

Remarks by the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson
Media Briefing – Handover of State-Owned Properties for Use as GBV Shelters
8 April 2025 | Waterkloof, Pretoria

Minister of Social Development, Sisi Tolashe,
Gauteng MEC for Social Development, Faith Mazibuko,
Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Nasiphi Moya,
Government officials,
Members of the media,

Good morning, and thank you for joining us today.

We are gathered here in Waterkloof for a purpose that carries both urgency and hope.

Today's handover of five state-owned properties to the Gauteng Department of Social Development marks another step in our mission to ensure that public assets are used for the public good.

For far too long, state-owned buildings such as these properties behind me have stood empty while there was a real need for shelters for women and children who are caught in very difficult circumstances.

At a time of a gender-based violence crisis facing South Africa, we must use these properties to provide a safe space for our women and children.

According to records from the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, only two properties were transferred in 2019 and 2022 to be used as gender-based violence, or GBV, shelters.

For years, progress was hamstrung by budget constraints, administrative delays, and red tape.

But that can no longer be our excuse.

We are now in a period of action—and this handover proves it.

We are changing the way we think about infrastructure.

No longer are we managing buildings just to maintain them.

We are unlocking them to save lives, restore dignity, and build a safer South Africa.

The horrifying rape of 7-year-old Cwecwe at a school in the Eastern Cape last year is a tragic reminder of why this work must be expedited.

It is a national disgrace that our children are not safe—in schools, in homes, in communities.

That young child's suffering must not be in vain. It must be a catalyst that shakes us to the core and propels us to act with urgency.

Shelters for victims of abuse—especially women and children—must never be considered a “nice-to-have.”

They are a critical part of our national fight against GBV.

They must be accessible.

They must be safe.

And they must be supported with proper infrastructure, personnel, and services.

That's why, over the next few months, I will be releasing more unused and underutilised state-owned properties in provinces across South Africa.

We are identifying assets that can be converted into safe havens, drop-in centres, and care facilities.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure will work closely with national and provincial departments, including Social Development, to ensure these buildings are ready for occupancy and properly maintained.

This is just the beginning of a broader effort to repurpose public infrastructure to meet the needs of our people.

Whether it is shelters for victims of abuse, housing for vulnerable groups, or facilities for skills training—our properties must serve a purpose greater than standing empty.

Let me thank Minister Tolashe, MEC Mazibuko, and Mayor Moya for their partnership in making today's handover possible.

It is through collaboration across spheres of government that we will succeed in building a better South Africa.

Lastly, I want to make it clear: we will not tolerate further delays.

The survivors of GBV cannot afford to wait.

Our children cannot afford to wait.

The time for action is now.

Thank you.

ENDS