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Public Works releases R120.7-mil worth of property and land

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The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has released 86 buildings and vacant land plots, combined, to the public.

These are assets that have been identified as no longer having significant value to the department and as such have been sitting as dead weight on the department's asset registry.

The move to dispose of the R120.7-mil worth of assets for the benefit of the greater public follows resolutions taken during the Build KZN Better conference on sustainable approaches regarding asset management. This is testament to the success of the event which prompted KZN Public Works and Infrastructure to go back to the drawing board and reassess its asset management approach.

The latest development comes as shortly after taking office, MEC Martin Meyer issued a directive that the department reposition itself to become one that works for the public, and as such the fate of any asset that does not add value to this goal must be reassessed. This was part of the MEC's vision of a lean and clean KZN Public Works and Infrastructure.

Following this, the department undertook an audit process to update its asset registry to better gauge which assets were used for what purpose and what was the usage status as unused assets continue to drain the department of significant amounts of money each year.

To put this into context, the release of these assets will save KZN Public Works and Infrastructure an amount of R24.3-million in annual rates. As a landlord, the department pays large amounts of money in rates for all its properties, whether they are in use or sitting vacant. This is money that could be better utilised towards other priorities.

The assets are sitting across various districts from Hlabisa to Ugu to eThekweni and many other districts in between. The department has since issued invitations for bidding for those wanting to make use of the assets to come forward and bid for them.

However, in keeping with the department's mandate of serving, uplifting local communities and creating job opportunities, during the bidding process preference will be given to those whose goals align with this objective through the acquisition of these assets.

Therefore, institutions of higher education, those wanting to build schools and NGOs will get priority with the assets given to them either at free or at low-cost long-term leases.

This historic move by KZN Public Works and Infrastructure is evidence that the once unknown poor cousin department within the provincial government family is stepping up to have its name recognised as one of the most efficient, transparent and accountable departments that puts the people of this province first in everything it does.

As the asset audit comes to near completion the public can expect to see KZN Public Works and Infrastructure taking more steps towards addressing unutilised assets with the benefit to the taxpayer in mind.



MEC Martin Meyer