

# Willowdale Farm Workers Housing Project Handed Over by MEC Sibiya

By Sonica Naudé-Steyn

The construction of 83 housing units at a cost of R12.3 million at Willowdale farm was recently completed and KZN MEC for Human Settlement and Public Works, Jomo Sibiya on Saturday officially handed over the title deeds to the recipients.

According to the department, the project was implemented under the Human Settlements Department's Farm Workers Housing Assistance policy and said that it is one of a few that the Department has successfully rolled out to ensure adequate shelter and permanent security of tenure for farmhands.

"The era of farm dwellers being treated as second class citizens in their own country is ending. They deserve better. Our Premier is resolute and so we are. This was in Ward 6 in Kokstad. A first of its kind project and we are going to expand this program. We were joined by a very capable Mayor, Bheki Mtolo and the team of councillors," said Sibiya.

He said that the department would do their utmost to quicken the tempo of such projects after noting that one beneficiary is a 93 year old woman.

"The Willowdale Farm Workers Housing Assistance and Title Deeds Hand Over Programme is indeed a historic one in that it takes place exactly at the same time when the province is on tenterhooks amid the tensions between farmhands and farm owners in some districts of the province. These tensions were evident during last weekend's Premier's Report Back sessions in oPhongolo, Gluckstadt and Normandien," said MEC Sibiya.

MEC Sibiya applauded farm owner, Max Bastard for his cooperation throughout the project from gifting the land to subdivision and allocation of land for the 83 units being built.

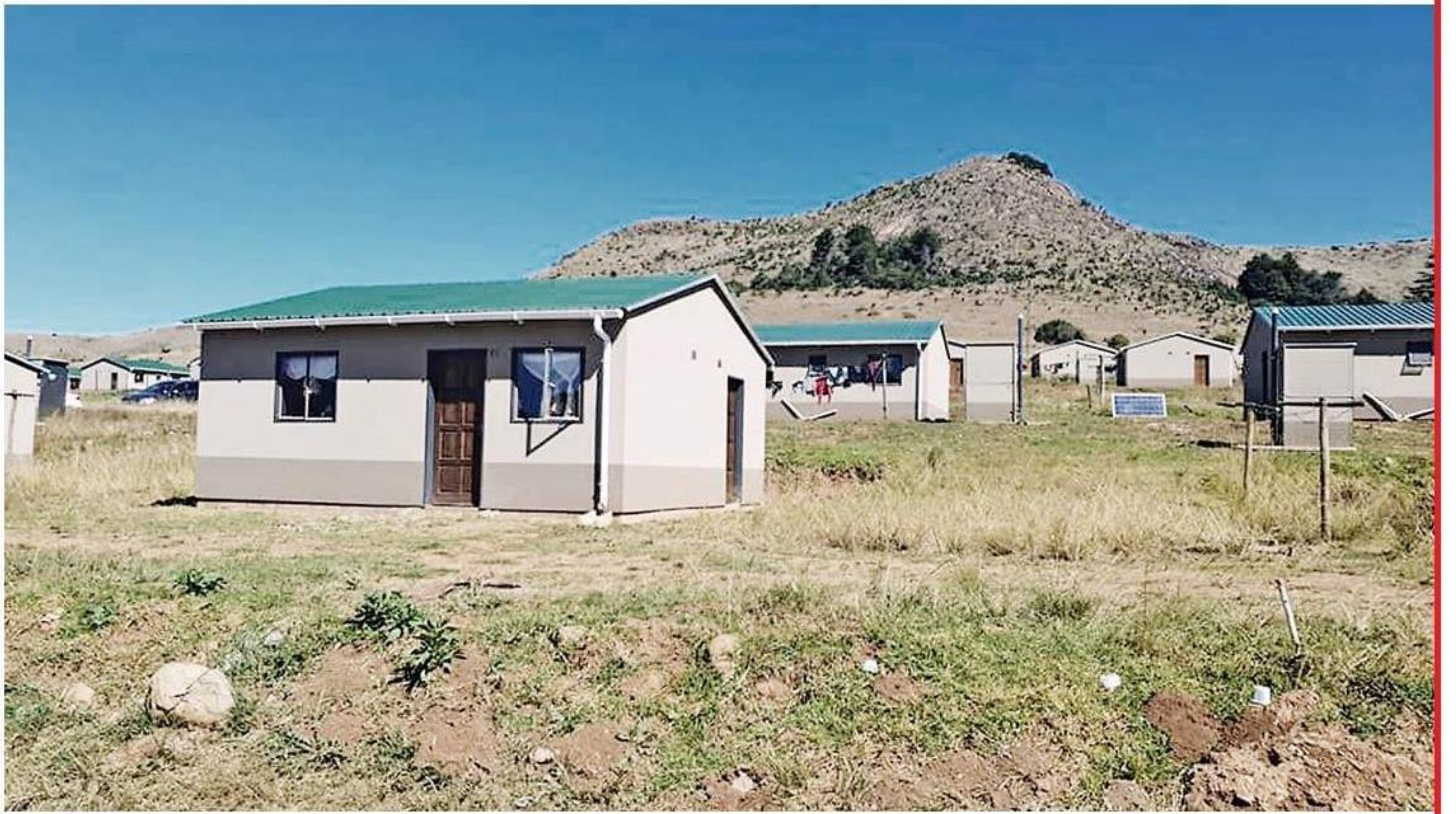
"The Willowdale Farm owner has been an exemplary and model farmer and the Provincial Government sincerely hope more other farmers in the province could emulate his deed so that there could be harmony in the countryside between farmhands and farm owners," said Sibiya.

He said that it saddened him to hear of a farm owner demolishing a formal housing structure belonging to a farm worker Fana Mnguni in Gluckstadt outside Vryheid recently and that the incident has once again placed pressure on the provincial government to expedite similar projects.

"Premier Sihle Zikalala has encouraged communities to plant seed of peace, unity and social cohesion to grow KwaZulu-Natal into a fruitful and prosperous Province," said Sibiya.

The MEC said that he was only aware of one other successful project where the department implemented a project under the same policy. This

was the project involving the Hiltonian Society and uMngeni Municipality in uMgungundlovu District where about 26 former farm workers who resided within the Hilton College complex became beneficiaries of houses near Howick West.



*The 83 completed housing units at Willowdale Farm were handed over, along with the title deeds, to beneficiaries on Saturday by KZN MEC for Human Settlement and Public Works, Jomo Sibiya.*



*KZN MEC for Human Settlement and Public Works, Jomo Sibiya with farm owner, Max Bastard, before completion of the project.*