



Built Environment Professions Bill withdrawn – Minister

By: Jade Davenport

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The controversial Built Environment Professions Bill has been withdrawn, newly appointed Public Works Minister **Geoff Doidge** said on Tuesday, citing technical and legal issues.

The objective of the Built Environment Professions Bill was to foster the accelerated transformation of professions, such as engineering, architecture, and quantity surveying, and also proposes the establishment of a new South African Council for the Built Environment.

This supercouncil would incorporate all the existing professional councils, including the influential Engineering Council of South Africa, and transform them into subsidiary boards.

Addressing a media briefing in Cape Town, Doidge explained that a number of the technical and legal details contained within the Bill overlapped and needed to be reworked before it could be tabled again in Parliament.

In addition, the Built Environment Professions Bill had not been subjected to the Nedlac process whereby various public and private stakeholders had an opportunity to review the Bill.

As a result, Doidge explained that the Department of Public Works was embarking on a process whereby all stakeholders would be consulted on the Bill "properly" before its promulgation.

Various stakeholders have raised concerns about the new Bill in recent months.

In this regard, Doidge acknowledged that he had not had the opportunity to engage extensively on the issues and concerns that had been raised by various stakeholders.

He conceded that there were many "convincing concerns" and that the department would have to "listen to both sides of the story" before the Bill could be tabled again.

"However, we are sure that the various stakeholders will find each other on many of the contentious issues," enthused Doidge.

He stressed the importance of this Bill and elaborated that transformation was an essential priority for the built environment sector.

The built environment sector had been neglected, from a legislative perspective, since the 1960s and, thus, the promulgation of the Bill was essential to the regulation and transformation of the industry, said Doidge.

"The most significant challenge, at this stage, is to ensure that transformation can succeed without sending skills out of the country."

Doidge expressed uncertainty as to whether the Bill would be tabled before the elections, which were scheduled for April next year.

However, if the Bill was not promulgated during this session of Parliament, Doidge stated that the Bill would certainly be tabled during the next session.

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Tel: +27(0)11 622 3744 | Fax +27(0)11 622 9350 |
newsdesk@engineeringnews.co.za
<http://www.engineeringnews.co.za>