



public works  
& infrastructure

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Department:  
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## **STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, PATRICIA DE LILLE**

### **ALL SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN THE RELEASE OF PUBLIC LAND TO ADDRESS THE HOUSING SHORTAGE.**

#### **HOUSING CRISIS IS NOT A GAME**

The Democratic Alliance's (DA) call for the release of the parliamentary housing village, Acacia Park, plus some sites currently used and occupied by the Department of Defence, lacks integrity and is cheap politicking, because it is not a serious attempt to address our housing crisis.

Rather, it is a contrived and convoluted attempt to identify public land, assumed to be readily available for human settlements, in order to electioneer with my name.

The system whereby the executive is in Pretoria and Parliament is in Cape Town is a relic of our colonial and apartheid past when the four colonies formed the Union and then the Republic of South Africa. This system was inherited from the previous regime under the leadership of the National Party.

Acacia Park was established as a housing estate to accommodate Members of Parliament who live, and serve their constituencies, in towns and cities outside of Cape Town.

MPs are accommodated there for the purposes of their work at Parliament and the estate currently houses members of parliament, including DA Members of Parliament. A total of 65 DA MPs are accommodated in the Parliamentary Villages in Cape Town, 60 of those living in Acacia Park.

Geordin Hill-Lewis lives in Cape Town so this accommodation is not a need for him. His call for Acacia Park to be released for housing purposes is impractical and childish. He offers no proposals for how current occupants should be housed.

The housing crisis in Cape Town, and across the country, is real and it should not be diminished to a political football game.

Every sphere of government has a role to play in identifying public land under in their custodianship that can address the housing crisis.

Well-located public land that serves no government purpose, and can create affordable housing opportunities close to jobs and CBDs, should be released to address this crisis.

This was my approach, in 2017, when I was the Mayor of the City of Cape Town. The fact that no inner city affordable housing has been built while the DA has been in government in Cape Town and the Western Cape is because the DA prevented this from happening.

The proposal to release public land in the Cape Town inner city was the genesis of my fall out with the DA whose conservative inner-cabal, and their funders, were heavily opposed to.

The DA, as the government in Cape Town and the Western Cape, has custodianship of several thousand parcels of land and public buildings totalling over a million hectares available for urban development. They share the responsibility to make suitable and well-located public land in their custodianship available for housing purposes. I will advise Hill-Lewis to read the immovable asset register of both the City and Province to see the thousands of hectares of land they are sitting on in well located areas but they refuse to integrate the city. If he needs help to access the immovable asset registers, I can help him.

I can confirm that the Western Cape Government has at least over 450 vacant parcels of land all over Cape Town and in other parts of the Western Cape that can be released for well-located affordable housing for our people.

Hill-Lewis should start with what the City of Cape Town and Western Cape Government can release from their asset registers for well-located affordable housing.

I am not waiting on City of Cape Town land to be made available for integration but we are already looking at releasing Customs House which is under the custodianship of DPWI to integrate the city.

In the meantime, I remain deeply committed to release public land that is in my department's custodianship for housing, land reform and land restitution purposes.

In the period from when I was appointed Minister from June 2019 to date I have released the following properties:

- 6 properties to the Western Cape Government for social services purposes for GBV shelters;
- Land for restitution purposes in Franschoek, District Six and Strand
- 6 land parcels for housing purposes:
  - 6.9 hectares in Stellenbosch
  - 12 hectares at Driftsands
  - 11 hectares in Mossel Bay
  - 3.5 hectares in Wellington

These land parcels are now awaiting approval by the Land Affairs Board and/or National Treasury.

I am also in the process of approving more land parcels for release for housing purposes:

- 17 hectares in Driftsands
- 17 hectares in Stellenbosch.

As the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure I am in no position to unilaterally release public land that is allocated to a user department. The military sites are used for operational purposes by the Department of Defence.

In January I convened a site visit of the military sites in Cape Town, with the relevant ministers to assess the possibility of making these sites available for housing purposes. The Minister of Defence will be making proposals about what portions of these sites are not required for military operational purposes, if any.

If Hill-Lewis wishes to be taken seriously as a Mayoral candidate he should demonstrate that he has the experience and the knowledge to lead a city. A good start would be to learn what he doesn't know about how different spheres of government all have a responsibility to release public land for public good, how public land is released and to act with integrity.

**Ends**

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