

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA demands urgent accountability as Eastern Cape wastes billions whilst unemployed doctors and pharmacists await job opportunities
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EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is concerned and disappointed with the Eastern Cape province's recently released audit findings, which reveal a staggering R2.7 billion in irregular expenditure.

The PSA particularly draws attention to qualified audits of critical departments such as Health, Education, and the Office of the Premier, which continue to face significant challenges in governance and financial management. The audit report underscores a persistent issue in the Office of the Premier, which has failed to address performance reporting adequately. The inability to substantiate achievements with credible data is a clear indication that systemic problems in the provincial leadership persist. The Eastern Cape Legislature's regression, from a clean audit to an unqualified status, is equally alarming, particularly considering its responsibility to set a high standard of financial accountability and governance.

The PSA calls for immediate and decisive action to address the underlying causes of these audit failures. The Office of the Premier and the Legislature should be leading by example in ensuring accountability, transparency, and effective use of public resources. Continued issues with service delivery and project management, such as delays, under-utilisation of completed projects, and unauthorised expenditure, require urgent intervention.

It is further deeply concerning that the Department of Health continues to claim financial constraints, particularly when there is an outcry from unemployed doctors and pharmacists who could be employed to address the province's dire healthcare needs. Rather than effectively using the available budget, the Department's pleas of poverty stand in stark contrast to vast amounts lost to irregular and fruitless expenditure. The PSA questions why the Provincial Government continues to waste public funds without accountability, when these could be better invested in creating employment opportunities for qualified professionals and improving essential services. The R467 million in unauthorised expenditure and R148 million in fruitless and wasteful spending represent wasted taxpayer money that should have been allocated to critical services for the people of the province. The PSA demands accountability for these financial losses and for the departments involved to be held responsible.

The PSA urges the provincial government to learn from the improvements made in other departments and replicate those efforts, especially in departments such as Education and Health that continue to struggle with basic financial management. The PSA is hopeful that the Provincial Government will rise to the challenge and work towards regaining the trust of the people they serve by prioritising responsible financial management and effective service delivery.

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