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Grass is growing on the helicopter pad and around the facility.

DoD sickbay a white elephant

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Another white elephant?

This seems to be the fate of the state-of-the-art sickbay at the Saldanha Military Base.

Construction started in May 2020 and the building was officially handed over to the Department of Public Works (DPWI) in September 2022.

It seems since the handover not much has happened at the medical centre. *Weslander* recently visited the base and found the gates of the sickbay closed, with the facility apparently not being used.

A local consultant who visited the sickbay in July found this to be much the case and was disheartened at its state.

The facility was intended to serve Department of Defence (DoD) members as well as veterans.

“Vegetation is growing between the paving and birds are nesting in the roofs,” the consultant said.

“Insulation panels that were wrongly ordered and had to be removed by the department are still stacked north of the deteriorating helicopter pad. This is what it looks like outside. But what does it look like on the inside?”

According to Thami Mchunu, spokesperson for the national department, the facility can provide services for dental care, physiotherapy, social services, pharmacy and consulting rooms.

A tender notice for the project was valued at between R61 and R200 million.

The DPWI confirmed the facility was officially handed over to the DoD.

“The facility and its equipment came with guarantees and/or maintenance plans that are under the ownership and direct control of the DoD,” Mchunu added.

Weslander sent an enquiry to the Saldanha Military Base on the new sickbay, now seemingly deserted, but had received no response at the time of going to print.