

## ACTIVISM

# Calls to release military sites for housing

**SHAKIRAH THEBUS**

shakirah.thebus@inl.co.za

THE Development Action Group (DAG), several land and housing NGOs and activists are calling for the release of state-owned underutilised military land to address the City's housing crisis.

DAG hosted a public meeting with land and housing partners yesterday on three parcels of military land identified for social/ affordable housing: Ysterplaat, Youngsfield and Wingfield, and its potential for development.

Last year, through a joint submission, the land and housing activists groups called for the release of the parcels of land in Cape Town.

"The three pieces of nationally-owned land have the potential to combat Cape Town's affordable housing crisis and alleviate the harmful effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has driven many into homelessness. By releasing the sites, the national government could make room for up to 67 000 low-income households in Cape Town, answering a decades-long call on the national government to address the gross spatial inequalities in the city," said Town Planner at Community Organisation Resource Centre, Chadermnay Glenn.

"Allowing this well-located state-owned land to lie fallow or under-utilised is irrational and unreasonable when it could instead be used to meet the housing needs of thousands of low-income households, many of whom are living in informal settlements, backyard shacks and other forms of unsafe housing."

Glenn said the military sites account for almost 680 hectares and is under the custodianship of the Department of Public Works. Legal Resource Centre attorney Anneline Turpin said the sites were close to schools, social facilities, police stations, health services and public transport. "Each site is located about 10km from the Cape Town CBD, close to existing economic and industrial nodes."