employees?
  - 1.4.3. Are the relevant emergency response authorities involved in the exercises?

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<sup>1</sup> South African Government. *Parliament on fire outbreak at precinct. 2 January 2022.* <https://www.gov.za/speeches/parliament-fire-breakout-precinct-2-jan-2022-0000>.

<sup>2</sup> Eyewitness News. 7 June 2022. *Mapisa-Nqakula: Parliament is facing R74-million budget shortfall.* <https://ewn.co.za/0001/01/01/mapisa-nqakula-parliament-is-facing-r74-million-budget-shortfall>

<sup>3</sup> The queries are based on a letter which that Chairperson of POC directed to the Speaker on 10 January 2022.

1.4.4. When did the most recent emergency and disaster exercise take place?

1.5. Whether any heritage assets have been contemplated in the risk management and mitigation plan?

In terms of Standing Rule 82(4)(b)(d) of the WCPP, the Chairperson requested that the POC conducts a walkabout between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floors of the WCPP in order to assess the fire risk and mitigation strategy that was in place.

On the day of the walkabout, the Speaker thanked the Committee for requesting a briefing on this agenda item, following the fire outbreak that took place at the National Parliament in early January 2022.

The Committee was given a tour of the fire exits/escapes on each floor, with explanations of the specific safety areas each fire exit would lead to. Members were told that there were “safe areas” on each floor that people with disabilities may utilise while they await assistance, if needed. There were also fire phones in certain fire escapes (such as the fire escape in the Members Lounge on the sixth floor), which people may use to call the Control Room for assistance. There is a Control Room, managed by the South African Police Services, for the 7 and 15 Wale Street buildings as well as 4 Dorp Street, which was available to handle emergencies day and night.

It was noted by members that teams were still installing fire and emergency evacuation equipment on the day of the tour, an indication that the WCPP is not ready for a fire emergency. Drilling and attaching of signs were being done as members were gathering in the chambers.

The members noted the vast difference in cleanliness and the condition of facilities for the fourth and fifth floors when compared with the sixth floor. It was observed that the sixth floor was in much better condition than the fourth and fifth floors, especially in terms of cleanliness, the state of the floors and carpets, and the condition of the toilets.

The Speaker noted that the toilets and some facilities at the WCPP were in a state of disrepair and not fit for use by Ministers, Members, officials and guests. He indicated that the WCPP had been requesting reparation of the bathrooms for years, however, this service was not forthcoming. The Speaker noted that the WCPP building was not habitable for human beings.

It was also noted that there was one service provider who handled cleaning for both the 7 and 15 Wale Street precincts. There was a need to regularise the cleaning of carpets and other facilities in these buildings.

The Department of Transport and Public Works (the Department) assured the Speaker and Members that the Department was currently involved in a tender process to secure a provider that would attend to the building and the toilets. The repairs were likely to begin in approximately two months.

The Speaker requested that the Department prioritise the WCPP. It was because of the challenging reparation issues in the building that the WCPP began exploring the idea of securing a different parliamentary precinct. Contributing issues included that members of the public could not identify the current building as a WCPP precinct and that travelling into the city centre every day was challenging because of traffic. In 2019, a working group was established by the Rules Committee to explore the options for a new building, however, these plans were halted when COVID-19 came about.

## **2. Resolutions/Actions**

Based on the observations made, as well as the discussions held during the walkabout, the Committee resolved on the following matters, that:-

- 2.1. The Institution provides the Committees with quarterly updates on the progress made by the Department of Transport and Public Works on the refurbishments and repairs being made to the WCPP facilities such as the toilets and floors or carpets;
- 2.2. Another walkabout of the WCPP be scheduled to gauge the state of the parliamentary building and the work environment for staff, particularly in respect of the shared spaces, toilets and floors or carpets on the fourth floor of the building

## **3. Acknowledgements**

The Chairperson thanked the Speaker, including the officials of the WCPP, for their willingness to meet with the Committee and to conduct the walkabout with the Committee and each other.



**MR G BOSMAN, MPP**

**ACTING CHAIRPERSON: PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:**