



**Publication:** Business Day - Main

**Title:** Khoisan occupation at Grabouw no longer our problem - forestry

**Publish date:** 20 Apr 2023

**Page:** 3

**Reach:** 14410

**AVE:R** 18370.97

**Author:** Liezl Human

KNOFLOKSKRAAL

## Khoisan occupation at Grabouw no longer our problem – forestry

Liezl Human

The department of forestry, fisheries & the environment has officially bowed out of managing a Khoisan settlement named Knoflokskraal near Grabouw, Western Cape.

The department had been managing activities at Knoflokskraal since late 2020. GroundUp first reported on the occupation of the 1800ha of land in June

2022. The original occupiers in 2020 planned to establish a self-sustaining Khoisan community.

Since then, the occupation has grown and now houses about 4,000 people on the land owned by the department of public works. In September, the department of forestry, fisheries & the environment said it planned to hand management of the land back to public works because it had failed to strike an

agreement with the residents.

In October 2022, the then public works minister, Patricia de Lille, told MPs the department had spent R3m on Knoflokskraal, including legal fees and sheriff's costs in efforts to evict the occupiers.

During the previous parliamentary briefing in March 2023, the Theewaterskloof Municipality told MPs it did not have money to provide basic services

such as water and toilets to residents of Knoflokskraal.

On Tuesday, the MPs in parliament's portfolio committee on forestry, fisheries & the environ-

**THE LAND HAS  
BECOME  
UNSALVAGEABLE FOR  
FUTURE FORESTRY  
PURPOSES**

ment adopted a report recommending that Knoflokskraal be managed by the departments of public works & infrastructure, and of co-operative governance & traditional affairs.

The report also recommended the establishment of a liaison structure with the police and the resolution of problems with leadership at the occupation.

According to the department of forestry, fisheries & the envi-

ronment's report, the land has become "unsalvageable" for future forestry purposes and there has been "irreversible damage to the plantations".

In its report, the department of forestry, fisheries & the environment made several recommendations, one being that the department of co-operative governance & traditional affairs oversee the implementation of the Traditional and Khoi-San

Leadership Act at Knoflokskraal. This would ensure that the community could set up a recognised council and become members of the National House of Traditional Leaders.

Another recommendation was for the SA Police Service to set up a Community Policing Forum "that will be inclusive of the affected communities to mitigate against conflicts between the police and the community".

DA MP David Bryant recommended that a comprehensive report be requested from the SA Human Rights Commission, saying that its reply in March to parliament on the occupation was "woefully inadequate". The recommendation was adopted by other MPs.

The department concluded its report by saying it had "no further oversight role" at Knoflokskraal. *GroundUp*