



**31 August 2018**

### **Maseko fired, Manyi brought in to GCIS without warning, acting DG Phumla Williams tells commission**

Current acting director-general (DG) of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Phumla Williams may have landed former GCIS head Mzwanele Manyi in hot water by dropping a bombshell just after the first tea break today at the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture.

As she returned to the witness stand, Williams revealed that Manyi had just sent her a text message asking her to tell the commission that *The New Age* breakfasts did not happen during his tenure at GCIS. The commission's chairperson, Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, on advice from his legal team head Paul Pretorius, said this was a serious matter and Manyi should be summoned in front of the commission.

According to Williams, Manyi was appointed to GCIS in a scandalous set of events, starting with former DG Themba Maseko – who sat in the witness seat the day before – abruptly telling the staff at GCIS that he was leaving because he was being transferred. Williams claimed that when she went on to check on Maseko following the shocking news, the former DG had his head bowed down on his desk. Soon after, he finished packing his personal things and Manyi arrived about two hours later. Williams' first task under her new boss was to call a staff meeting so that he could announce himself as the new DG.

Williams said she was shocked by the news as the post was not advertised and she later found out that during Maseko's departure, Manyi had been waiting in the basement.

#### **Sweeping and inexplicable changes**

Williams further revealed that Manyi brought a lot of changes to GCIS, and that during her 19-year spell in the public service she had never seen anything like that happen. When asked by evidence leader Adv. Kate Hofmeyr about these changes, Williams said the impact the disruption had on the organisation was massive.

"It was demoralising to the staff and nobody could give us an explanation of what is going on. There were many changes that were not consistent with the culture of the organisation. The first change is that he re-appointed me in June 2011 three months after he arrived. On another day we woke up being told that he has appointed a new adjudication committee, and all the people in this committee were people who were new at GCIS and came with him."

Williams highlighted one member of the new committee, a Penelope Ntuli, who started working with Manyi at Tiger Brands. She said the pair also worked together at the Department of Labour before meeting again at GCIS shortly after Manyi arrived.

#### **Subverting the tender process**

Williams also mentioned that during Maseko's era the process of tenders was finalised by the adjudication committee, but after Manyi's arrival he finalised all the tender processes. She claimed that

Manyi removed the duty of the internal auditor to report to her office, and told them to now report straight to him.

“One lady who was unhappy with the changes subsequently resigned and Manyi wanted to be part of and chair the interview process. We did not find a suitable candidate which led to Manyi saying he will headhunt someone himself.”

### **Enter *The New Age***

Williams says this led to the government advertising being directed to *The New Age*. She said the SABC together with *The New Age* were hosting breakfast, and some ministers were invited to have roundtables discussing policies. Williams, however, was questioned by the Hawks and had maintained that GCIS did not host any breakfast, nor did it approve them. After this questioning she went to enquire with Supply Chain Management (SCM) and was told that they were indeed bullied into approving those breakfasts.

According to Williams, SCM said they were told that the breakfasts were for advertising purposes – although they did question this process, saying that for them to approve these breakfasts all media houses who might want to bid for the advertising tender must be included. Williams told the commission she saw e-mails of correspondence to this matter with the tone of “You are ahead of yourself” and “This will happen”. SCM was also reminded that they are not experts. Williams claimed these e-mails were sent by then CFO Zweli Momeko.

Williams revealed that after Manyi left GCIS, then minister Collin Chabane appointed her to be acting DG from 2012 to October 2014. She says her acting contract was renewed every six months and on the third such occasion Chabane asked her what will happen if he just appointed her to the position permanently. Williams refused, saying it would be improper and he must follow proper procedure.

Chabane later came to Williams to reveal that he had been directed not to appoint her but he did not reveal the source of this instruction.

Williams will continue with her testimony next week.

### **Useful links:**

[Government Communication and Information System](#) (GCIS)

[Zondo Commission](#) website

Public Protector’s [State of Capture](#) report, released in November 2016