



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Department of Public Works secures alternative accommodation for the Wynberg Home Affairs

Media reported last week that staff at Home Affairs in Wynberg were locked outside their offices as a result of a dispute between the Department of Public Works and the Building's landlord, over a lease.

However, as background the lease agreement at the Wynberg District Office, situated at Chadwick and 5th Streets in Wynberg, ended on 31 March 2005. The Department of Home Affairs continued to occupy the premises, and the Department of Public Works, continued to pay the rental on the premises, based on the previous lease agreement. The landlord allowed the Department of Home Affairs to occupy the property, and use it for the required purposes.

The landlord, however requested additional escalated amounts, and was required to conclude a lease agreement with Public Works. To date the landlord, had not concluded such a lease agreement, nor had he supplied proof of his tax clearance status, which is a SARS pre-requisite in the procurement process.

The Department of Public Works represented by the State Attorney, engaged in negotiations with the landlord, and offers of settlement were made. However, the landlord did not accept such offers, and an eviction order was obtained from the High Court, and was not opposed by the State Attorney. A further automatic rent interdict was sought, and an inventory prepared, the attachment of State goods, at the Chadwick premises. The latter legal process was not acceptable, as State-owned property cannot be the subject of an attachment.

The subsequent, offer to pay the full amount, was tendered, and however was not accepted by the landlord. The landlord has also not been co-operative in relation to the upgrading of the condition of the facilities.

The Department of Public Works, sought the urgent advice of Legal Counsel, and the Senior State Attorney, who after consultations resolved the matter with a Judge of the High Court. An agreement was reached on 22 June 2006, and Public Works, was able to secure the release of the building, and allow Home Affairs access to the premises.

STATUS OF NEW ACCOMMODATION:

During the aforesaid processes, Public Works, secured alternative accommodation for Home Affairs, at Rautenbach and 4th Street, Wynberg. The premises will be occupied by Home Affairs, as of 1 July 2006. The new landlord is currently attending to the cleaning of the 3rd floor, as interim accommodation, until the ground floor tenant installation is finalised. The ground floor, shall be the permanent location for the Department of Home Affairs, and shall be used as the District Office for the Wynberg Area.

The interim arrangements, to ensure continued public services, include among others; a fully equipped mobile unit which shall be operational as from 23 June 2006, and will be stationed opposite the new building, in Rautenbach & 4th Streets, Wynberg. The mobile unit shall cater for distribution of application forms, and queries in relation thereto; the collection of identity documents, passports, marriage, birth & death certificates, shall be collected from the Randburg Office, situated at 198 Hans Strijdom Drive, Strijdom Park.

All face value documents shall be transported to the Randburg Office and all furniture, and other office equipment, etc. shall be transported to the new Wynberg (Rautenbach Street) offices, and will be stored on the 3rd floor, until the offices are ready for occupation on 1 July 2006. Public Works has arranged for a designated removal company to assist, in the transportation of goods etc, to the new Wynberg premises.

Flyers and notifications shall be distributed at the mobile unit, as well as at various street points, in and around the area, to ensure that the public are made aware of the arrangements. Signage shall be placed outside the building, and at various street points.

Consideration will be given to the use of the radio media to distribute information regarding the changes. Public Works, shall forward all the contact details of the relevant broadcasters, to Home Affairs.

The Department of Public Works, has jointly worked with Home Affairs, and Department of Justice, to ensure that public services can be restored as soon as possible. This situation is highly regrettable, and all efforts have been made to resolve the situation.

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