CORRUPT OFFICIALS MUST FACE FULL MIGHT OF THE LAW

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MPS SERVING on the portfolio committee on human settlements, water and sanitation last week commended the Department of Water and Sanitation for acquiring an unqualified audit in the 2018/19 financial year.

This clean audit is only the second one in 10 years. While this is not really something to write home about, it is a step in the right direction in stabilising the department.

These are the results of measures that have been put in place in turning the department around to ensure that it functions optimally and implements its mandate.

However, the portfolio committee also noted that the department had lost millions in fruitless and wasteful expenditure from its main account.

The department said an amount of R46.7 million related to the management fees charged by its entity, Lepelle Northern Water.

An additional R11m was for the charges on standing time and interest on overdue payments for the projects that were implemented by Amatola Water.

This follows Minister Lindiwe Sisulu's announcement at a media briefing recently that 86 officials in her department had been found guilty of fraud and corruption.

Millions squandered recklessly by officials is a concerning trend in the government, especially in the tough economic climate we find ourselves in as a country, due to the rapid spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, and other competing demands.

For a department that is mandated to deliver a basic and significant service such as the provision of water and sanitation, it cannot be allowed that this kind of money is not recovered.

To address this, the department's acting director-general Mbulelo Tshangana has committed to work with his team to clean up the department through the effective implementation of the Financial Recovery Plan.

The plan seeks to stabilise the department, its water boards and decisively deal with all the officials found to have transgressed

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Clean drinking water and suitable sanitation