



GOVERNMENTDIALOGUE

November 2013

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE



Giving prizes where praise is due

By Albert Pule

How often do we read about government employees wasting public funds and offering inferior services to the public?

Often we see headlines claiming how taxpayers' money has gone down the drain and cannot be accounted for.

The perception is that public servants are a greedy, corrupt and incompetent bunch whose sole intention is to loot the state's coffers.

This perception has fuelled the notion that services rendered by government are of an inferior quality.

But that is not the whole truth.

The majority of the 1.3 million public servants are committed, professional, disciplined and efficient. South Africa wouldn't be where it is today if the opposite was true.

Those hard-working public servants, who are doing their bit behind the scenes and away from the media spotlight, are the ones who make this

country a better place to live, work and play in.

These are our colleagues who have made the second decade of our democracy meaningful and eventful. They are responsible for educating our nation, providing us with improved healthcare services and keeping us safe on the streets. They've made it possible for more South Africans to have access to piped water, electricity and housing and ensure that deserving people receive their social grants on time and consistently.

These are the people we hardly read and hear about or see on national television. It is for that reason that the Department of Public Service and Administration held the inaugural national Batho Pele Excellence Awards recently, to honour the cream of the crop.

"Today we take time to honour these people who work hard to make our lives better. In honour of those who toil with dedication to serve our people," said Minister of Public Service and Administration Lindiwe Sisulu.



Public Service and Administration Minister Lindiwe Sisulu.



government
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Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Some of the winners at the inaugural national Batho Pele Excellence Awards.

The awards are aimed at recognising excellence in the Public Service. They are also meant to acknowledge and encourage other public servants to raise the bar and improve services.

The department has decided that from now on the awards for the entire Public Service will be held in September each year. The public will be invited to nominate public servants deserving of recognition for excellent service.

The awards are not only to recognise excellence in the Public Service, but to encourage all public servants to do our best at all times, pull up our socks where necessary and learn from the people we are serving so we can do an even better job.

"The main focus of these awards is to recognise excellence in the Public Service, acknowledge and encourage it and in exceptional cases, ensure that we can urge and mature it to greater heights of delivery," explained Minister Sisulu.

Star performers:

The biggest winner in this first round of awards was Dr Kelly Gate, a surgeon from Bethesda Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal, who won the Best Overall Batho Pele Award and gold for Best Public Service Leader of the Year. The two awards came with R30 000 prize money, a scholarship and holiday package for two.

Former Chairperson of the Public Service Commission Professor Stan Sangweni, South Africa's oldest teacher Nontsikelelo Qwelani and former Secretary of Parliament Ambassador Sindiso Mfenyana were honoured with the Public Service Lifetime Achiever Awards.

Nosipho Ncaba, Director-General of Environmental Affairs, scooped the award for Best National Head of Department.

Constable Mapule Tshepe from Kagiso Police Station won the Best National Frontline Service Award. She won R10 000 and a

scholarship to Oxford University.

The Department of Science and Technology walked away with the award for the Best Functioning National Department, while the Department of Community Safety in the Western Cape won the Best Functioning Provincial Department.

The Best Implemented Project of the Year went to the KwaZulu-Natal Schools Environmental Education Programme.

The National Department of Public Enterprises scooped the award for Best Department on Professional Ethics.

The Department of Cooperative Governance, Housing and Traditional Affairs in Limpopo was awarded Best Public Service Creative Innovator of the Year for its New Engine Server.

This year's awards serve as an incentive for others to excel between now and September next year and place themselves in contention for this prestigious recognition.