



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

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FRASER CREDITS HARD WORKING OFFICIALS FOR THE UNQUALIFIED AUDIT OUTCOME

For the first time in four years, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has turned around its audit outcome and received an unqualified audit opinion as well as a noteworthy 70 percent achievement in performance for the 2020/21 financial year.

This was due to the stewardship and leadership of the National Commissioner, Arthur Fraser, who remained focussed on the job at hand and ensured compliance to legislation and prevented accountability failures.

DCS was qualified in the last four years by the Auditor General and Fraser had committed to bring stability and significant improvements of audit outcomes of the department.

Fraser whose contract ends this week, says he is bowing out with a great sense of pride, leaving behind a stable and resilient correctional service which has obtained an unqualified audit outcome and made a serious impact in the mandate of creating safer communities in South Africa. The buoyant Fraser credited this milestone to the hardworking force of DCS and the progressive executive, as it was almost unthinkable that the Department could trounce Covid-19 and overturn a four-year negative string of qualified audit outcomes.

Year 2018 in DCS was defined by some to be calamitous and challenging, following the Bosasa revelations at the State Capture Inquiry, pushing the department to in-source the nutritional services in its correctional centres. Although facing court challenges on the nature of his transfer to DCS, Mr Fraser remained focused and managed to steer a seamless takeover of nutrition services thus saving the State millions of rands following the termination of the Bosasa contract.

DCS is in a far better position today as it has been stabilised and refocused to be Centre-Centric in its operational structure as espoused by the service delivery model.

Invoking patriotism and the importance of the South African flag amongst the workforce, are some of initiatives instrumental in cultivating a new cadre of DCS. Every correctional facility in the country flies the flag with a great sense of meaning. The institution has gone further to reprioritise care for its officials and this has given credence to the enhanced performance that Department is now reaping today. A 92% performance outcome in the first quarter of 2021/22 is beyond outstanding considering the challenges brought in by Covid-19.

Under Fraser, a clearly defined Covid-19 strategy became a useful instrument in DCS managing this pandemic by means of developing new Standard Operating Procedures (known as SOPs). It is these SOPs that provided guidance on mitigating measures to be implemented in order to prevent, detect and respond to COVID-19 without deviating from the core business. It took a collective effort and resilience from every line function for DCS to turn the tide and deliver this unqualified audit outcome.

Oversight bodies assisted to ensure accountability of the Audit Action Plan, while also giving strategic direction towards good governance.

The Justice and Correctional Services Portfolio Committee's hard stance on DCS is welcomed as it pushed the Department to go beyond the perceived limitations. Being accountable goes together with a commitment to fulfil an obligation and this is what has set DCS apart from its conduct of yesteryears.

The improvement is due to, amongst others, interventions put in place to ensure irregular expenditure is identified and fully disclosed in the annual financial statements. Another important factor was to review and update procurement policies and delegations in order to ensure alignment with the recent changes in procurement legislation. This led to improved internal controls as a means to identify and prevent irregular expenditure, thus driving compliance with Treasury regulations.

The Department is on the right path to achieve clean audit outcomes for the current Medium-Term Strategic Framework as this year's unqualified opinion is in the first year of the 2020 – 2025 strategic plan of the Department.

"It can only be an honour having to marshal an institution that is pivotal to moral regeneration and central to defining a renewed narrative of South African Society into the future. I am handing over an organisation with a clear conscience knowing that systems are in place to be optimised."

"I want to thank Minister Lamola and Deputy Minister Holomisa for their continued support. We learnt a lot from their insightfulness, and I wish them further progress and success as they steer this important portfolio of Correctional Services forward," concluded Fraser.

Ends.

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