



human settlements

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Building No 6 & 7, No 7 Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Extension 2  
Mbombela, Mpumalanga, Private Bag X11328, Mbombela, 1200  
Tel: +27 (13) 766 6088, Fax: +27 (13) 766 8441

Litiko  
Lekuhlaliswa Kwebantfu

Departement van  
Menslike Nedersittings

UmNyango  
Wokuhlaliswa Kwabantu

**Press Release**  
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## **MORE EFFORTS TO TACKLE HOUSING BACKLOG IN DELMAS**

The tenants of public service is openness, transparency and accountability and as such, government should forever keep close contact with its service market. It is for this reason that the Mpumalanga MEC for Human Settlements, Mr. Speed Mashilo recently appeared before the Committee on Women, Youth, Children and People living with Disabilities to respond to petitions from Victor Kanye Local Municipality. In the main, the petitioned matters related to access to government subsidized housing, the application thereof and ways to deal the housing backlog. Championed by the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, the session promotes accountability and strengthening the oversight function of the institution.

As conceded by the MEC Mashilo, it was apparent that the housing need in the province remains stubbornly high. “The province has over 250 000 housing backlog and this number has remained the same for some time, it is our elephant in the room”, said Mashilo. “I have engaged municipalities to avail the service sites to communities for self-build purposes and the public must take advantage”, he continued. Mashilo further stressed that the solution to housing needs in the province must be treated as a collective responsibility wherein both the public and private sector work hand in hand, especially the mines.

According to the National Housing Needs Register (NHNR), the housing backlog Victor Kanye Local Municipality alone stands at 7680 individuals who are in need of houses. To dent this number, the Department is currently servicing 500 stands across the municipal jurisdiction, which is now at 93 percent completion. Upon completion, the Municipal Council will determine the number sites reserved for construction of government subsidized units and houses for middle-income earners. In partnership with the private sector, the Department and the municipality have collaborated with Mbuyelo Mine for the development of Abor Township. Moreover, the application for the development of 2000 stands in Waaikraal Farm is receiving attention from the Department of Agriculture Rural Development and Land Reform.

Speaking on behalf of the community, Mr Philemon Gumede decried the dire need for housing and pleaded with government to give urgent attention to the Delmas community. “It is common cause that there has been some work done, however the high number of people in need for housing is growing. I also want to agitate that there be a strong resolve to address illegal occupation of houses”, pleaded Gumede. He continued to question the process of allocating housing, as there is still high number of highly deserving beneficiaries without houses.

The Acting Head of Human Settlements, Ms Hazel Zitha explained that the national qualifying criteria remains important and requires that priority must be given to vulnerable and needy groups. “The Department’s allocation policy directs that when allocating units priority is given to the elderly, child-headed families and people living with disability”, explained Zitha. As far as illegal occupation of houses is concerned, the Department has directed the contractors to locate and involve respective beneficiaries when constructing their houses with the help of local councillors and human settlements officials.

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**ISSUED BY THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE**  
**MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**  
**CONTACT: FREDDY NGOBE – 013 766 6014 / 082 859 4630/ [flngobe@mpg.gov.za](mailto:flngobe@mpg.gov.za)**

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