

# Government commits to looking after its own people

The Department of Public says it is committed to honouring its Constitutional mandate to provide accommodation to government, including members of the Executive.



Mahlamba Ndlopfu, formerly known as Libertas, is one of the heritage houses in Bryntirion that will be kept in tip-top condition for government officials.  
Image: Wikipedia

According to the department, this is done in line with the expectation of tightly-controlled costs and efficiency.

"The department has a duty to provide habitable accommodation to members of the Executive and to maintain and renovate these houses as and when needed," the department said in a statement.

Some of the houses, which form part of the State's property portfolio, are heritage houses and are expensive to renovate because of heritage rules and regulations.

These rules are enforced by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). It says some of the materials used to restore heritage houses to their original state need to be imported from overseas, with high cost implications.

In the current financial year (2014/15), the department has budgeted R39.7m for maintenance and renovations to 26 ministerial residences in Cape Town and Pretoria.

The work being undertaken includes major and minor refurbishments, electrical works, painting and correcting structural defects.

"The department is continuing its fight against maladministration, tender irregularities, price inflation and other flaws in respect of certain State-owned accommodation in the Prestige Portfolio located in both Pretoria and Cape Town.

"After the completion of an investigation of seven houses in Pretoria, the Director of Prestige in the Pretoria Regional Office was charged, found guilty and dismissed, while other parties are also being charged for maladministration," the department

said.

In Cape Town, 17 ministerial houses are currently under investigation by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU). The investigation covers the period 2008 up to August this year.

The investigation is looking at possible tender irregularities in the appointment of service providers, inflation of bills of quantities and non-delivery relating to payment claims by contractors.

"The measures undertaken prove that as the Department of Public Works, we will not tolerate corruption. We will restore the good name of the Department of Public Works and provide the excellent service that is expected of us," the department said.

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