

# Male victims of gender-based violence urged 'not to suffer in silence'

## NOKUTHULA NTULI

KWAZULU-NATAL'S Social Development (DSD) MEC Nonhlanhla Khoza has urged men who are victims of gender-based violence not to be scared of coming forward and seeking help.

She was speaking during her maiden budget speech at the provincial legislature yesterday.

Her department received an allocation of R3,5 billion from the Provincial Treasury for the 2019/20 financial year.

Khoza said DSD has set aside R57 million for the victim empowerment programmes in response to the increase in incidences of domestic and gender-

based violence in the province.

While the department has been known to render support to female victims who seek help at its various centres — some which are also based at police stations — Khoza said they have heard the voices of men crying for help as they also become victims of gender-based violence. "In response, the department has established two shelters for men in uMgungundlovu District and eThekweni Metro. To date, 69 men have accessed the services. I am happy to make this announcement during the Men's Month. We encourage men to come forward and not suffer in silence," she said.

MEC Khoza expressed her concern



Social Development MEC Nonhlanhla Khoza

that substance abuse remained the main driver of social ills. She said the department has allocated more than R103,5 million to programmes geared towards drug prevention and rehabilitation. This includes the capacitation of three state-owned rehab centres and fast tracking the implementation of the Ke Moja Prevention Programme in all districts and institutions of higher learning.

"In strengthening the implementation of the National Drug Master Plan and the establishment of the local drug action committees, I will personally be meeting mayors of district and local municipalities ..."

In response to persistently high levels

of poverty, the department has set aside R20,2 million in order to continue to provide food to the needy. The beneficiaries of this initiative will also be linked to the Expanded Public Works and other skills development programmes.

A variety of catalytic projects in various districts have been identified to provide sustainable income to women who are heading their households.

DSD will also spend R16,8 million on social relief for those affected by natural disasters, R266 million on HIV/Aids programmes, R145,5 million on services for people with disabilities and R185 million on the elderly.

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