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The current state of the naturally heated swimming pool at the once beautiful Mphephu Resort in Nzhelele. Photo: Lutendo Bobodi.

Let us rescue Mphephu Resort, ask local residents

By Maanda Bele

The Mphephu Resort in Nzhelele, currently managed by the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment, and Tourism (LEDET), was once a highly popular relaxation destination that attracted tourists from across the country.

Situated beneath the sacred Tswime Mountain, at the borders of Siloam, Sendedza, and Mahlarini villages, the Mphephu Resort featured a natural heated pool, two regular swimming pools, a hot spring, a large park, a disco, and well-equipped accommodation facilities. The entire area was surrounded by lush, beautifully landscaped gardens and well-maintained green lawns. It was also used as a venue for meetings, matric farewells, and entertainment events.

The resort was officially opened in 1989 by former Venda President Mr Frank Raveza, a year before he was removed from office in a military coup. In May 2009, former Limpopo Premier Ngoako Ramatlhodi announced the renovation of the resort. However, things took a downturn.

In 2021, heavy rains badly damaged the access bridge to the resort and parts of the fence, but unfortunately, no subsequent effort to repair them has been made. This once-proud resort is now in a dilapidated state, resembling nothing more than a sad, white elephant. The park's once-vibrant lawns and gardens now lie dead and untended, the

swimming pools have dried up and become dirty, and some of the buildings have been vandalised.

The closure of the Mphephu Resort has not only impacted the local economy but also the entertainment sector. Speaking on behalf of the community, Mr Samuel Lusunzi expressed their feeling of disrespect and hurt by the government for abandoning the resort. "They are not respecting our heritage. This resort was our pride and a tourist attraction. It also provided valuable knowledge, like where this hot water originates. We have to travel all the way to Durban for entertainment, but we want people to come here for entertainment and to enjoy this place."

Lusunzi pointed out that the resort has a rich history, having hosted popular artists such

as Brenda Fassie, Arthur Mafokate, and many other renowned names.

"Our children now have to travel far just to swim for a day, even though we have this beautiful resort in our area. We have written a letter to the MEC (Mr Rodgers Monama), informing him that we are willing

to renovate the resort ourselves. Our community has all the skills required to run this resort. Our children have gone to school and are employable. We have security guards, chefs, bartenders, lifeguards, managers, assistants, and more. The Vhembe community is more than capable of managing the resort without government assistance," he said.

LEDET spokesperson Mr Zaid Kalla said that the Department of Public Works had conducted a conditional assessment, which required funding. "The funding will allow us to appoint service providers in the built environment, such as architects, engineers, and a quantity surveyor, to create detailed, costed designs. Afterwards, we will apply to the Treasury for funding to start the renovation," he stated.



One of the vandalised buildings at the Mphephu Resort. Photo: Lutendo Bobodi.

Elim's eye care unit gets high-tech equipment to assist with treatment

By Thembi Siaga

Elim Hospital's deteriorating eye-care unit received a high-tech boost when they received brand-new equipment during the Eye Awareness Campaign on Monday, 16 October.

Limpopo MEC for Health Dr Phophi Ramathuba handed the equipment over to the hospital. She was joined by doctors, nurses, member of the CHAI global health organization, hospital board members, and many other guests.

Elim Hospital, one of the oldest health facilities in Limpopo, once boasted one of the region's top ophthalmology departments. Over time, however, the quality of the eye facility declined. The eye-care unit serves as a specialised health-care facility focused on the

from Sherly village, expressed her gratitude for receiving assistance in regaining vision in her left eye. "We went to the eye theatre for cataract surgery and after the operation, which took more than 15 minutes, I could see through my left eye again for the first time in three years," she said.

Ramathuba explained how the availability of modern eye-care equipment will enhance the quality of eye-care services at the hospital. "With the new equipment, many operations can now be performed at Elim Hospital, instead of transporting patients to Mankweng Hospital in Polokwane. All the ophthalmology operations will be done here, including proce-

dures for retinal detachment," she said.

Ramathuba elaborated on the importance of early detection and treatment of eye conditions. She said caring for one's eyes and shielding them from the sun were crucial. She advised those who sense that something is amiss with their eyes to visit an eye clinic. "Sometimes other health issues, like high blood sugar, can lead to eye problems that are not easily rectifiable. Regular check-ups and maintaining normal blood-sugar levels can help prevent these issues. Our hospital has eye nurses and doctors who can identify problems early, when they are more manageable," she said.

