

Ministers get to rent a R4m flat for R40 a day

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“You’ve got a government that is not coming up with some kind of financial strategy or recovery plan for the economy of SA, but here they are spending taxpayers’ money [on themselves],” said Holenstein.

“If you are going to pay R75 for an apartment that is worth R4m in the open market, that is tantamount to corruption and fraud.”

Political economist and analyst Zamikhaya Maseti said government infrastructure such as Rygersdal should be expropriated without compensation and converted into affordable rentals for young people.

“The directors-general and ministers have got fringe benefits which can be used for whatever accommodation needs they have. Students are struggling with high rentals in and around Cape Town,” he said. “You can’t stimulate the economy if you are coming up with such ridiculous practices.”

DA MP and deputy finance spokesperson Alfred Lees said the renovations involved unforgivable extravagance.

“From a financial point of view, it is excessive that this kind of money has been spent on accommodation for the directors-general and ministers at a time when the economy is in such a bad state,” he said.

Mchunu said that after a number of companies had submitted quotes, the contractor appointed American Shutters to supply shutters that were made locally for more than R700,000. “Only single components of the shutters, the flush sliding bolts, were imported because there was not a comparable product in SA,” he said.

Imported Envirodeck composite decking was sourced from a local company. Mchunu said: “It is important to note that there is no local manufacturer for this material.”

Maintenance-free HulaBond cladding was chosen because Rygersdal was a “recy-



The Rygersdal apartment block in Rosebank, Cape Town. Picture: Supplied

Over-the-top materials that pushed up price

Marmoran paint cost about R2.5m. Normal paint would have cost 30% less

Imported decking and wooden structures cost about R3.5m. The decking cost about five times more than a comparable local product

Imported bamboo flooring cost about R2m, more than twice what a comparable local product would cost

Imported HulaBond cladding cost about R4.6m

cled” building. “We required a lightweight material to achieve the divisions and screening between apartments on the façade of the building.”

Mchunu defended the use of balau for “external natural timber slatted screens”. He said the wood, from Malaysia, was renowned for requiring little maintenance.

“Finishes were chosen to be low on maintenance, hard-wearing and versatile,” he said. “It is important to note that the building was designed with a long term of over 30 years’ life cycle projection, therefore, where possible, the latest high-quality products had to be used to reduce risk of early redundancy or need to further upgrade in the short to medium term.”

A “good balance was achieved between local products and imported products”.

Approached for comment, Ngonyama Okpanum director Hammond Dendere said: “I can’t disclose anything without being authorised.”