

## Ace Magashule linked to dodgy contracts “again

ANC secretary-general Ace Magashule is embroiled in another government contracts scandal involving millions of rand in the Free State where he was premier, writes **Legalbrief**. It has been reported that **his daughter and brother have allegedly benefited from a string of government contracts that were meant to uplift emerging businesses**. The DA has demanded that the Free State Department of Police, Roads and Transport be held accountable for allowing politically connected individuals to score millions in government contracts, notes a report on the **IoL** site. The party said it would write to the provincial legislature’s infrastructure committee regarding the grass cutting and road maintenance contracts that have reportedly benefited the children of Magashule and Free State Premier Sisi Ntombela. The report notes that this is not the first government scandal with links to Magashule.

*The details are fleshed out in a **Daily Maverick** report which says politically connected companies were gifted bakkies, trailers and related equipment by the Free State Provincial Government.* They also received contracts for roads maintenance, grass cutting and other services as part of a preferential procurement drive that has cost taxpayers at least R300m since 2016, the **DM** notes. A group of emerging companies that were included in the programme earlier say their contracts from the province dried up as soon as the politically connected contractors were appointed. The **DM** says one document shows that **at least 20 of the companies appointed in 2016 came from the Fezile Dabi District Municipality, which includes Magashule’s home town of Parys**. Further research on the department’s contractor development programme beneficiaries and grass-cutting contractors reveals that at least 10 of the 2016 intake of companies for the programme are owned or run by people directly related to or linked to Magashule, Ntombela and other senior ANC figures in the province, according to the report.

*The ANC’s deputy secretary-general, Jessie Duarte, has hit out over accusations of criminality against party leaders, saying this was akin to guilty findings outside a court process.* A report on the **IoL** site notes Duarte said after a two-day Alliance Political Council, attended by SACP, Cosatu and SA National Civic Organisation leaders, there was agreement to back efforts aimed at abating criminality, including corruption and parasitic networks – which were blamed for aiding the looting of the state through state capture. Duarte is quoted in the report as saying: **‘Let us allow the law to identify criminality. Allow the law to charge people appropriately. Allow the courts to be independent and make the right decisions at the end of the process.** If we continue with a process of already finding people guilty - because that is the choice we are making – then we are not allowing the law to make that choice.’ SACP deputy general secretary Solly Mapaila said while they were opposed to witch-hunts against individuals, the rule of law had to be used to bring to book all those implicated in criminality.