

MEDIA STATEMENT

10 October 2023

Claims of DSAC failure to support Pienaar Theatre Group untrue!

The Limpopo Department of Sport Arts and Culture has noted the actions of a theatre team that allegedly slept on the corridors of the State Theatre in Pretoria because of an alleged failure by the very Department in procuring accommodation for the team.

Although the Department sympathises with the “Pienaars Theatre Group,” it cannot be held at ransom to procure accommodation for a team that left the province without having had prior agreement with the Department and blame the department for not being able to be accommodated subsequently.

The Department would like to categorically respond to the malice of the group to tarnish the image of the department, and that of the MEC.

Firstly, to deal with allegations of a “promise” made by the Department in relation to the accommodation is a blatant lie, and safe to say only a request has been made without having been approved. The Department does not fund artists organisations. The Pienaars Theatre is one of the best theatre groups in Limpopo, but not the only one. Over the years including 2023, the group has been funded by government to over R1million. The expectation of funding is for such entities to ultimately rely on themselves for sustainability, while government looks to develop other groups in the eventual years.

For the group to claim that it does not have operational costs for a planned theatre week is unheard of, and would call on it to desist from using the Department as a scapegoat to its possible lack of planning, and in the process putting its own members at risk. The said group has reached professional status and proceeds from the State Theatre goes directly into their pockets at the conclusion of their play. An organisation at their level could have surely planned around its own operations.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture in South Africa has created funding entities such as the National Arts Council (NAC)- from which Pienaar’s group is funded, Mzansi, and others such as The Lotteries for the funding of such entities in their quest to be self-sufficient. The mentioned entities fund the creative industry throughout the country. Upon their request, we also assist the groups with letters of support to authenticate their work to possible funders.

The DSAC does not directly fund the creative industry, but work through the Limpopo Arts and Culture Council (LACC) which is a creative industry representative. Some of the members of the Pienaar’s cast are members of the LACC, and ought to understand the processes.

The Department continues to support “developing” theatre groups that goes to Makhanda (Grahamstown) every year. Phase Productions, Amagrootman etc. All these groups have through DSAC benefitted from government funding agencies, and not the Department at the Provincial Government.

The Department wishes to call on South African people to support the Pienaars Theatre group as they make their debut at the State Theatre. The play started on Monday and will end on Friday the 19th of October 2023.

END

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Issued by the Department of Sport Arts and Culture