

Job creation project gets off to a slow start

By Janine Stephen

Nine months after the launch of the government's job creation project, the Expanded Public Works Programme has created just 144 000 opportunities - and most of them are temporary.

Department of Public Works officials say it could take two to three years before they have figures on how many who trained under the programme found permanent jobs.

Although job opportunities created so far exceed the target for the first year of the programme by 14 000, they remain a long way off the million jobs promised by 2009.

Speaking at a media briefing in parliament yesterday ahead of her budget vote debate, Minister Stella Sigcau said many of the jobs created were short term.

"In most cases we can't say that (the job) will last for ever."

However, she stressed the training aspect of the programme, which aims to equip people with skills that will help them to find work.

Training took place through sector education and training authorities and was overseen by the Department of Labour.

The minister said every beneficiary of the programme had to undergo two days of training out of every 22 worked.

A total of R2,4-billion was spent on 1 890 projects in the first nine months of the programme.

Total wages paid to individuals on the programme by the third quarter of the 2004-2005 financial year amounted to R508-million, up from R127,8-million at the end of the second quarter.

Cosatu spokesperson Elroy Paulus questioned whether the programme was creating sustainable jobs.

Economist Anna McCord said jobs wouldn't be sustainable, and weren't meant to be. - Political Bureau.

parliament@incape.co.za

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