

## WESTERN CAPE

# Groups air their views on expropriation bill

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THE national debate on the Expropriation Bill came to the Western Cape over the weekend, with the DA dismissing the process as a political stunt while the ANC said the bill was a progressive move to bring justice to land issues.

During the hearings across the province since Thursday, various groups and individuals, both for and against the bill, used the public hearings to set out their positions on the issue.

In KwaLanga on Friday, public works and infrastructure portfolio committee chairperson Nolitha Ntobongwana (ANC) said the purpose of the bill was to repeal the existing Expropriation Act of 1975.

She said the committee decided to hold hearings during the week and at weekends to afford as many citizens and stakeholders as possible an opportunity to participate in the hearings.

As provincial politicians rallied their supporters to the cause, provincial DA transport and public works committee spokesperson Ricardo MacKenzie said that while land reform was a crucial aspect of redress because of the country's tragic history of forced removals, the bill was draconian.

"The work of the provincial government in finalising land claims shows that we need neither draconian legislation nor constitutional amendments to get the job done.

"Between 2012 and 2019, the provincial Transport and Public Works Department committed itself to finalising a total of 168 967m<sup>2</sup> of provincial land for restitution claims.

"The failure of other provinces and the national government to finalise restitution matters is purely a result of mismanagement and poor political



A PREVIOUS public hearing on land expropriation without compensation held in Cape Town.  
| **DAVID RITCHIE** African News Agency (ANA)

leadership."

Supporting the bill, provincial ANC finance and economic opportunities spokesperson Nomi Nkondlo said the bill was driven by a democratic agenda.

"As part of the social contract with the people, we have to repeal apartheid legislation which resulted in disproportionate distribution of and inequitable access to land and property.

"The Expropriation Bill 2020 is in line with this as it seeks to provide for a just and equitable process to restore the dignity of all citizens, in addressing access to property and land."

On the question of the adjusted alert level 2 lockdown regulations for public gatherings, Ntobongwana said: "In line with the announcement made by the president, the committee will

adhere to the regulated 100 participants in a venue at any given time."

The public hearings began on Thursday with a session in the West Coast District at the Cathy Johnson Community Hall in Cederberg Municipality. The Western Cape is the seventh province that the committee has visited.

Ntobongwana said the committee has taken a resolution to postpone hearings in the Northern Cape and Free State, as the provinces are experiencing a rise in Covid-19 infections.

"After the completion of the Western Cape leg of the hearings, the committee will pause its programme until the rate of infections is under control in both the Northern Cape and Free State," she said.