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Author: Staff Reporter

More mass care centres close as displaced families move to decent accommodation

THERE has been a remarkable increase in the shutting down of mass care centres that had been sheltering flood-displaced communities. Coupled with the finalisation of most lease agreements for the Transitional Emergency Accommodation (TEAs) facilities, this will provide decent shelter in the interim for displaced flood victims.

To date, about 60 mass care centres remain in eThekweni Municipality which was the epicentre of the April and May floods disaster. This is almost half of the initial mass care centres that had been set up immediately after the disaster.

Due to the slow pace of delivery, in terms of the Temporary Residential Units (TRUs) and the pressure to remove people from halls, government is now proceeding with the establishment of TEAs as an alternative to mass rollout of TRUs.

This will bring the total number of closed mass care centres to six, since the start of the programme to relocate flood victims began during the first Sunday of this month.

KZN MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works, Dr Ntuthuko Mahlaba welcomed these recent developments. He remains adamant that the department's plan and target to close all mass care centres as speedily as possible was on the right track.

To date, 1 521 Temporary Residential Units (TRUs) have been completed in the province to ensure that thousands of displaced families are provided with decent homes. Of the completed TRUs, 1 440 are occupied thus far.

The initial TRU intervention in the aftermath of the devastating floods was a temporary solution, while permanent housing developments were also being steadfastly worked on.

Of the completed TRUs, 81 remain unoccupied in KwaDukuza Municipality in the Ilembe District. About 47 % (64) of the mass care centres have been closed down, and all mass care centres in Ugu District have also closed down.

In KwaDukuza Local Municipality, there are 81 TRUs already constructed for communities still in mass care centres, and the installation of outstanding services such as water has commenced. Meanwhile, eThekweni Municipality has supplied building materials to some of the families in shelters.

Underperforming service providers and the on-

set of the rainy season have also seen a reduction in the number of TRU completed, with 43 out of a weekly target of 100 completed as of the end of last week.

The department remains intent in pursuing the decanting of mass centres from all angles. Several mass care shelters remain in eThekweni, KwaDukuza and Msunduzi Local Municipalities.

In the Msunduzi Municipality's Truro Hall mass care centre, one family has been moved to a house in Copesville.

In addition to the construction of TRUs, technical assessment of the temporary rehabilitation of recommended properties has also been completed in order for mass care centres in and around eThekweni to be decommissioned with urgency.

The department will not compromise on quality when identifying options to relocate the families currently being housed in these mass care centres. Two mass care centres have been closed in the Harry Gwala district and Zululand district.

The initial allocation of TRUs in Ilembe, King Cetshwayo, uMkhanyakude and uMzinyathi districts has already been completed.

So far, more than R82.3 million has been paid to service providers. Close to a further R6.3m is being processed for payment.

The province is close to spending R112m of the first tranche of the allocated R325m from National Treasury.

Among the milestones achieved so far with regard to the above expenditure, there are 1 114 TRU completions with 1 164 at wall plate level and about 1 226 foundation slabs cut.

Of the initial 1 860 TRU sites that had been confirmed as buildable for phase one of the rebuilding process, there are a remaining 289 TRUs.

The availability of suitable land is a challenge that is impeding this work. The department remains committed to linking land to the shelters where people are currently being temporarily housed. So far, three land parcels have been handed over to service providers, with one outstanding to be handed over before the end of October.

A further 1 224 platforms for additional TRUs have been cut. In addition, the signing of lease agreements for the TEAs will have been completed by the end of October.



KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube was accompanied by KZN MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works, Dr Ntuthuko Mahlaba and eThekweni Municipality EXCO member Councillor Mosepye Madala on a visit to the Truro Hall mass care centre in Westville, prior to its inhabitants being moved to a transitional emergency accommodation facility in early October. The three also visited the Reservoir Hills site, where 78 families who were displaced by the floods will be relocated to permanent homes.