

# Issue of abandoned buildings is still unresolved

The City of Cape Town is escalating the issue of abandoned buildings and vacant land that belongs to national government.

This was revealed by Alderman Stuart Pringle, Subcouncil 24 chairperson, during his opening address at the first subcouncil meeting of the year. “These properties are simply left abandoned at vast expense to the fiscus,” he said. “We will continue to pressure these national departments to get to grips with the property they own and decide what they wish to do with these assets.”

Pringle explained the subcouncil ordinarily uses the Problem Buildings Bylaw to deal with abandoned or derelict land or buildings, including

those owned by national government.

“When dealing with other spheres of government, this entails using the lengthy intergovernmental dispute process, and the subcouncil therefore also seeks to engage directly with the office of the relevant national minister, such as the Minister of Public Works in order to speedily resolve such matters.”

Generally, the response from the minister’s office is prompt, but the action they take may take months or years. “Some of the options are to close up or otherwise secure buildings, or even the disposal of the buildings,” Pringle related.

Over the last five years, the subcouncil, sought to use both

the bylaw and direct engagement, but the time had come to escalate the matter.

“The building of greatest concern at the moment is on the corner of Andries Pretorius and Pastorie streets, which is owned by the Department of Public Works,” he said. “After engagement between the national department and the subcouncil, the building was secured but it remains a problem.”

He added that there were a number of other problem building and land also of concern in Somerset West.

**This building at the corner of Andries Pretorius and Jubilee Crescent was declared a problem building several months ago.** Photo: Yaseen Gaffar

