



Kevin Mileham: scrutinising local government (and its players)

Last month the DA's shadow minister for Cooperative Governance, Kevin Mileham, made headlines after the Public Protector found that former Cooperative Governance Minister, Des van Rooyen, had misled the National Assembly (www.politicsweb.co.za). The findings, which may well have proven to be the legal basis for Van Rooyen's removal from Cabinet, came in response to a complaint Mileham made regarding the Minister's relationship with the Guptas. But Mileham was in the news for more than being Van Rooyen's nemesis, he was also putting Salga under pressure with allegations of mismanagement and partisan focus. He also questioned municipal investments in the now-collapsed VBS Mutual Bank. This Personality of the Month profiles the vocal opposition MP as Parliament becomes a more assertive voice in South African politics.

Outspoken opposition voice

Mileham has firm roots in **local government**; before representing the DA as an MP (a role he took up in 2013 when he replaced Athol Trollip), he had been the DA's Chief Whip in Buffalo City (between 2011 and 2013), a role preceded by that of councillor in Port Alfred (between 2006 and 2011) (whoswho.co.za).

Before these roles, Mileham had a private sector career in various public relations and marketing posts which appear to have been surpassed by political concerns in the developmentally-complex Eastern Cape where he received his secondary education (although also having a footprint in Durban, where he was born, and Johannesburg, where he studied a BCom at Wits University, whoswho.co.za).

Mileham queried Van Rooyen's private activities as far back as 2016 (www.news24.com). Earlier last month, the Public Protector found that in visiting the Gupta family home since taking office, Van Rooyen had violated

paragraph 2.3 (a) of the Executive Ethics Code as well as section 96(1) and 96(2)(b) of the Constitution (www.politicsweb.co.za, mg.co.za). (For the original report, see www.pprotect.org).

Responding to the findings, Van Rooyen argued that his relationship with the Guptas was in his capacity as an office bearer of the Umkhonto We Sizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA, mg.co.za, www.news24.com) - an argument that was insufficient to shake off his Gupta association.

It is perhaps pertinent to note that Mileham is married to equally outspoken DA MP, Natasha Mazzone, who laid a similar complaint against Public Enterprises Minister, Lynne Brown (www.politicsweb.co.za). These complaints overlay with **State Capture** concerns with most associated ministers - including Van Rooyen and Brown - now cut from the new Cabinet.

But the chapter on State Capture is still to close. The DA has requested that House Chairperson, Cedric Frolick, compel the Portfolio Committee for cooperative governance to institute a formal enquiry into the extent of state capture in the national Department of Cooperative Governance (Cogta, www.politicsweb.co.za), raising questions about Cogta's relationship with Gupta-linked Trillion (city-press.news24.com).

In addition, Mileham also issued recent statements on the **water crisis** (www.politicsweb.co.za) and the politicisation and management of **Salga** (politicsweb.co.za) - threatening to withdraw DA municipalities from the local government association by April if concerns are not addressed - both key issues in the sector. Mileham also asked for a written reply on which municipalities had invested in the now collapsed VBS Mutual Bank ([http://www.treasury.gov.za/publications/other/MinAnsw/2016/Reply%20to%20PQ%202150%20\[NW2470E\].pdf](http://www.treasury.gov.za/publications/other/MinAnsw/2016/Reply%20to%20PQ%202150%20[NW2470E].pdf)).

As State Capture allegations are unpacked, there will be no shortage of new issues in local government for Mileham to take up as a prominent voice on local government. It will be interesting to see how the new Minister for Cooperative Governance, Zweli Mkhize (municipalig.co.za) provides a counterbalance to his opposition narrative.

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