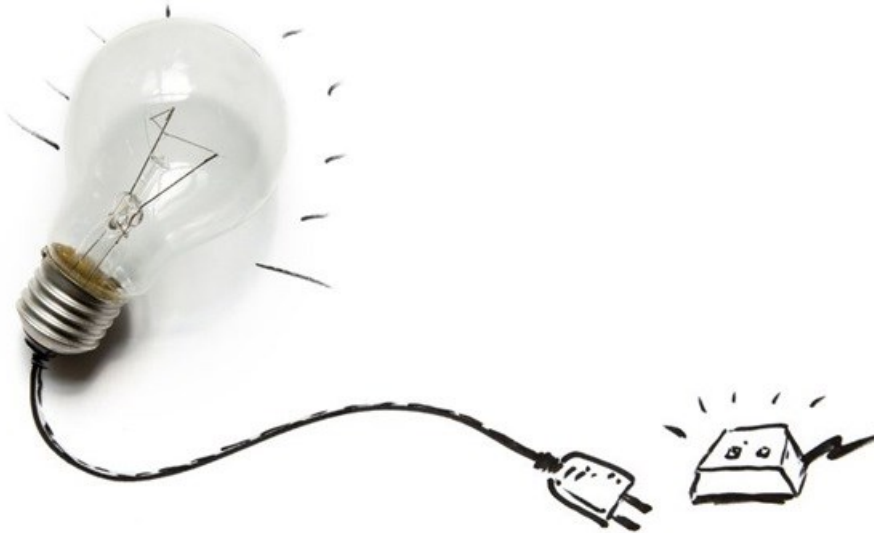


Public Enterprises Minister blocks Molefe's millions

Public Enterprises Minister Lynne Brown has pulled the plug on a move by Eskom to give its former chief executive, Brian Molefe, a R30.1-million pension payout.



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The *Sunday Times* reported a fortnight ago that Molefe was due to get a R30.1-million golden handshake. He told the newspaper that he was to be paid what was due to him, but refused to give a figure.

Brown said yesterday she could not support the payout because there was no justification for it.

"I found the argument presented by the board lacking in legal rationale and it cannot be substantiated as a performance reward because Molefe has already been granted a performance bonus for his contribution to the turnaround of Eskom," said Brown.

"Nor is the proposed pension payout justifiable in light of the current financial challenges faced not only by state-owned companies, but by the country as a whole. I have in the past asked Eskom and the other five state-owned companies to demonstrate financial prudence and social consciousness when considering executive emoluments," she added.

Molefe resigned from Eskom in November after being named by Public Protector Thuli Madonsela in her State of Capture report for his interactions with the controversial Gupta family.

Brown said she met Eskom chairman Ben Ngubane last week following the *Sunday Times* report.

The DA welcomed Brown's decision. Last week it wrote to Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane asking her to look into the payout.

The SA National Civic Organisation also lodged a complaint with Mkhwebane.

"Mathematically, the R30.1-million was irrational and not at all possible to be a pension payout. One would have to assume that it was nothing but a golden handshake," said Natasha Mazzone, the DA's public enterprises spokesman.

The public protector's spokesman, Oupa Segalwe, said Mkhwebane was yet to decide whether to investigate the Molefe payment.

"The public protector can't talk about action against anyone now because there is no investigation yet, let alone findings. The assessment team will take into account any new information," he said.

Brown said she has ordered the power utility's board to negotiate with Molefe, now a member of parliament, and to report back to her with an "appropriate pension" proposal within seven days.

Source: The Times

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