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## MEDICAL NEED

# Unused taxi rank to be demolished to build new clinic

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THE Hornlee Clinic project will see an unused R9.2 million taxi rank demolished and converted into a medical facility to replace the Hornlee Clinic in Knysna.

The Department of Health and Wellness provided an update on the project to the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness on Friday.

The department will enter into a 99-year lease, yet to be signed, with the Department of Infrastructure (formerly the Department of Public Works and Transport).

Construction on the R35m project is set to begin in July 2024 and is expected to take 10 months to finish.

The new facility is intended to ease the immense burden faced by the existing Hornlee Clinic.

The department's chief director for facility infrastructure management, Dr Laura Angeletti-du Toit, said the current Hornlee Clinic infrastructure was too small to deal with the patient load and overcrowded, with poor



HEALTH MEC Nomafrrench Mbombo at the official opening of the new Gouda Clinic.

patient flow. She added that the full package of services cannot be provided and the facility cannot be altered or extended. Discussions with the municipality on the use of the taxi rank for the clinic started in 2014, as the site was unused by taxis.

The department was informed on July 6, 2021 that the Knysna Council approved entering into a 99-year lease agreement with the Department of Infrastructure.

Consultants found that the existing parking deck was not structurally strong enough for the clinic to be

built on, with the department opting to demolish the existing structure to make way for the new clinic.

Committee chairperson Gerrit Pretorius said: "The existing clinic is very overcrowded, very cramped. And I think for the whole community, from what we observed there through the talks that the minister gave, this cannot happen soon enough. Obviously we don't want to rush it, we have to follow procedures."

Department spokesperson Mark van der Heever said from October 2021 to May 2023, R815 574.11 was spent on security services.

On costs related to occupying the site, Van der Heever said: "The lease is not yet finalised with the Department of Infrastructure, which includes the financial cost. Thus we cannot comment on it yet."

Meanwhile, Health MEC Nomafrrench Mbombo formally opened the new R17.9m Gouda Clinic, yesterday. The new facility will replace the former semi-detached house which was converted into a clinic and had been the old Gouda Clinic.