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Rented property bungle

PUBLIC WORKS: DEPARTMENT BLAMED FOR ALLOWING USERS TO MISS PAYMENTS

→ 'Every individual who utilises a government facility that's residential, has to pay.'

Reitumetse Makwea

North West public service employees who reside at state houses and have not paid rent could soon be homeless, despite the department of public works and road's failure to implement its own state housing policy.

This is despite the department's policy clearly stating "the department, in conjunction with the respective provincial departments, shall cause all rentals received from officials employed in the public service to be deducted through a salary stop order facility".

Department spokesperson Lerato Gambu said according to MEC Gaoage Oageng Molapisi, to a greater extent the employees understood the system and decided not to follow through.

Gambu said some of these missed payments dated as far



PAPAL VISIT

Pope Francis prepares to leave in the Popemobile at the end of the weekly general audience at St Peter's Square in The Vatican yesterday. Picture: AFP

back as 2005.

"The houses that belong to public works are not only occupied by employees of public works. There are also employees of other de-

partments, of which as public works, we only have the right to garnishee them through the client department offices," he said.

He said state-owned proper-

ties operated differently. "You find that we do have other client departments, who then when we give their employees the accommodation, we give the individual

employees the garnishee orders". "So what then happens is that they don't submit it to our office, and therefore it makes it difficult for us to refer to the garnishee orders," he said.

However, political analyst Dr Bernard Sebake said given their qualified audit history, the department should take responsibility for failing to implement its own policy and keeping up with it, instead of making excuses.

"Every individual who utilises a government facility that's residential, has a responsibility to pay the user fee," he said.

"Whether people work directly for the department or not, the blame should go to public works which decided to put people in the building without initiating a process of how the user fee is going to be paid."

The department has consistently received a qualified audit outcome for the past six years: 2015-16 to 2021-22.

Based on its most recent audit outcome, the department rented out properties it owns and leases from landlords to client service departments and other lessees for office and residential accommodation, respectively.

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