

Media Statement by the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Willies Mchunu on the Second Phase of the RTI Trainee Recruitment Process

11 April 2013

Good morning ladies gentlemen of the media. Thank you for attending this important media briefing and your presence here, is indeed, greatly appreciated.

May I also use this opportunity to express my gratitude to you, the members of the media for the on-going support that we are getting from you.

Following the unfortunate passing away of seven applicants for the Trainee RTI posts during the fitness test in December 2012, we saw it advisable to suspend the recruitment process with a view of reviewing it.

The idea behind the review of the process was to ensure that sufficient care was taken to ensure that in future we avoid the regrettable incident of December 2012.

Just by the way of background, the Department had advertised 90 Trainee Provincial Inspectors posts.

A total of plus or minus 150 000 applications were received from potential candidates. Through the sifting process, 40 700 candidates met the set minimum requirement and were short listed.

On the 27 December 2012 these candidates were subjected to the physical fitness test in the form of a 3.8 kilometres elimination run at the Harry Gwala Stadium.

Regrettably, as you know, members of the media, there were seven (7) fatalities and a large number of participants requiring medical attention.

Candidates who were successful during the fitness test had to proceed to the driving assessment test – this process was suspended by the MEC after learning of the tragic death of applicants but also to give the department time to review the process.

Given the unfortunate incident of December, it became apparent that there was a need to craft a new framework and to refine the process of this recruitment going forward.

Among others, a detailed report was submitted to the Premier on the matter early in January 2012 for his input and guidance.

The Premier noted the submission and supported the formation of the Commission of Enquiry on the matter.

Furthermore, a Cabinet Memorandum was tabled by the MEC apprising the Executive on the matter which was followed by Cabinet Memorandum tabled by the office of the Premier on the Establishment of the Commission of Enquiry.

Members of the media I am sure you are aware that the Premier has since announced the establishment of the Commission and made public the names of commissioners. This process is still under way and I have nothing new to further report on the Commission.

May I, however, state it for the record that myself and my department have made the undertaking to cooperate fully with this Commission.

To take the recruitment process forward a submission on the revised recruitment process was made to the Premier in February this year and has been approved by the Cabinet.

It is, therefore, my pleasure ladies and gentlemen of the media to share with you the details of how we intend to take this process forward. Essentially, the second phase of this recruitment process comprises of the continuation of the driving evaluations, aptitude test, criminal records checks, medical examination and formal interviews.

Briefly, the business of taking this process forward has been informed by a number of considerations. Chief among these is to ensure that the second phase of recruitment is conducted in an atmosphere that is free of a potential danger to candidates.

In this regard sufficient care has been taken to ensure that we do not assemble in one place a large number of candidates and at the same time.

To ensure this, we have decided to decentralize this process. This effectively means that all these would now take place at the departmental regions closer to where the applicants come from.

For this process we will conduct the further recruitment at four centres, namely Rossburgh in Durban, Mkhondeni in Pietermaritzburg, eMpangeni on the North Coast and Ladysmith.

For the record a total of 13 500 applicants will undergo a driving license testing:

Rossburgh – 4500

Mkhondeni – 3500

EMpangeni – 3000

Ladysmith – 2500

At each recruitment centre special care has been taken that applicants do not arrive at the same time in large numbers. This is to eliminate any potential pandemonium that might undermine the safety of the process.

To effect this, applicants have been informed that the first batch will undergo test at 08h00 AM, the second at 10h00 AM, the third at 12h00 PM and the fourth at 14h00 PM.

Furthermore, to ensure the transparency and safety of the process senior officials have been tasked to take full responsibility for a driving licence competency test taking place in the respective regions

Ladies and Gentlemen of the media it is our conviction that after the reviewing of this process and taking a considerable care to avoid any possible hitches, this process will now proceed smoothly.

We will however, remain in constant contact with you to ensure that you remain updated about this process until it reaches its finalization.

May I state it for the record ladies and gentlemen of the media that this department is committed to the principle of transparency as outlined in the Constitution and in the pursuant of this obligation I will, where possible, remain available to you on matters affecting the Department.

May I once again extend our gratitude that you have managed to be with us today and for your on-going support in this regard.

I thank you