



public works  
& infrastructure

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**Media Statement by Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Patricia de Lille, MP**

**Department of Public Works and Infrastructure releases hundreds of parcels of land for public good**

As part of government's commitment to land reform, redistribution, restitution, land tenure that includes human settlement development, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) is pleased to announce that a number of parcels of land has been released for these purposes over the past few months.

As the custodian of State-owned land or properties, DPWI is often requested to release available land for human settlements developments or land which is subject to a restitution claim.

Returning land to dispossessed families is one of the fundamental actions we can make to reverse the legacy of apartheid where people of colour were stripped of their dignity, their land, the right to own land and homes. In this process families and communities were torn apart when people were displaced and forcibly removed to the outskirts of cities. The process of returning land to dispossessed families has been a long one but one that should be hastened with urgency so that claimants can finally have closure as they have already waited too long since the land claims process closed in 1998.

Equally important as the restitution process is land distribution to develop integrated human settlements for those in need who have been on housing waiting lists for many years. Our country's history has made our democracy and restoring people's dignity through giving them a home a cumbersome process but it is a task that must be expedited.

As public servants we have a duty to do everything we can to ensure that we fulfil our mandate, deliver services and undo the vicious legacy of apartheid spatial planning.

My department has a vital role in this process and we are committed to doing everything we can and to do it faster. I preach: "Khawuleza" to all DPWI officials because the patience of our people is running out.

We are not merely dealing with buildings and pieces of land, we are responsible for ensuring that we respond to the needs of our citizens and ensure that public land and public buildings is used for public good and not for profit only.

Over the past 10 months, I have signed off numerous requests for releasing land under the custodianship of DPWI for human settlements, land distribution and restitution purposes.

In October 2019, Cabinet was briefed on the progress made by the Inter Ministerial Committee on Land Reform on accelerating land reform and redistribution through the release of State-owned land.

In October, one hundred and sixty-seven (167) portions of state-owned land measuring fourteen thousand, one hundred and five (14 105) hectares held by the DPWI was approved by Cabinet to be released.

In addition to the 14 105, DPWI has processed the release of an additional 648 hectares of land has since been approved for release for human settlements developments.

DPWI releases for human settlements development purposes on a gratis basis subject to various administrative processes and conditions being met.

Land transferred by DPWI must be used for human settlements and not for resale to the private sector.

In the event that land is to be resold, national government must get the first option to take the land back. We must stop the tendency where national government releases land gratis to municipalities and provinces and they in turn sell it for profit. National government must also be provided with a database of land owned by provinces and municipalities so that all spheres of government can plan and deliver together.

The following parcels of land under the ownership of DPWI has recently been signed off for release:

- Northern Cape: Release of four state-owned properties to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) to settle the restitution claim by the Doraan family. This claim was lodged before the 31 December 1998 cut-off date and complied with the provisions of the Restitution of Land Right Act, 1994. The market value as at March 2018 for the four erven (2.8 hectares) being transferred to the Doraan family stood at approximately R3.2million.
- Tshwane: A request from the City of Tshwane for the release of a proposed portion of the remainder of portion 153 of Farm Elandsfontein for human settlements purposes. The land is to be released free of charge. This land is located approximately 29kilometres from the City Centre in Tshwane. The municipality has informed us that they can build approximately 4 000 houses on this parcel of land. The development will benefit the communities of Phomolong, Itereleng and the Hills informal settlements and will significantly address the housing demand.

- Eastern Cape: Release of various state-owned properties in the Humansdorp registration to settle the restitution claim by the direct descendants of the Tsitsikamma Development Trust/AmaMfengu community. The AmaMfengu Community that settled in the Tsitsikamma area during the Anglo-Xhosa “frontier wars” of 1833 – 1834. The AmaMfengu Community were dispossessed of their land and forcibly removed from the claimed properties in October 1927. Their removal was done in terms of the Black Administration Act of 1927. 15 other properties under the custodianship of DPWI were found to be available for the restitution claim. The 15 properties are more than 4 000 hectares in size. The value of these 15 properties that will now be given to the claimants stands at around R18.8million.
- North West: Release of state-owned property – remaining extent of portion 3 of farm Booykraal for a restitution claim by the Madibamantsho Community. The land will be released to the DALRRD to finalise the claim and transfer to the land to the claimants. This land is located in the Rustenburg District. The claim was made on 22 April 1998. The land that will be returned to the Madibamantsho Community is more than 1 120 hectares valued at around R4.4million.
- KwaZulu Natal: Gratis release of state-owned land for human settlements purposes in Cato Manor to the eThekweni Municipality for the upgrading and formalisation of an informal settlement. The size of the land is just over 2.1 hectares worth R2.9million.
- North West: Release of the remaining extend of the farm Rosmincol No. 442 JP registration division to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to settle the restitution claim by the Baphiring community.
- Gratis transfer of state-owned land to Identified Emerging Black Farmers. Portions 318 of Farm Loskop South 53 JS, District of Groblersdal, Limpopo Province.
- Release of land to the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) who will in turn release land for the redevelopment of District Six.
- Mpumalanga: Release of state-owned property; portion 23 of the farm Valschfontein to Dr JS Moroka Municipality for Human Settlements.
- Release of a property in Salvokop, Pretoria to the Department of Social Development for use as a centre for victims of gender based violence.

DPWI will continue to fulfil its mandate with urgency to ensure that where land has been identified for human settlements, redistribution, land tenure and restitution claims, that we will expedite our processes so that no unnecessary delays are experienced with these important projects.

ENDS

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