

Eskom fires whistleblower

Eskom has summarily dismissed its suspended head of legal, Suzanne Daniels, following the outcome of a disciplinary hearing.



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Daniels said she had expected this outcome as the chairman of the disciplinary hearing, Advocate Nazir Cassim, was not predisposed to listening to her version “right from the outset”.

The four charges of misconduct against her were:

- Distribution of confidential Eskom proprietary interest to a third party;
- Her involvement in the McKinsey and Trillian transactions;
- Her involvement in the Tegeta transaction; and
- Her mandating a firm of attorneys and approving payment to the firm of attorneys for legal services rendered to former SABC board chairperson in the SABC Parliamentary Inquiry, which had absolutely nothing to do with Eskom.

Daniels has been engaged in a running battle with her former employer since she testified before the public enterprises committee’s inquiry into state capture about the Guptas’ alleged influence at Eskom. She was first suspended in October 2017, after she ordered law firm Bowman Gilfillan to issue letters of demand to McKinsey & Co and the Gupta-linked Trillian Capital Partners for payments the companies allegedly received without valid contracts. In this case, the CCMA awarded her five months’ pay as compensation and ordered that she be allowed to return to work.

She was once again placed on suspension on 16 March 2018, when the new charges were brought against her.

Daniels said she decided to blow the whistle in 2017, after her conscience was “jolted” by Public Enterprise Minister Pravin Gordhan’s statement at a press briefing to “connect the dots”.

“When you close to something, you don’t really see the bigger picture. Pravin Gordhan made the challenge to us to connect the dots... it started to make me think what are we actually doing?”

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