Housing & Hostels

-W. Cape-

1999
Bargain bid to turn tenants into owners

But housing chief sees snags

CHANTELE EFROY
STAFF REPORTER

A proposed amendment to a provincial law may mean thousands of people will be able to buy their council homes.

The change will apply to people living in homes subsidised by the provincial Housing Board.

But Hans Smit, president of the Institute for Housing of South Africa, warned that many of these homes were not suitable for sale.

Local Government Minister Patrick McKenzie has proposed all tenants be able to buy their homes at a discounted price, without having to get a clearance certificate proving they owe no arrears.

He said the Western Cape cabinet had approved the change to the legislation in principle. The proposed amendment to Section 55 of the Municipal Ordinance of 1974 would allow a transfer of property to take place regardless of any other money owed to the municipality.

“Before, many people couldn’t buy their properties because they were in debt and couldn’t get a clearance certificate. Now, for the first time, tenants can buy their rented houses at a discounted price – whether or not they owe the municipality money,” Mr McKenzie said. “Every single dwelling will then be owned by the people.”

Tenants wanting to buy their homes would have to sign an agreement with the municipality stating they would remain liable for any outstanding debts.

Mr McKenzie said at least 30 000 people would benefit should the amendment be approved.

But the number may be far lower, as people in double- and triple-storey blocks would be at a disadvantage.

Mr Smit, who is also executive director of housing for the South Peninsula Municipality, said that many homes currently subsidised by the Housing Board were “not built for sale.”

He said costs involved in making double- and triple-storey homes saleable would be too high.

In the event of the sale of a multi-storey house, costly adjustments would have to be made to the water and electricity supply, in addition to the units having to be sold under sectional title.

“In the South Peninsula, we have a housing stock of about 7500 rental units and of this, the large majority are double- and triple-storey units. The costs involved in making them saleable would be tremendous,” Mr Smit said.

If Mr McKenzie’s proposal goes ahead, anyone renting a government-subsidised home will be able to buy it at the original building cost, with a further discount of R7 500 – before March 31, when the discount scheme expires.
Council gets tough on R554m arrears

TOM HOOD

THE Cape Town City Council — burdened by arrears of R554-million — is to issue thousands of summonses in the next two weeks warning homeowners, tenants and businesses that their properties will be seized and sold if they do not pay up.

In the 12 months to November unpaid rates soared by R60-million to R185-million.

Arrears for water charges jumped R42-million (21 percent) to R70-million.

The council has also threatened to take the drastic step of disconnecting defaulters' water — not merely reducing it to a trickle as it has been — if they do not pay their bills: So far 270 warning letters have been sent out.

Tenants of council houses are to be sent letters saying they will be evicted if they do not pay their rents. On average, tenants owe R3 700. Unpaid rents stretching back to the rent-boycott years have piled up to R56-million.

The council is also owed R45-million in repayments on 16,000 homes bought by tenants: On average, these' home-owners owe R8 800.

The tough plan of action was announced by the city’s executive director of corporate finance, Philip van Rynveld, after a finance committee reported that the R554-million owed was R117-million more than a year ago.

"People must realise the council is no longer a soft target to be kept at the end of the queue when they pay their bills," he said.

"We are going to enforce this policy and the politicians are firmly behind it.

"A number of houses have already been seized, and water disconnections have begun..."
Second UDM killing ‘over housing plans’

Squatter camp residents say politics not an issue

BEHURGARO TRUMP and
MOSALOA MIYAKAMA
Staff Reporters

People in the Samora Machel squatter camp say the death of a Cape Flats United Democratic Movement leader at the weekend was the result of bitter rivalry in the settlement over sites for housing, and had nothing to do with politics.

UDM branch chairman Vulindlela Matiyase was gunned down on Sunday.

Politicians feared that his death was the result of the violence that has rocked KwaZulu-Natal spilling over into the Western Cape.

African National Congress provincial secretary Mcebisi Skwatsha yesterday condemned the attack and added his hopes that no further violence would follow.

"We hope the incident is not related to what is happening in KwaZulu-Natal. If so, it has to be nipped in the bud immediately," he said.

Mr Skwatsha called on police to apprehend the murderers.

"The province already suffers under a wave of intimidation by urban terrorists and we cannot allow any more battlefields," he said.

Mr Matiyase's attackers asked for him by name when he answered their knock on his door, suggesting they did not know they were speaking to the person they were to kill, said police spokesman Jacques Wiese.

Mr Matiyase was shot twice in the chest and three times in the back.

"What immediately comes to mind is that it was politically motivated," said UDM Western Cape chairman Johan Slabbert.

He said that rumours had surfaced that Mr Matiyase had been murdered for his involvement in a debate over a housing development.

His death took place after a meeting between South African National Civic Organisation executive committee members and squatters from the informal settlement about plans for development.

Mr Matiyase survived two earlier attacks. He was shot at while walking around the area, allegedly by a break-away group from Sanco.

This group was removed from a local Sanco executive committee a few years ago, and was now opposed to any development in the area.

Other Sanco members fear that they might also be targets.
Ratepayers owe R2-bn

TOM HOOD

RESIDENTS in the Western Cape owe local councils R2-billion in unpaid rents, rates and other services.

This estimate is based on figures obtained from local authorities by Patrick McKenzie, MEC for local government.

Sixty-one percent of the 96 municipalities reported a total of R1.253 billion owed by residents as at June 1998. This was up 34 percent from the previous year.

Only 14 municipalities had adopted the Mazakane campaign, said McKenzie. He supplied the figures at the request of Daniel Silke, a member of the provincial parliament.

Silke said McKenzie had failed to give people any incentives to pay the outstanding amounts.
Local services debt now at R2bn

MONEY owed to municipalities for services provided in the Western Cape doubled between October 1996 and this year, and now totals around R2 billion.

This is a total of 12% of the national debt figure owed to local governments, said Local Government MEC Patrick McKenzie.

"We cannot afford not to collect this money," he said during his budget speech in the legislature yesterday.

He said municipalities had to implement better credit control, while also taking cognisance of unemployment and poverty which rendered some people incapable of paying for their services.

These figures underline a point made by the Democratic Party's Daniel Silke some months ago, that the Masakhane campaign was failing in the Western Cape.

Silke yesterday said that arrears in the City of Cape Town amounted to R116 million.

In George, arrears had almost doubled from R49m in September 1997 to R73m in September 1998.

Money owing to the Ceres local authority increased from R5m in 1997 to R9m a year later, and in Worcester arrears increased from R36m in 1997 to R55m last year.

— Political Writer
There is life after Chukytown.
Bond defaults costs company millions

By Joshua Raboroko

KHAYALETHU Home Loans has lost R3.5 million a month as a result of low-cost housing bond defaulters. In the six months ended December 1998, the company has revealed.

The financial institution is to take action, including evicting defaulters from their homes, in an attempt to recover the money before it runs down its operation next year.

KHL's managing director Mr Siza Khampepe said bond defaulting was for various reasons, which included unemployment, job losses, increases in the cost of living, political boycotts and dissatisfaction with houses.

The institution built 30 000 low-cost houses countrywide and 24 000 were paid up or were being paid for by homeowners since its inception.

KHL was started by the South African Housing Trust to finance homeowners in the low-income market.

However, homeowners started a bond boycott for political reasons and dissatisfaction over structural defects in the homes.

A team was appointed to investigate these defects.

It was found that developers failed to meet their obligations or could not be traced to account for the defects. Some developers had gone bankrupt while others changed names and addresses. After protracted discussions with stakeholders - particularly the South African National Civic Organisation - KHL set aside R35 million to pay for the repairs of the houses.

Satisfy client

Khampepe said: "We took this decision to satisfy our clients as well as to end the boycott that was wreaking havoc with our finances. We will evict people who refuse to meet their obligations."

Bond repayments had shown an encouraging increase in the past months, Khampepe added.

The average collection index recorded an increased of 15 percent.

Khampepe said a net profit of R8.8 million was realised in the first months of the 1998-1999 financial year.

However, the profit was eroded by provision made for boycott-related issues.
THE ARK' ORDERED TO CAST OFF

R1.5bn trade-off unshackles housing

AN EXCITING new venture involving shack-dwellers, industrialists and developers could result in substantial social upliftment. CHRIS BATEMAN reports.

A UNIQUE R1.5 billion public/private sector partnership in Westlake is set to provide housing for 684 shack-dwellers within 10 months and create 450 upmarket homes, a light industry and business park and an office park within five years.

However, the development means possible short-term hardship for the Ark, which houses 950 indigent people, ranging from abused mothers, abandoned children to reforming alcoholics and drug addicts and foreign "economic refugees" on the site.

The Ark has until the end of April to relocate from Westlake to the vacated Faure School for Boys.

Ark director, Pastor Greg Grobler, said yesterday that about eight former support staff at the Faure school were "unwilling" to move, meaning that some 100 children with their house "parents" would have to stay in containers until the impasse is resolved.

Westlake developers Rabaec had donated the containers as a temporary measure as well as two rented bakkies for relocating the Ark's inhabitants, 370 of whom had been moved in the last two weeks.

"We were supposed to be out by the end of February but the date has now been extended because of the delay with the Faure staff," said Grobler.

Kobus Stander, a provincial property management official in Wale Street, said court interdicts had been served on the occupants of three of 11 Faure homes, while the remainder had been given until "June or July this year" to find alternative accommodation.

Grobler estimated that all Ark residents would be moved to Faure by mid-April.

He said the Ark had previously enjoyed subsidised lights and water bills and would now have to foot a bill which he estimated would come to R20 000 a month.

He appealed to the authorities to provide pre-paid meters so that "at least we can monitor usage — otherwise I don't know what we'll do". The Ark is staffed by volunteers.

Meanwhile, at an upmarket Waterfront launch attended by Rabavc executives, Public Works Minister Jeff Radebe, Western Cape Premier Gerald Morkel and South Peninsula Municipality planning chairman Neville Reilly, the R1.5 billion development was outlined yesterday.

The 100-hectare Westlake Estate, bounded on the west by the prestigious Steenberg Golf Estate, on the east by Silvermine and the Westlake golf course, will provide for current shack dwellers.

A R10 000 "developer contribution" to the R17.250 provincial housing subsidy

A community centre, creche facilities, schools and a skills training programme.

Hundreds of on-site jobs.

The new one-bedroomed homes, with capacity for extension, will sit cheek-by-jowl with an upmarket R40 000 home suburb in a lush, wooded location which will be in five safely "secured" precincts with "outstanding views" of the Constantiaberg and the adjoining Steenberg Golf Estate.

Plots will be between 600 and 700 square metres.

The DP Marus (tuberculous) Hospital staff and patients have been relocated and incorporated with the Princess Alice Hospital, while the Westlake Convalescent Hospital is to be incorporated into the Connaught Hospital.

Some 15 hectares will be transformed into a landscaped mixed business and light industrial park, while a 12-hectare upmarket office park, called Steenberg Office Park, will adjoin the Steenberg Golf Estate.

A small "retail facility" for tourists will also be built.

The project is being spearheaded by Rabavc/Cavcox with JSE-listed Wescape and empowerment group African Renaissance each sharing a 25% stake.
Furore over cement works’ homes-from-hostels plan

NORMAN JOSEPH
Metro Reporter

A plan to turn mid-century hostels into family units in Brackenfell is attracting anger from neighbours and the New National Party.

The New NP in the Oostenberg municipal area is opposing the development in Krusfontein Road, near the Old Pearl Road, fearing that neighbouring homeowners may see property values plummet.

But African National Congress members in the local authority have criticised the New NP’s stance, saying the party was returning to its “old-style ideology.”

Everite, a company which makes cement products, wants to convert old, single hostels into family units to house its workers.

But people living near the site said there were far more housing stands in the plans than there were workers needing accommodation. They said they feared the settlement would cause property values in the established residential area of Brackenfell to fall.

Oostenberg’s New NP leader and chairman of the Cape Metropolitan Council executive committee, Pierre Uys, said his party was not opposed to residential development.

“But under no circumstances can we allow this informal settlement to proceed, especially when there is land set aside for this purpose in nearby Wallacedene and Bloekombos.”

But Oostenberg’s ANC chief whip Ebrahim Sawant said the New NP were going backwards “to the dark days of forced removals.”

“With proper consultation, the creation of a second residential area by Everite could see a great deal of goodwill in the neighbourhood.”

The provincial housing board was awaiting Oostenberg’s decision before deciding whether to advance the necessary housing subsidies for the scheme.

Everite spokesman Charles Julies said the factory wanted to improve the quality of life of its employees.
Nyanga police to probe Brown’s Farm ‘land scam’

MANDLA NTYAYANA
STAFF REPORTER

Nyanga police have asked all Brown’s Farm residents who had allegedly been forced to pay fees to local area committee members for unserviced sites to come forward and lay charges.

This comes after a protest march by hundreds of Brown’s Farm informal settlement residents to Nyanga police station on Monday.

They wanted the police to arrest local area committee members whom they allege had been demanding fees from residents seeking sites in the settlement.

Mthetho Ntlangamso, a councillor for Ward 021, said about 600 sites at section 1 in Brown’s Farm were allegedly “sold” to residents by local area committee members, who charged between R100 and R200 a site.

On Monday, a huge crowd of residents with placards called on police to act against the area committee members.

“What we need is development in our area,” said a mother of two who did not want to be named. She claimed she paid R100 to an area committee member three years ago when she arrived at the settlement.

She believed the “corrupt” committee members should “all be locked up, because what they did was wrong”.

A man who claimed to be from Angola said he had paid R100 to another area committee member when he arrived in the settlement looking for a place to erect his shack a year ago.

A woman, who said she had left Gugulethu four years ago, said she was promised a plot by a local area committee member if she paid him R100.

When she could not afford to pay the amount she was refused access to the plot and the man visited her home every week to demand the money.

“Although I was unemployed at the time I paid it bit by bit until I finished the amount,” she said.

Another woman said she and her mother were told to pay R200 for a site.

Councillor Ntlangamso said the men told a community meeting that they had demanded the money from residents to pay for a front-end loader used to level the sites.

He said he was concerned the controversy might cause conflict among residents because some of the victims of the alleged scam were unemployed and now bore grudges against the area committee members.

Vuyisile Jantjes, a communications officer for Nyanga Police, said that after a meeting with a delegation of Brown’s Farm residents, a special police unit would be set up to investigate the matter.

Police have asked all affected residents to come forward and lay charges so that a proper investigation can take place.
Housing project grinds to a halt after R1,7-m theft

This was a good sign to Mr Khathisa, who said he had always hoped that one day he would own a brick house so that he and his wife and seven children could leave the two-roomed shack that they had occupied for seven years.

But the arrival of building materials did not mean much, and residents said they were forced to sit and watch as the materials were stolen or deteriorated.

Mossel Bay residents and the police are on the lookout for the thieves who have struck a housing project in the town.

The police said they were on the lookout for any information that could help them identify the culprits.

The theft occurred at a housing project in the town, where builders had been working on the construction of houses.

The police said they were investigating the matter and were appealing for anyone with information to come forward.

They also asked anyone who had been approached by the thieves to contact the police.

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City poised for new rates deal

Council approves system aimed at equity for property owners

NORMAN JOSEPH
Metro Reporter

A new system of municipal rates, which introduces increases for some areas and bonus decreases for others, has been given the go-ahead by the majority of political parties in the City of Cape Town.

At a joint meeting of the executive and the finance committees in the Civic Centre, African National Congress and New National Party councillors endorsed the new rates and tariffs system which is to be implemented in the 1999-2000 financial year. Only the Democratic Party opposed the grouping together of neighbourhoods under the new system.

On top of an inflation-related 6% across the board, residents in better-off areas of the city will pay more than people in poorer areas.

Residents in Clifton will have to pay 5% more, in Camps Bay and Bantry Bay 7% and in Sea Point, Tamboerskloof and Oranjezicht 5% more.

However, residents in Hanover Park, Beacon Valley, Eastridge and Tafelsig will see their rates cut by 7%, while rates in Manenberg, Nyanga, Guguletu and Langa will be cut by 8%.

Non-residential properties such as corner shops, will face rates and tariffs increases according to prescribed levels for each residential area.

Property owners in Cape Town’s central business district will face hikes close to the inflation rate.

DP councillor Belinda Walker told the meeting yesterday that her party was concerned about legal challenges the council might face if an area-based differentiated increase in rates was introduced.

The banding together of residential areas, which formed many pockets in the city council area, was done on the basis of property price increases and property sales in an area.

City executive director of corporate finance Philip van Rynveld said the proposed grouping of areas would not be done on land or site valuation ratings.

City executive committee chairman Saleem Mowzer, of the ANC, said residents would not pay more than a 20% rates increase in the next financial year.

Mr Mowzer said the proposals might not lead to “total equity”, but they were “a step towards a more fair” rates and tariff structure.
Race storm mars housing plan for ‘Cardboard City’ squatters

NORMAN JOSEPH
Metro Reporter

Racism has marred a debate by City of Cape Town councillors over the allocation of houses on a site earmarked for “Cardboard City” and Mitchell’s Plain squatters.

Fifty-two of the 81 applications by squatters to the provincial housing board for subsidies to buy houses at Montrose Park in Mitchell’s Plain were successful.

The remaining 29 did not qualify for a subsidy and there were, therefore, still sites available.

It emerged during yesterday’s council meeting that the housing committee had recommended that the 29 spare sites be granted to homeless people from formerly black local authorities.

The council is spending about R400,000 from its social development fund on the land at the corner of Highlands and Samantha roads in Montrose near Lentegeur.

An agreement last year between the council and “Cardboard City” squatters (near Gallows Hill in Green Point) was that Montrose Park houses would be allocated to them and to homeless people in Mitchell’s Plain.

New National Party councillors claimed the move to house people from formerly black local authority areas at Montrose Park was racist.

The African National Congress caucus denied this, saying the recommendation was based purely on integration.

ANC councillor Saleem Mowzer said the council was striving to integrate the municipal area, and that this was one of the council’s priorities with the provision of housing for the homeless.

New NP councillor Yusuf Waggie told the meeting that if the 29 sites were allocated to people from formerly black local authority areas, the council would be labelled racist by the Mitchell’s Plain public.

He said there were many homeless people living in backyards and on plots in Mitchell’s Plain who needed houses.

New NP councillor Elizabeth Banton said that “people on the list” for housing at Montrose were from Mitchell’s Plain only, and that the housing committee’s decision was “not fair.”

Housing committee chairman Whitey Jacobs said he would consult the Mitchell’s Plain homeless people about the available sites.
Some rates go up, others dip in shakedown

PRISCILLA SINGH ET 26/3/99

THE city of Cape Town yesterday passed recommendations for a proposed differentiated rates hike that will see some homeowners paying higher percentage increases than others — and some areas even enjoying decreased rates.

In a joint Executive Committee and Finance Committee meeting, 32 areas were presented to city councillors demarcating the percentage rates increases.

The increases come on top of the inflation-related nine percent.

Residents in Camps Bay will fork out an extra seven percent, Clifton nine percent, Bantry Bay seven percent and Sea Point, Tamboerskloof and Oranjezicht five percent.

At the other end of the scale, residents in Hanover Park, Beacon Valley, Eastridge and Tafelburg will see a seven percent decrease in their rates, while those living in Marenberg, Nyanga, Gugulethu and Langa will enjoy a five percent reduction.

The new differentiated system is the first of its kind in South Africa and was formulated after months of research. It is designed to correct inequities of the past, especially the unfairness of the rates system inherited from 1979.

If accepted by the council, the new rates structure will be introduced by July 1 when the city’s budget for the 1999/2000 financial year comes into effect. Income generated by rates payments could total between R750 and R770 million this year, up from R680 million last year.

Philip van Rynveeld, executive director of Corporate Finance, and Mike Parker, the co-ordinator of Rating and Valuation, pioneered the new system with the help of an American valuations expert, Dick Ward.

The proposed system has been based on sales data drawn from the Deeds Office and a sophisticated computer-modelling system that enabled officials to demarcate geographical areas in which property values have increased by similar percentages relative to other areas.

Pinelands and other areas such as Mandalay will now also be incorporated into the new rates system, bringing them in line with the rest of the municipality.

Both Van Rynveeld and Parker were pleased with the outcome of yesterday’s meeting and said the acceptance of the recommendations was a just reward for months of hard work.

The Democratic Party (DP) caucus opposed the increases. At one stage during the meeting, it was believed that councillor Brian Watkins left the room to consult with Western Cape DP leader Hennie Bester on how the DP councillors should vote on the proposal.

The New National Party accepted the proposal without grumblings.

City manager Andrew Boraine said the new system was morally correct and it was legally necessary to go this route.

"The new differentiated system is based on objective, scientific data that was generated with the help of an international expert. We know it’s going to work," Boraine said.

The city’s exco chairperson Saleem Mowzer said that the DP’s arguments were "spurious" and that they did not give sound reasons for opposing the proposal.

"We have agreed in principle to move forward with it and offer the proposal for public comment. We are legally obliged to implement a differentiated rates increase system."

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Housing money row over council defector

NORMAN JOSEPH
Metro Reporter

The New National Party has been investigating claims that one of its defectors in the City of Cape Town council allegedly received money from people as deposits for housing allocations.

The NNP caucus in the city council has lost councillors Louise Jansen and James George to the African National Congress.

The councillors, who hold two of the eight seats in Mitchell’s Plain, crossed the floor during yesterday’s council meeting and joined the ranks of the ANC, the city’s ruling party.

NNP caucus leader Clive Justus said his party was probing claims that Ms Jansen had received deposit payments for houses. In December, the council failed to prove she had breached the councillors’ code of conduct in connection with these allegations.

Mr Justus claimed that the reason Ms Jansen had defected to the ANC was to avoid facing the outcome of the party’s investigations.

But Ms Jansen said the NNP’s claims that she had taken money for deposits for housing allocations were “a lot of nonsense.” She knew that “a lot of bad things” about her would emerge when she defected to the ANC.

Ms Jansen said she was very unhappy at the NNP because of a lack of comradeship among party councillors who “gossiped most of the time.”

“I’ve got nothing against the party, but my colleagues did not support my projects and work in my community,” Ms Jansen said. She represents ward C24 in Woodlands.

Referring to Mr George’s defection, the NNP claimed he had been functioning as an individual and not as a party member in the council.

Mr Justus alleged Mr George would never join a “black” party such as the ANC. But Mr George denied this, saying he had been a member of the council’s interim phase in 1995 and had worked with black people.

He said he was fed-up with the NNP’s infighting and lack of discipline.

Mr George said Mr Justus’s claims were a lot of nonsense. “They have to say something about my defection, he does not even know me well,” he said.

He said he had been a worker in Ward C28 in Rocklands and he had proof to back this claim.

The NNP challenged its two former councillors to resign from their council seats and to fight a by-election, but both dismissed the call as “a lot of nonsense.”
Water cut-offs start as council coffers dry up

DAN SIMON  CT 31/12/99

The City of Cape Town this week adopted tough new measures to deal with non-payment for its services - and has already started disconnecting the water supply to dozens of defaulters' homes and businesses.

Over the next few weeks the council will send out thousands of summonses, eviction notices and cut-off notices to ratepayers, home-owners and tenants. It is hoped many defaulters will pay up before any action is taken.

"We want people to wake up and pay up," said Kendall Kavney, the city council's director of water and waste.

"People who don't pay must realise we'll cut them off."

The water cut-offs, which follow seven-day warning notices which must be issued in terms of the Water Act, were introduced last week in terms of the new credit control policy adopted by council in June last year.

Consumers who don't pay or make alternative arrangements to pay will have their water and electricity services disconnected until their debts are settled.

The policy also extends to council tenants and home-owners who are in arrears with their rent or housing repayments. Here the council will evict defaulters or repossession and sell their homes in sales of execution to recover debts.

Kavney said that over the past week, water cut-offs had been carried out daily.

"We are doing roughly 20 a day in all areas and we're issuing about 60 cut-off (warning) notices a day - so far we have had an 80% reaction to the notices. This, of course, varies from houses to businesses to schools."

Previously the city council - which is saddled with arrears in water charges totalling R70 million - simply reduced the flow of water to the homes and businesses of defaulters in a bid to exact payment.

But drastic measures were called for last year after arrears in water charges alone jumped from R49 million to R70 million by November. Unpaid rates over the past year have also soared by R60 million to R185 million.

The council is also owed unpaid rentals of R56 million, much dating back to the rent boycott years, and R45 million in repayments on 16 000 homes bought by tenants.

In all, service arrears rose by R116 million, prompting the city council crackdown. But Kavney said that in terms of the Water Act, the city council could not arbitrarily cut off someone's water supply.

"For example, if a household has a new-born baby then we can't cut the water due to health reasons."

The city's executive director of corporate finance Philip van Rynova said it is hoped that with the new approach, the city would collect about R100 million in service arrears over the next four months.

"Durban, which has a strict cut-off policy, has a 98% payment rate. It's not impossible to collect over R100 million over the next four months. That is a realistic target and that is what I am aiming for."
Housing on track again

NORMAN JOSEPH
Metro reporter

The Grahamstown municipality plans to provide low-cost housing to all its shack-dwellers by the end of 2002. There have been violent clashes between residents and police over the development of low-cost housing at a site known as Melrose Place. Allegations of fraud and corruption involving several tenders stalled the project, but now it is back on track.

Town clerk David Petrus said the provincial housing board had approved housing subsidies of about R9 million last week for Melrose Place. The board gave the green light for 223 erven in the first phase of development, and beneficiaries were awarded a subsidy of R15,000 each. Those in a second phase of 350 erven had a subsidy of R12,500 each. A third phase of 100 erven, with a R9,500 subsidy each, will complete the Melrose Place project, with a total of 1,273 units.

Mr Petrus said that 370 foundations had been laid on the site in the past 10 days.
800 lose out in deal

missing

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Housing

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Housing
Clashes over homes feared

WE ARE BEING DRIVEN INTO FIGHTING.
WE ARE BEING DRIVEN INTO FIGHTING

Clashes over homes feared

THREE YEARS AGO shack dwellers in Nyanga were promised homes. The homes have not materialised. Now their shacks have been demolished. ERIC NTABAZALILA reports.

FIGHTING over housing is looming in Nyanga after a group of shack dwellers whose shacks were demolished by police on Monday started rebuilding them yesterday.

Residents of the newly formed Eyethu squatter camp, who come from the backyards of Mau-Mau township in Nyanga East, first marched to the police station yesterday to warn the police not to involve themselves in any future demolition of the squatter camp.

On Monday, after their shacks were demolished, they went to dump rubbish in front of councilor Nomfusi Mpheka’s house, which is being guarded by police.

“We don’t want what happened in Crossroads to happen here, but we are being driven into fighting as the police started destroying our materials without even explaining to us why our shacks were demolished. We are not moving anywhere even if they come back to destroy these shacks again. We will sleep here,” a resident said.

He did not want to be identified as he feared being victimised.

“We are not being difficult or trying to cause any trouble. We are just asking for what we were promised in 1996 by our councilors who can’t even come to us now,” he said.

Mpheka said she was afraid that fighting might break out as the group of about 100 squatters had started provoking people.

“It is true that we promised them houses but this is a process. We have to secure funds first. Their problem is they don’t want to wait,” he said.

“We called them to a meeting on Sunday and they refused to listen to us as we tried to explain the process to them. We tried to explain to them that it was council land earmarked for houses. So we sent city council officials to demolish those shacks. After that they came to dump their rubbish in front of my house,” she said.

Last year, after continuous fighting between groups over housing development in Crossroads, the Cape Town City Council released a report alleging weapons were being stockpiled in Crossroads and warlords were planning a comeback in time for this year’s election.

The report said the primary cause of the violence in Crossroads and Philippi was “political intolerance between parties, organisations and individuals”, and “these differences were exploited by criminals elements which exacerbated the situation.”

Len Kholane of the Urban Monitoring and Awareness Committee told the Cape Times yesterday that his organisation was “deeply concerned” about the developing situation in Nyanga, and had invited disgruntled residents to meet his committee today.

“We want to meet the squatters and try to open a dialogue between the two groups. We believe dialogue offers the only solution to this problem. Without it, we could see a bloodbath similar to the one in Crossroads,” he said.

His committee would try to meet all the parties involved before Friday to speed up the dialogue.

Mpkela said when she started campaigning to be a councilor her concern had been the housing problem in Nyanga. She said that at a meeting with the residents it had been decided that the field along Lansdowne Road would be required to build houses for Nyanga backyard residents.

Mpkela said she would organise a meeting with councillors from the Cape Town City Council at which they would discuss what they could do to defuse the potential fighting in the area.
City hides names of its debtor councillors

15 may have unpaid bills

Eight Cape Town city councillors are in arrears with municipal accounts, says the council. But insiders believe at least 15 have not paid bills for electricity, water and refuse removal.

After repeated questioning, the city council yesterday refused to reveal the names of the non-payers and their political affiliations, keeping this information a closely guarded secret even from party chief whips within the council.

In October, 31 councillors were in arrears, some of them for as long as 18 months, but 23 had since paid up, said a council spokesman yesterday.

A councillor, whose post is not considered a full-time one, gets an allowance of R3,653 a month.

This goes up if he or she becomes a member of the executive committee.

Approached for comment, corporate finance director Philip van Rhyneve said the eight councillors' arrears did not exceed three months.

"We completed a thorough investigation at the end of December and found no councillors in arrears by more than three months,"

He said there might be councillors in arrears by one or two months. "We have to take action if they are in arrears, but at the moment there is no cause for concern."

Mr Van Rhyneve said that "questions have been asked" and that the council had been monitoring the issue.

All 74 City of Cape Town councillors recently received a circular letter warning them not to get into arrears with municipal accounts.

Democratic Party councillor Brian Watkyns said he had forwarded questions to the council to clarify the position.

Mr Watkyns said councillors should be above reproach and set an example to communities, especially in the light of the Massakhane campaign.

The law was clear. when a councillor was in arrears, a process had to be followed by the council, and the individual should then leave the council.

"That is why I asked the council several questions regarding the issue and I am still awaiting answers from them," said Mr Watkyns.

New National Party chief whip Clive Justus said: "We raised the issue last month and were assured that no councillor was in arrears."

"We have no details of who are in arrears."

But he agreed that the law should take its course in respect of any councillors who were in arrears.

African National Congress chief whip Saleem Moewer said he was not aware of any councillor in arrears with municipal accounts.
Blow to squatters as housing cut R5.9-bn

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

The Western Cape housing budget is to drop by 12% or R5.9-million to R43.7-million.

This is according to budget estimates of revenue and spending tabled in the provincial legislature to coincide with Finance Minister Leon Markovitz's maiden budget speech.

The housing budget cut includes a 10.85% reduction in the budget for the office of the provincial minister, a 33.75% cut in the allocation for development promotion and a 25% reduction in settlement assistance, a programme funded by central government conditional grants for settlement of squatters by local authorities. The housing management budget is to go down by 6.1% to R13.8-million. But within the overall 12% budget cut for housing is an increase of 48% or R869 000 for project execution and 3.2% or R43 000 for professional and technical services.
IN CONFLICT: An .....
revive lagging inner cities

Gauteng to spend R150m to

By Joshua Rokofo

(Revised 14/11/19)
Dassenberg housing given the green light

ANC vows to back court action to stop plan

Provincial planning minister Michael Louis's controversial approval of the Dassenberg farm development at Sun Valley has been unanimously supported by the province's Planning Advisory Board.

This was disclosed by Mr Louis in his response to strong criticism by the environmental lobby and the African National Congress of his decision to overrule the South Peninsula Municipality and allow 170 housing units on the farm - which borders the new Cape Peninsula National Park.

ANC MP Jannie Momberg, whose constituency includes Noordhoek and Sun Valley, said "That area is much too beautiful to pack with houses. We totally support the conservationists and others who are opposed to this."

"I will be in touch with Neville Riley (chairman of the South Peninsula Municipality's planning committee) and we will do everything we can to support them, even if it means giving financial support for a court case."

Mr Louis said he had twice visited the site and had been advised and informed by "a wide range of competent, professional people".

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"I will be in touch with Neville Riley (chairman of the South Peninsula Municipality's planning committee) and we will do everything we can to support them, even if it means giving financial support for a court case."

Mr Louis said he had twice visited the site and had been advised and informed by "a wide range of competent, professional people".

These had included staff of the provincial directorates of transport, planning services, and land use management, as well as the Planning Advisory Board.

"They all supported the development subject to various conditions," he said.

During a meeting with environmentalists after making his decision, Mr Louis was challenged to name those who had supported his decision.

They were environmental scientist Neil Carter, land surveyor Ken Beard, engineer and chairman of the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company Louis de Waal, town and regional planner Derek Chittenden, architect Trudi Groenewald, and lawyer Michael Radomsky.

The chairman of the board is Christo Kannenberg, who heads the Cape Town company the Planning Partnership. Mr Kannenberg recused himself from the decision about Dassenberg because his company was responsible for submitting the failed rezoning application to the South Peninsula Municipality, and the subsequent appeal to Mr Louis, on behalf of the owner.

Mr Louis also said that all the comments relating to the development were documented and could be seen by all affected parties.

"The final number of units will have to be determined by the South Peninsula Municipality, based on the outcome of the environmental management plan/programme."

"It is important to note that a detailed site development plan, a revised layout plan, with a sensitively designed development as well as building platforms for each of these units, must be submitted to council for approval."

"The final say in regard to the proposed development - including the number of units - therefore rests with the South Peninsula Municipality."

But this is disputed by the environmental lobby, which has legal advice that Mr Louis's decision is now functus officio - in other words, it stands and can only be overturned by a court of law.
New rates a step in right direction, says ex mayo head

END DAWN
FAIMA SCHEIDEGG

NEWS
Delft gets new housing project

Mandla Nyakama

The launch of the Wesbank Housing Development Project in Delft yesterday was not motivated by the national election, Western Cape Housing MEC Cecil Harendien said.

"It's not because of the coming elections. We had this initiative for a long time," he said, handing over the keys to Delft residents who moved into the first 60 houses of the 500 two-bedroom homes to be provided for people in the Oostenberg municipal area.

There are two houses — each equipped with a bath and a toilet — per plot to save land.

In the near future, 20 houses will be built each day.

Schalk Vorster, of project managers BKS, said the project was valued at R120 million. He said R92m came from the government's housing subsidies.

The initiative was aimed at making houses available to poor people, most of whom were on the waiting list of the Oostenberg municipality area, he said.

They would try to house all people who were on the list, he added.

In spite of the problems of cracks and damp which other Delft residents experienced in the past, Harendien said he was pleased with the quality of the houses.

"This is a very good example and people here are satisfied with it," he said.

He also urged residents from the area to stop criticising initiatives by the housing board.

"People out there should stop criticising the change. They must come and see how grateful the beneficiaries of these houses are," he said.

David Reed, one of the Delft residents who received the keys to his house, said he was overwhelmed to have his own brick house after living in a one-roomed shack for many years.

"I really feel good and satisfied to get my own house. I praise and thank our government for helping us. I hope to live a happy life with my family in the coming years," he said.

Other residents in the area also expressed their gratitude for the project.

Oostenberg municipality housing director Cecil Africa said the project set the pace for other municipalities in the province.

He urged those who had not yet registered their applications for the Oostenberg integrated housing waiting list, to do so.

Africa also asked those who moved out of the area after registration to contact his department.

In the past few years, Western Cape residents who claimed to have had their names on the Provincial Housing Board's waiting lists for many years illegally occupied houses from other projects in the area.

Other residents were conned by people who demanded hundreds of rands in return for guaranteed housing.
Thirsty work: Frances Sele, left, leads residents during a sit-in at the Bonteheuwel rent office to protest against water cuts.

Water supply cuts spark sit-in

CHANTEL ERFORT
Staff Reporter

"Put our taps on now!" This is the demand of more than 50 Bonteheuwel families who have had the water supply to their homes cut off.

Men, women and children yesterday staged a sit-in at the Bonteheuwel rent office in response to the council's decision to cut off the water supply to homes where residents were in arrears with their water bills.

Although the cost of the first 10kl of water consumed is equivalent to that of the cost of three tons of cool drink, some residents are already in arrears by up to R6 000.

When residents expressed outrage at water cuts in other areas, council officials said they had been warned to pay up or make an arrangement with local officials.

But South African Civic Organisation representative Yusuf Cassiem said the main problem was the manner in which the water was cut. He said neither residents nor local ward councillors were informed of the decision to cut the water supply, nor did officials implement what is referred to as the trickle system.

Bonteheuwel resident Frances Sele said her water supply had been cut, despite her having made an arrangement to pay arrears.

She said she was late in paying her most recent installment.

The residents are also concerned that being without water is unhealthy.

Mr Cassiem said, "The council thinks they're solving problems, but they're just creating a bigger one - a health problem."

Tygerberg municipal spokesman Hugo Steenberg said the council would not back down on its decision as residents had been given fair warning.

"People are given months to pay and they only wake up on the day their water is cut. We appreciate some people don't have the money, but that is why we tell them they must come to us and make arrangements to pay off their debts."
City’s ‘rough and ready’ rates plan

JENNY WALL
STAFF REPORTER

The new differentiated rates system proposed for the Cape Town municipality is not perfect, but it does begin to address inequities of the old system, says a council finance chief.

Philip van Ryneveld, the city’s executive director of corporate finance, was addressing a meeting last night of representatives of residents’ and civic associations.

The civic centre briefing was part of the council’s process of consultation on the new rates system.

Under the new system, a general rates increase will be announced. In each area rate-payers will then either get a discount or pay a premium on this amount, depending on the value of property in the area.

Mr Van Ryneveld said the old system of a fixed increase for all areas was unfair, because it did not take into account that property values increased much more in some areas than others. In some areas, property values had tripled in value, in others, they had gone up 20 times.

The new system has pegged increases in such areas as Clifton at the average increase (to be decided in May) plus 9%.

Other areas – parts of Mitchell’s Plain, for example – will rise by the average minus 7%.

These figures will apply both for this financial year and the 2000/2001 financial year.

It is an interim measure until a metropolitan-wide rates system is implemented in 2001, based on a new valuation roll.

“It’s not a perfect solution, it’s a rough-and-ready solution,” Mr Van Ryneveld told the meeting, “but there is general consistency.”

In drawing up the figures for property rates increases, house sales over a period of 20 years in all areas were looked at.
Constanita and Tokai hit hard but most get good news

Rates shock for southern suburbs wealthy
I am not misleading the public - Louis

V紫外线 will determine how many houses built at Bassendean, says

I tried to determine how many houses built at Bassendean, says

Minister
I can't say I hate the place; I have nowhere else to go.

WEST SIDE [4a]

ct 8/14/78

IN the 1960s the government began hounding black people from

apartheid, a system of racial segregation and discrimination the

control of the press by the government, which spread fear and
discouraged people from reporting on the abuses of the

Roger Friedan and Betty Friedan, "Protest and Resistance in the

In the past, there was a sense of security and tranquility. People felt protected and safe in their homes and communities. The idea of a strong and stable nation was central to the American identity. Today, however, that sense of security has been replaced by fear and anxiety. The economy is struggling, the political climate is volatile, and the country is divided. People are questioning the future and wondering if they can trust the institutions that were once considered pillars of stability.

The mood of the nation is captured by the author in this excerpt:

"Innocence in America. A sense of security and tranquility. People felt protected and safe in their homes and communities. The idea of a strong and stable nation was central to the American identity. Today, however, that sense of security has been replaced by fear and anxiety. The economy is struggling, the political climate is volatile, and the country is divided. People are questioning the future and wondering if they can trust the institutions that were once considered pillars of stability."

The author's words reflect the changing mood of the nation. Are people losing faith in government and institutions? How can we address these issues and restore a sense of security and stability?
THE Cape Town City Council declared a formal dispute with the Cape Metropolitan Council yesterday over the allocation of money to upgrade poverty-stricken areas. JUDITH SOAL reports.

A R50 million fund meant for poverty relief has been allocated to costly projects rather than the most urgent ones in an attempt to win favour with certain voters before the election, the city council said yesterday.

The ANC-dominated council voted to declare the dispute with the NNP-led metropolitan council — the first such dispute under the new local government laws. The city said the metro's about-turn on the criteria for the allocation of the money was "illegal, inequitable and unconstitutional."

In terms of the law, the city council is not able to take another government body to court but can refer the dispute for mediation and arbitration. In the meantime, the proposed community projects will be put on hold.

"The metro council said the R50m would be allocated to low-income areas for projects that are considered absolute priorities," said Tony Goom, deputy chairperson of the city's executive committee.

"It was supposed to provide new or upgraded infrastructure such as roads, stormwater drains, sewers, water and electricity."

"We put forward a series of projects we considered urgent but then the metropolitan council changed the criteria midstream and made its own proposals."

The projects which the metropolitan council approved include:

- R1,6m towards a beachfront erosion protection project in Camps Bay
- R1,44m towards the Hugo Lamprecht Music Centre in Parow in the Tygerberg region
- R5,300,000 towards the upgrading of Boshoff Gates in Newlands
- R3,150,000 towards the upgrading of Zeekoevlei Tennis Court in the South Peninsula Municipality

The city council had submitted proposals including R9m for upgrading streets and stormwater drainage in Langa, R5m for sewers in Philippa Industria and R500,000 for street lighting in Brown's Farm.

The Brown's Farm proposal was accepted but the metro's evaluation committee cut the Langa project's allocation to just R500,000. They also rejected the Philippa Industria proposal.

Other projects not submitted by the city but within the city's borders — such as those in Camps Bay and Newlands — were approved.

The city council believes the metro council is stepping outside of its area of jurisdiction.

"We had sat down and decided on the priorities and areas of most urgent need," said Goom. "Now the metropolitan council comes with other proposals that aren't based on an overall assessment of the region."

He said the NNP, with the co-operation of the DP, is using the money to buy votes by prioritising projects in areas that have traditionally supported the parties.

Pierre Uys, chairperson of the metro executive committee, in turn accused the ANC of trying to whip up support ahead of the election.

"This dispute is just about party politics. That money belongs to the Cape Metropolitan Council and we are free to allocate it as we see fit. We didn't say it must only be for poor areas."

In terms of the Local Government Transition Act, the two parties now have seven days to reach a compromise. If they fail, the dispute will be referred for mediation.

If no agreement has been reached within two weeks, it will be referred to arbitration for a decision.

This may be the first formal dispute between the region's two tiers of government, but it is not the first time they have clashed.

Though they have distinct areas of responsibility — with the local municipal councils in charge of infrastructure such as road maintenance, sewers and refuse removal and the metro in charge of broader functions such as bulk water services, air pollution and metropolitan planning — they frequently lock horns over finances.

Sources in the city council say more disputes are expected soon. The city has objected to metro's proposed six percent increase in water tariffs, it disagrees with the way poverty grants have been allocated, and it disputes metro's stipulation that it have the final say over all consultants appointed by the city council.

"These disputes reinforce the argument for a megacity with one tier of government," said ANC councillor Les Recontore. "That way we could just get on with the delivery of services."
A Place to Call Home
does the hard thing that can’t
Taking Poverty for a Better City
Matchbox houses could be the ANC’s election undoing

By ADRIAN HADLAND
PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT

The Government has spent close to R10-billion on housing programmes since 1994 but, ironically, the provision of low-cost housing may yet prove to be a serious liability for the ANC’s election hopes in June.

Parasitic problems regarding the quality of construction, shoddy workmanship, the inadequacy of the government’s R15 000 subsidy, the small size of the new dwellings, allegations of corruption, and the vulnerability of new homeowners to fraudsters have caused anger among potential voters.

People have given the new low-cost “RDP houses” several derogatory terms that reflect discontent with their size and construction, among them “unbos” – after the small Fiat Uno car – “matchboxes” and even “toilets”.

According to a recent nationwide poll by the Human Sciences Research Council, housing tops the list of South Africans’ complaints. But it’s not only the lack of housing that’s causing the anger.

In the small Klein Karoo town of Calitzdorp, several of the recently built houses have massive cracks right through the walls. Residents fear that the strong winds that whip over the nearby Swartberg mountains could demolish their homes at any moment.

Failure by both the New National Party-led provincial government and the ANC to assist residents led to virtually the entire town signing up with the PAC in March.

In Aberdeen, Eastern Cape, RDP houses have been abandoned, unfinished, because the council ran out of funds. Those that have been completed are a fraction of the size of the houses built by the government before 1994, conjuring unflattering comparisons and fuelling further discontent.

“The ANC can’t do anything right. They have failed to govern the Eastern Cape properly. They’ll never be able to do what the NNP did in past years,” said local NNP organiser Stephanus Lewis.

Building industry representatives complain that the government subsidy of R15 000, even taking into account the imminent increase of the grant to R16 000, is not enough to build a 30sq m home, as stipulated by the government’s recently approved minimum-standards legislation.

Building Industries Federation of SA president Jan Robinson said earlier this year that the Housing Ministry was being unrealistic in its setting of minimum standards for the low-cost housing industry. The subsidy could at most provide for a house of 10sq m – little more than the size of a small room, he said.

Although millions of people have been housed and sheltered since the last election, the problems associated with that housing may yet cost the government dearly when it faces voters once more next month.
Couple get house after 22-year wait on 'the list'

NORMAN JOSEPH
Metro Reporter

It was a big day for Nyanga East resident Malingatshoni Nonjono.

He met City of Cape Town Mayor Nonqaba Mbeketo for the first time, then he got the keys to his new house.

Mr Nonjono's meeting with the mayor yesterday culminated in her unlocking the front door of his new house between Sibonqo and Fifth Avenue.

Ms Mbeketo addressed the Nyanga East community, then went on a walkabout and handed keys to eight families who moved into units in a huge housing complex.

The eight beneficiaries formed part of the last group of 48 families moving into the 90-plus units, which formed part of the council's rental stock.

The City of Cape Town upgraded and developed the buildings, previously male hostel single units, into family ones.

The council is turning several single-unit hostels into family-size houses in Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu at a cost of about R10-million.

Mr Nonjono and his wife, Nokhetha, parents of five children, have been living in backyards in Nyanga East for many years.

Mr Nonjono, 49, a gardener working in Newlands, said he had been on the council's waiting list for a house since 1997.

"Today I'm very happy because I met the mayor for the first time in person."

"I only saw her before in the newspapers."

"Receiving keys from her for a house makes the occasion even more exciting, one I'll remember for the rest of my life."

Nyanga East African National Congress ward councillor Tempton Mxekeni said the area's Masakhane Campaign had led to an increase in payments being made.

Within 14 days about R15,000 had been collected in rent.

Ms Mbeketo said the city council planned to upgrade and develop all single-unit hostels in Nyanga, Langa and Guguletu into family units by 2007.

Between 2002 and 2007 the council planned to upgrade and develop 1,200 units in the three areas.

Cape Flats building contractor Cornelius Petersen, who is working on the upgrading project, said he had already approached the council in connection with a further R10-million tender to complete the venture.

Yesterday's proceedings were attended by senior council housing officials and politicians, including Western Cape Legislature ANC MP Roseberry Sonto.
22-year wait on the list
Couple get house after

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22-year wait on the list
Couple get house after
R85m set aside for valuation roll

Tim Cohen

CAPE TOWN — The Cape metropolitan council has set aside R85m to establish a new valuation roll which will be implemented throughout the council's area in July 2001.

The council said yesterday all properties would be given a market value at January 1 next year and that the properties would be valued on the basis of market value of land plus improvements.

It is estimated that the total cost will be R85m, which includes the outsourcing of a number of functions and setting up a team of 20 to 30 valuers, 160 data gatherers, 70 captureurs and administrative support staff.

The council's intention is to achieve equity and will bring local authorities into line with the provisions of the Local Government Transition Act and the Municipal Structures Act.

Until now the metropolitan local councils have been using outdated valuation rolls and, in some cases, several different valuation rolls to assess rates.

The internationally accepted computer-aided mass appraisal system will be used for residential properties and the conventional manual process for the non-residential sector. The Cape metropolitan council has budgeted R50m for the project in the next financial year. Local councils will contribute R15m in proportion to the number of properties in their areas.
IMPLEMENTATION TO COST R85m

Single rating system for Cape Metropole in 2001

PROPERTIES throughout the metropole are to be rated according to the market value of the land on January 1 next year plus improvements. PRISCILLA SINGH reports.

AFTER months of controversy the Cape Metropolitan Council has decided to implement a common property valuation and rating system throughout the Cape Metropole Area in July 2001. All properties would be given a market value on January 1, 2000, the CMC said.

The estimated total cost of about R85 million includes outsourcing certain functions and setting up of a team of 20-30 valuers, 160 data gatherers, 70 data capturers and administrative support staff. Until now, the Metropolitan Local Councils (MLC) have been using outdated valuation rolls, and in some cases several different valuation rolls, to assess rates. A common roll is intended to achieve equity and bring local authorities into line with the provisions of the Local Government Transition Act and the Municipal Structures Act.

Properties will be valued on the basis of market value of land plus improvements. The internationally accepted Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal system will be used for residential properties and the conventional manual process for the non-residential sector.

A pre-implementation plan prepared by outside consultants and accepted by the CMC and the MLCs proposes a metropolitan project management team to co-ordinate the process.

The CMC has budgeted R50m for the project in the next financial year, with the MLCs contributing R15m in proportion to the number of properties in their municipal areas. As the municipality with the most properties, the City of Tygerberg, for example, will contribute R5.1m, while Helderberg will pay R800,000. The balance of the funds required will be carried over to the following financial year.

To meet the July 2001 implementation date, the project will get under way in July and details of tender documentation will be published by the end of this month. A steering committee consisting of the exco and finance committee chairpersons and representatives of the six MLCs will have the task of achieving this.
Council housing gets R12-m upgrade

Although burdened by rent arrears of about R65-million, the City of Cape Town has spent more than R12-million upgrading and developing its rental stock on the Cape Flats.

Cape Town mayor Nomandia Mseketo went to Nyanga East, Athlone and Manenberg this week to hand keys to beneficiaries and inspect several upgrading projects to flats and houses.

Today, Ms Mseketo will help workers paint flats in Hanover Park.

Municipal spokesman Theo Koopman said even though the council was owed almost R65-million in rent arrears, upgrading would continue.

In Athlone's Kew Town where Ms Mseketo inspected blocks of flats built in the 1940s for World War 2 soldiers, the council spent R1.8-million on upgrading.

She was shown work in progress such as the construction of fire-proof walls, new look courtyards used for netball and basketball, and new washing lines.

The council has spent R10-million to convert single-male hostel units into family-size dwellings in Nyanga East.
Right against water privatization has mainly dried up.

Inside Labour
Rich face steep rates increases

Overall rise to be lower than inflation

TOM HOOD

THE City of Cape Town municipality has decided on a below-inflation overall rates increase of eight percent starting from July 1.

The new tariff will be staggered according to the perceived increase in the value of properties, with some owners in poorer areas having to pay just one percent more and those in more affluent areas such as Clifton having to fork out up to 17 percent more.

The municipality increased rates by a flat 10 percent last year.

The new structure is aimed at a fairer distribution of the cost of municipal services. According to a draft capital and operating budgets document to be submitted to the council on Tuesday, property owners in areas that have benefited from a sharp increase in land values over the past few years will have to pay more than those in areas where values have shown modest increases or remained stagnant.

The city bowl, Mouille Point, Green Point and Sea Point will pay 13 percent more, and Camps Bay and Buitengracht 15 percent.

Some parts of the Cape Flats will see a five percent increase. People in Manenberg, Nyanga, Guguletu and Langa will be charged an extra three percent.

Businesses in the CBD face an eight percent increase.

The other municipalities in greater Cape Town are expected to announce their increases in the next few weeks.

The new system is based on different increases in property prices in 32 demarcated areas over the past 20 years.

Parts of large suburbs such as Claremont will pay different percentages because some areas of the suburb show higher increases than others.

The system is an interim measure until a metropolitan-wide rating system is adopted, possibly in two years.

The council's total budget, if approved on Tuesday, will rise 6.25 percent to R3.4-billion from R3.2-billion this year. A joint meeting of the executive and finance committees on Thursday heard that tight control of capital projects (roads, sewage, water infrastructure) cut the capital budget by R17-million to R688-million, keeping down borrowing costs despite high interest rates. The operating budget is estimated at R2.7-billion, only R200-million more than last year.

Changes to the rates rebate system will bring reductions to ratepayers earning less than R2,000 a month.
How the new rates system will affect Cape Town
Rates rise range from 1% to 17%

NORMAN JOSEPH
Metro Reporter

Property owners in the City of Cape Town area face rates rises of between 1% and 17% from July 1.

The council's new budget was approved after a six-hour debate. The African National Congress and New National Party voted in favour but Democratic Party councilors abstained, saying they had "major problems with it.

The budget is for R3.4 billion - R2.7 billion for operating expenditure and R653 million for capital expenditure, representing more than half the total local government expenditure in the Cape metro area.

- Mitchell's Plain ratepayers will have 7% deducted from the increase, and so will only have a 1% increase on their rates bill.
- Clifton and Bishop's Court face a 17% increase (9% will be added to the 8%)
- Most of the City Bowl and Sea Point will pay 13% more (an extra 5% is added)
- Most of the Cape Flats will have their rates reduced by 3%, keeping the overall increase to 5%.
- Rondelsbosch and Athlone residents face a 9% increase.

All property rates tariffs will be based on property valuations, and the thinking is that home-owners with more expensive properties will face steeper increases.

In an interview, executive director of corporate finance, Philipp van Rynseveldt said most property rates had been based on a property valuation carried out in 1979.

Since then the values of some properties had increased markedly while others had increased by only a small amount. For example, many properties on the Atlantic seaboard were now worth 35 times more than they were 20 years ago, while this was certainly not the case with many properties on the Cape Flats.

Executive committee chairman Saleem Mowzer said that the area-differentiated increase was an attempt to address inequity in an interum period, until a new property valuation was carried out across the entire Cape metro area.

"This new property rates system, based on a new metropolitan wide general valuation, will come into effect in July 2001," Mr Mowzer said.

Other implications of the budget approved yesterday are that:
- Domestic consumers of electricity will pay 7.5% more, while industrial and commercial users face a 3.5% increase. The aim of this is to promote greater investment and economic growth in Cape Town.
- There is a shift from a three to five-step domestic water tariff, meaning that consumers will pay more if they use more water, but most domestic consumers will see their water bill go down.
- The first six kilolitres of water are to be much cheaper for everyone, and will provide a lifeline tariff for the poor.
- Consumers using more than 1,000 litres a day will face an increase above the inflation rate. Those using less than 500 litres a day will see a substantial drop in their bill. Mr Van Rynseveldt said a household consuming an average of 600 litres a day.

Democratic Party councillors opposed the area-differentiated property rates system, saying they were in favour of a site-rating system.

The DP's Belinda Walker said the council's system was vulnerable to legal challenges.

Ms Walker said the system was crude and "needed fine-tuning."

She said that while there might be mansions along the Atlantic Seaboard's beachfronts, there were ordinary houses in nearby neighbourhoods which could not be grouped with expensive dwellings.

In his response, Mr Mowzer, said the council could not continue using outdated valuation rolls of 1979.
CMC budget good news for city firms

Housing projects get R19-million boost

Norman Joseph
Metro Reporter

Business levies in the Cape metropolitan area are to remain unchanged after the Cape Metropolitan Council approved an annual budget of R1.9-billion.

Yesterday, the New National Party-controlled metropolitan council was supported by African National Congress, Democratic Party and African Christian Democratic Party councillors, ending a 90-minute meeting on a high note with applause.

The Metro Council is to raise its income from a levy imposed on businesses’ payrolls.

The budget included an operating expenditure of R1.5-billion and capital expenditure of R574-million.

Operational allocations to the six local councils in the Cape metro area will be R176-million.

Provision for housing infrastructure within local council areas, one of the budget’s highlights, will increase from R104-million to R123-million, speeding up housing delivery to the 229,000 people on the waiting list.

An amount of R26-million was set aside for other infrastructure projects across the Cape metro area.

The operating expenditure of R1.5-billion for the next financial year will be funded mainly by business levy income of about R568-million, and income of R26-million from the supply of bulk water and waste services to the six local councils.

Executive committee chairman Pierre Uys said because his council did not levy property rates, it relied heavily on the business levies. But these would not be increased, and had not been increased in the past four years.

Mr Uys said the reason for this was to stimulate economic growth in the central business district.

Because the levies had not been increased, there had been a 5% growth in levy payments, meaning that more businesses had moved into the CBD over the four-year period.

Metropolitan council mayor William Bantom said business in central Cape Town promoted economic growth and job creation.

Mr Uys said a lot of hard work had gone into the preparation of the budget, which balanced the demand for services and infrastructure in communities with cost-cutting where feasible.

"By maintaining the subsidy to local councils at its present level, we will help them to keep property rates down to a minimum. "At the same time we have kept salaries and wages in the council down to 20% of net operating expenditure, which is a sign of good housekeeping. "We have also given attention to the need for low-cost housing by increasing our spending by R19-million."

Hope for homes in CMC budget

PRISCILLA SINGH

THE wait is almost over for at least 232,000 people on the housing list of the Cape Metropolitan Council, which has upsided its housing budget from R104 million to R123 million for the coming financial year.

The CMC got its 1999/2000 budget of R1.3 billion approved yesterday and it is one that balances development needs with good financial housekeeping, according to CMC executive committee chairman Pierre Uys.

"We have also given attention to the need for low-cost housing by increasing our spending on the provision for housing infrastructure by R19 million for the next financial year," Uys said.

The CMC voted on the budget yesterday and it was unanimously passed after a short debate. The budget increase has been trimmed to 5.49%, but this excludes special adhoc projects such as "radio trunking", the compilation of a common property valuation roll and water demand management functions.

Areas in the CMC holdings include Cape Town, Tygerberg, Blaauwberg, Oostenberg, Helderberg and South Peninsula. Operational allocations to these six Metropolitan Local Councils (MLCs) will be maintained at R176m, the same level as the current financial year. Mirroring the city of Cape Town's priority to provide more houses, the CMC's budget has made greater provision for the housing infrastructure, Uys said. Other projects have been allocated R86m.

"Business tariffs, which provide a large portion of the CMC's income, will remain unchanged. The business community has been fully consulted in the budget preparation process," Uys said.

The operating expenditure of R1.58bn for next year will be funded mainly by levy income (R503m) and income from the supply of bulk water and waste services to the six MLCs (R596m).

"By maintaining the subsidy to the MLCs at its present level, we will help them to keep property rates down to a minimum. At the same time we have kept salaries and wages in the CMC down to 20% of net operating expenditure, which is a good sign of housekeeping," Uys said.
SEVENTY-SIX cases of dysentery — including some fatalities — have been reported after an outbreak at informal housing areas of Nyanga and Guguletu.

The disease was traced to contaminated water and poor sanitation, said Ahmed Vawda, Cape Town’s director of community development.

“We have recognised for some time that informal areas could become a health hazard so we are distributing potable water and providing basic sanitation,” he said.

Sanitation would be improved by replacing the “night soil” bucket sewage removal system with a reservoir system that was cleaned out every few days.

City health officials had planned workshops with local communities to raise awareness of the disease and how to combat it, Vawda said.

“People often contaminate their drinking water or pick up dysentery from unwashed hands. But it is not an infectious disease,” he said.

According to Mike Marsden, director of municipal services, the city’s water mains would be extended into informal areas through shared taps.

Electricity would also be extended to informal areas to cut down on fires. The fire hydrant system would also be enlarged.

The dysentery outbreak coincides with a hard-hitting report outlining serious flaws in the Khayelitsha sewerage system, written by the
City reaches out to its forgotten parts

Councillors give green light for R120m for poor areas

MORE than R120-million will be pumped into more than 45 major projects in the “hopelessly neglected” areas of Cape Town when the next financial year starts in July.

Clinics, libraries, swimming pools, sports fields, road projects, halls and community centres and taxi ranks are on a list that was given the green light by councillors when they approved Cape Town’s R3.4-billion budget.

Capital spending on new infrastructure and facilities will total R688-million.

“Since the new City of Cape Town was formed, over R1.6-billion has been spent on capital projects and infrastructure,” said Salim Mowzer, chairman of the executive committee. “In the hopelessly neglected areas of the city, the council has repaved and rebuilt virtually the entire infrastructure. A stormwater system has all but eliminated the winter flooding that brought hardship to so many people for decades.”

• Spending on 15 new halls or community centres includes Crossroads (R2.2-million), Zolani (R1.8-million), Endlovu (R1.7-million), Philippa West (R1.7-million), Beltkorn (R1.6-million) and Langa (R1.2-million).

• Libraries at Brown’s Farm and Philippa East will share R5.1-million.

• Among health centres and clinics are Nyanga (R3.4-million) and Weltevreden North (R3-million).

• Almost R10-million will be spent on swimming pools at Lentegeur and Philippa.

• R19.27-million earmarked for sports fields, R10-million will go on upgrading Athlone Stadium, R1.4-million on replacing artificial turf at Athlone, R6-million at Vygieskraal Stadium and R1.5-million for a sports field at Brown’s Farm.

• Another R4.5-million will be spent on taxi facilities at Mowbray, R3.4-million on the NY3A taxi rank, R2.1-million to finish Philippa Station’s transport interchange and R950 000 on taxi ranks at Koeberg and Maitland stations.

Nyanga councillor Templeton Mgcokeng said residents had fought long and hard for the R3.4-million upgrading of their very basic centre and were happy with the grant. The funds would help renovate and expand the offices, teach skills to the disabled and build a parking area and children’s playground.

Philippa East councillor Mxwandle Matiwe said while there had been a lot of development, the community wanted a library of their own as they had to go to the city centre or Mitchells Plain to get books.

The city this week launched an innovative housing finance plan for low-income families, in which the government subsidy will be topped up with a loan for those who can prove they have a solid savings record.
City gives top-up boost to housing subsidy

The city of Cape Town has announced plans to provide an additional boost to its housing subsidy program. This is in addition to the R250 million already allocated to support the Cape Town Housing Company (CTHC). The city has committed R100 million to this program, bringing the total to R350 million. The intention is to assist more residents in accessing affordable housing.

The city's mayoral committee member for human settlements, Dr. Zandile Gumede, said, "This is a significant step towards making housing more accessible to all residents of Cape Town. We are committed to ensuring that everyone has a safe and decent place to live, regardless of their socio-economic background."

The money will be used to fund additional units and support ongoing projects. The city is also exploring partnerships with private developers to accelerate the delivery of new housing units.

This move comes in response to growing demand for affordable housing in the city. The housing department has been working on several initiatives to address this need, including the launch of a new housing development program and the expansion of existing subsidy schemes.

Mayor Dan Plato emphasized the importance of affordable housing, stating, "Housing is a basic human right. It is crucial that we ensure everyone has access to decent housing. This additional funding is a step forward in achieving that goal."

The city encourages residents to apply for the housing subsidy. Applications can be submitted online or at any of the city's social development offices. For more information, visit the city's website or contact the housing department directly.
The South Africa has yet to arrive in Elisas River

Democracy's a luxury in the dumping ground

DECEMBER 1999

CPRE AUSAIR FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1999

NEWS
BRIDGING THE 20-YEAR GULF

New valuation formula starts to iron out inequities between Mother City’s suburbs

For just over two decades, huge economic and social gaps between Cape Town’s distinct ethnic communities have been ignored in property valuation for rates purposes. Whether you lived in Clifton or Athlone, Muizenburg or Bantry Bay, the annual rates determination applied irrespective of the often starkly differential rise in the market value of properties. This is about to change.

The intention is to siphon off higher rates from the rich to subsidise the poor — the familiar redistribution of resources which SA’s various cities have tackled in different ways. At times this redistribution has triggered rates boycotts by the affluent or overtaxed business sector. The process has often fostered race, income and class resentments.

Cape Town has been divided into 32 areas, each of which will pay rates based on a formula whereby percentage points are added to or subtracted from the overall annual increase — 8% this year. The entire exercise is predicated on an interim assessment of the rise or fall of property values in the 32 areas since the completion of the last valuation roll in 1997.

It’s no secret that Atlantic seaboard property values have risen swiftly in recent years, outpacing escalations elsewhere except, perhaps, in the plush suburbs of Bishopscourt and Constantia. Hard-currency speculators snapping up bargains have helped drive the racially based divergence of prices between gangland and Baywatch terrain.

Informal settlements of black communities like Crossroads and Khayelitsha are not subject to any rating system, though the residents are responsible for paying interim service charges.

Water, electricity and sewage removal are built into these charges, but cross-subsidisation is necessary for any of the services to be provided consistently.

In terms of the new formula, the maximum “surplus” rates increase for a house in Clifton or Bishopscourt will be an additional nine percentage points on this year’s 8% general increase — a total of 17%.

Some Mitchells Plain suburbs will have seven percentage points deducted from their obligation, thus paying a 1% increase.

Suburbs like Rondebosch and Athlone, with a 9% increase, will escape the full penalty of the new system, which comes into effect on July 1.

Cape Town’s plan, pending a new general valuation roll due to come into being in July 2001, has gained the support of the ANC and New National Party in council.

The Democratic Party, on the other hand, opposed it.

Watching the sun set over the Atlantic will be a little more expensive for those who own property there. Another G&T may be called for.

Peter Wilhelm

NATIONAL PROPERTY REGISTER

RADEBE’S IN THE MONEY

Minister can claim R7bn rent

Jeff Radebe, the Public Works Minister, could soon also be the richest landlord when his department starts collecting around R7bn rent a year from its mainly government tenants.

But it's not only those tenants who will be disappointed with the results of Radebe's digital national property register, a three-year, R56m project. There are also the occupants who should not have been in the 847 houses that will now be sold, or the perpetrators of R53m in maintenance fraud discovered in Justice Department-related properties alone during compilation of the register.

Then there are the private landlords who will now get R40m-a-year less rent because the registry compilers checked rents paid against leases signed. And that is just the beginning.

The register will in future form part of the government accounting system and control all aspects of government property.

Charging rent is only the first step in proper asset management. Rent-paying officials, with 4m m², occupy three times more space than the entire Johannesburg CBD. If the right action is taken, their office space could be Imploded, properties sold and, if Radebe can keep the kleptocrats at bay, he could contribute tens of billions of rand to social projects or tax reductions.

Ian File
Back to shacks as houses at $14

Rates cost people their only government-subsidised home

MYLOSIPHE
Special Correspondent

Some owners of the new government-subsidised houses in Du Noon near Milnerton are selling up to raise money to pay off debts and are returning to live in shacks.

In many cases, people have large municipal service arrears and say they have no choice but to sell to get money to pay the bill.

The community claims the municipality took too long to send them accounts and now they face high bills they cannot pay.

Many are thousands of rands in arrears.

But the provincial housing ministry has warned would-be sellers that they may be giving up their only chance of owning a proper house.

There was also concern that the residents who were leaving were selling their houses to locals or people desperately in need of them, but to people from Khayelitsha, Langa and Guguletu, who wanted the buildings for business purposes.

David Mbolombo, a committee member of the Du Noon housing task team, said residents had been promised that nearby factories and the council would employ people staying in that area so they could afford to pay their rates and other accounts.

Mr Mbolombo, who is unemployed, sold his house after he got a municipal bill for R3 109.64. He is now living with his unemployed wife in the home of a relative who is in hospital. He said he did not know what he would do after the relative was discharged.

Several residents showed the Cape Argus municipal service accounts of more than R2 000.

They said they had been promised that the unemployed and pensioners would get their houses free, while workers would have to add R7 000 to the government subsidy of R17 250.

But, in fact, everybody was paying the same.

Sekhakhwa Jikwana, secretary of housing committees in Kwa-Five informal settlement, where some of Du Noon residents came from, sold her house for R8 000 to repay a funeral debt and was now back in a shack.

She said although people were worried about winter and leaking roofs, they had sold their brick houses for a number of reasons.

Some were moving back to the Eastern Cape, others had moved to farms while others were overcoming their financial problems “like me”, she said.

She sold her house for R8 000 because she had to repay a R6 000 loan taken out to bury her sister’s child.

She claimed some of the houses had been sold for as little as R800.

Ms Jikwana said residents were aware they would not be entitled to another government subsidy, and living conditions in informal settlements were worse, but people had no choice.

Charlotte Sims, director of housing and health for Blaauwberg Municipality, said the sale of houses was legal.

She said organised local government and housing professional bodies had warned the government that its “lackadaisical” attitude to housing sales would lead to a significant percentage of housing subsidy money being thrown down the drain.

Both the African National Congress and the New National Party in Blaauwberg were unhappy about the selling of government houses and vowed to investigate and stop it.

Chris Fotjister, the NNP’s chief whip in the council and district chairmain for Table View, dismissed claims that the sale of houses was politically motivated, saying both parties and the ANC were working hand in hand to provide housing in the area.

“We fought for years to house people and we can’t allow these houses to be thrown away to people taking advantage of the situation I will stop it,” he said.

Mr Fotjister, who said he had lived in informal settlements for 50 years, said people wanted to sell their houses because arrears should be a reason to start the council and make arrangements to pay their bills instead.

Surita Botes, the provincial housing department’s spokeswoman, said many people did not understand they would not be entitled to another government subsidy.

Some had already tried to apply for a second subsidy in another town, but the national housing database meant they could easily be identified.

Mxuzani Sonto, provincial ANC housing spokesman, said people who bought or sold government-subsidised houses were complicating the process.

He said people needed to be advised about paying rates as it was a new thing to most of them.

“The DP and completely d the changes to South Africa. ANC is in favour of the changes. It calls “trans means making of its cronies.
completely different.

The DP and the ANC have

Selling rooms. Renting housing is a way to raise a new

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The people need to be educated

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Rent increases set to hit poor hardest
And more are in the pipeline, says council

(Peter Gossen)
Social affairs correspondent
Life is tough for the thousands of poor and elderly people who rent low-cost housing in the South Peninsula. They are faced with an increase in their rent from the end of July.

And despite the South Peninsula council giving them a last-minute reprieve by bringing the increase down in future, they will still have to pay more.

Councilor Paul Smith
The increase is about R3 a month for 234 tenants who pay R114,75 onwards. Tenants paying R80 a month will pay R130 more, while those paying R120 will pay R12,60 more.

Rents in old-age accommodation have been exempted from the increase.

The increase was bitterly opposed by the South Peninsula councillors Hennie van Wyk and Veronelle Seymour as well as councilor for the constituency, Gert and Grassy Park, the council's subdivision.

Mr. Smith said he could not support any increase in spite of understanding the economic rationale behind it.

He showed councilors a petition signed by tenants of Dennehof, Keurboom Hof and Syringa courts objecting to the proposed increase.

Mr. Smith said the rise in rentals was to pay for badly needed maintenance of homes.

By law, we have no alternative

but to increase rentals and in six months time, the government has made it clear, we will have no option but to charge economic rentals. This is going to mean further hardship for the poor.

Councillor Svet Moodley said the council felt for the people faced with the rent increase, but it was also the duty of councillors to encourage their constituents to pay their bills.

If some of the R38-million in outstanding rentals was paid, it could cancel out further rent increases.

Councillor Deon Kruse said the difference between hikes of 8% and 9% amounted to about R150 000 a year.

Tired old fire engines raise alarm

(Peter Gossen)
Social affairs correspondent

They are old and battered. They leak oil, they brandish dodgy, their gauges are wonky and they are replaced every other week.

No, it's not the contents of a shady used car lot. It's the South Peninsula Municipality's fire engine fleet.

It appears possible that only a few of the vehicles would pass the municipal's stringent fire test.

A report by the director of inspection services, Roger Bosman, on the south's 21 firefighting vehicles, many of them "second-hand" from the City of Cape Town or the Cape Metropolitan Council, highlights the issue.

A 1992 Dennis has recurring power steering problems and electrical problems which cause beacon failure.

Escaping with only minor dents and a bit of rust are a 1999 Mercedes, a 1980 Unimog and a 1973 Mercedes.

There is some relief. Unable to afford new fire engines, the south has bought two refurbished trucks at a fraction of the cost — R2.75 each and both are fighting fit.
Squatters evicted from low-cost houses

NORMAN JOSEPH

Metro Report

The West Coast Transitional Council says it will not provide alternative accommodation to 153 homeless families who illegally occupied houses in Saldanha.

The transitional council, also known as the Vredenburg Town Council, is asking the families to go back to where they came from.

The council called in the sheriff of the court to start evictions on Tuesday this week, forcing people to leave the low-cost houses which they had illegally occupied for several weeks.

Town clerk Peter de Klerk said, “We understand the frustrations, but are doing our best to provide low-cost, affordable housing.”

Mr De Klerk said provincial housing minister Cecil Herandien had asked the council to hold back the eviction order, but this could not be done “because the project must proceed.”

Mr Herandien’s spokeswoman, Surnia Botes, said he had asked the council earlier this week not to execute the eviction order — because there was an investigation under way into allegations of irregularities in the allocation of houses.

However, to avoid any legal actions against the council from impatient beneficiaries, it was decided to go ahead with the evictions, Ms Botes said.

All the illegal occupants were evicted by the sheriff yesterday.

Saldanha police commissioner Jorrie Jordan said police would patrol and protect municipal workers on the site, and prevent further occupations.

A full investigation into the allocation of houses in Saldanha was being launched.
New dam will keep taps flowing

PRISCILLA SINGH

A MAJOR new dam, needed to meet the growing demand for water in the greater Cape metropolitan region, was yesterday approved by Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal after an 18-month delay.

"It is a relief to have reached this point," I have carried the submissions around in my briefcase for 18 months before I was satisfied that sufficient work had been done on the integrated approach and demand management, for me to give my approval," Asmal said.

The Skuifraam Dam will be on the upper Berg River in the La Motte forest near Franschhoek and will be operated with Tshewavusluf Dam as an integral part of the Riverkruier tunnel system. The dam storage added will be about twice the size of the two Steenbras dams combined.

The Skuifraam supplement scheme, also on the upper Berg River, will be a winter high-flow diversion scheme which will pump water for use from a point about 11km below the dam.

"Both the Skuifraam Dam and the supplement scheme have been found to be technically feasible, economically desirable and socially acceptable," Asmal said.

He said a water demand strategy was critical to the success of the project, which is expected to cost about R780 million.

"Only if we are managing the water we use carefully and not wasting it, can we justify spending money on developing new water resources. I am, however, greatly encouraged by the work done by local government authorities to promote demand management and water conservation."

Studies have shown that the combination of the Skuifraam Dam and the supplemented scheme was the best way in which to make more water available to meet the area's growing needs. Asmal said the Western Cape's strategy was a good example of the new approach to water management, which is being introduced throughout South Africa.

The project will provide a stimulus for the currently depressed construction industry and emerging small contractors will be used where possible. Communities in the area will benefit from job creation, and recreation and tourism opportunities once the dam is complete.

The crest length of the dam wall will be almost a kilometre. The wall will be 60 metres high, most likely a concrete gravity wall with an overspill section 150 metres long. The dam will store 126 million cubic metres of water and add 56 million cubic metres per year to the current supply system.

In what was probably his last briefing before the elections, Asmal used the opportunity to hail the efforts of his department over the past five years.

"I believe that as a country, we have made remarkable strides in water resource management and have managed to place ourselves among the forerunners in integrated water resources management throughout the world," he said.
Minister hands 400 houses to Grabouw

JOCelyn JOHNSON

AFTE years without a permanent place to call home, farm workers watched with pride as their dream became a reality and Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu Mahanyele handed over 400 houses to the Grabouw community yesterday.

This is the first phase of a plan to build 1,273 houses by March 2000.

Yalezwa Winbou, an administrative assistant of the Grabouw housing department, said the second phase is estimated to begin in July.

"We must wait for the provincial housing board to confirm that the money needed for construction can be released," she said.

Typically, housing a family of five, the one-roomed houses each stand on 25m² of land. They include a bathroom and running water, but electricity is not provided.

Residents can install an electricity box for about R100, after which they will have a prepaid service.

Winbou said the need for land developed due to a political and historical legacy that prevented blacks from residing in the area.
New dam to meet city's water needs

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within the North River. The area

September 8th, 1977

STATE OF NEW YORK,

COUNTY OF RENFRO

R780-m Project on Bega River

James Smith

Engineer

May 28th, 1977
Council tenants able to buy Bo-Kaap flats

A WOmen's initiative of 1995 came to fruition yesterday with a new arrangement which enables council tenants to buy their properties. YAZEED KAMALDIEN reports.

The Cape Town City Council’s 7 500 capital discount scheme came to fruition yesterday when the Bo-Kaap Residents’ Deed of Sale was signed.

This historic event — marking the first time that residents can buy council property — was held at the B66rhaanool Centre in Piert Street, Bo-Kaap.

The mayor of Cape Town, Nomandla Mleko, the chairman of the council’s executive committee, Saleem Mower, and residents from the council-owned flats in Bo-Kaap attended.

The mayor of Bo-Kaap’s oldest residents, Mymoena Abrahams, 93, signed the deed of sale along with Mower and Mleko.

From now on, tenants will be able to purchase their flats from the council.

“Most tenants have been staying in the flats for over 50 years. This is a good example of how the council and the community can work together to achieve success,” Mower said.

The flats were initially built in the 1940s for the Muslim community and many tenants have stayed in them ever since.

In 1995 it was the women-residents who initiated the scheme to buy their flats, which range from one- to three-bedroom units.

Buyers are to pay between R1 800 to R8 400, “depending on the size of the flat.”

Eighteen blocks of flats, totalling 191 units, are available.

“To qualify, they must not own another property and they can only purchase their own flat, in which they are currently staying,” said Salah Patel, the lawyer representing the residents.

Flats will be bought on a “wel-wel,” or “as is,” basis.

This means that when residents purchase their flat, they will accept full responsibility to upgrade it.

The council will make no further improvements.

“The structures are very solid, and the residents are getting a bargain,” said Patel.

The 7 500 capital discount scheme is open to all tenants of council-owned houses or flats.

**SIGNS OF THE TIMES:** Bo-Kaap residents sign the deed of sale which will enable them to purchase council property. In some instances, residents have been tenants of the properties for 50 years or longer.

**PICTURE** MUAHD SAFODIEN
SUGAR CANE. 

A woman's de motor of 1955 came to prison yesterday.

NEWS

MONDAY, MAY 31, 1999

Cape Times

A woman's freedom of 1955 came to prison yesterday.

to buy Do-Kap Flats

Council tenants able

RESIDENTS SIGN DEED OF SALE
Water makes your housing subsidy grow

Big thank-you for Asmal

(124) 1/6/99

Some city house-owners will have a little more elbow-room in their newly-built, subsidised houses in future, thanks to millions of rands saved through the "Working for Water" programme.

This was revealed by Finance Minister Trevor Manuel at a function in the Bellville Velodrome last week, when several thousand programme workers said "thank you" to Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal.

Mr Manuel, who was handed a copy of the programme's annual report by Professor Asmal, announced that the City of Cape Town had decided to increase housing subsidies by R5 000, using about R16 million saved through the programme.

This meant that the houses built with the subsidies could be significantly bigger.

In 1996 Professor Asmal initiated the innovative programme, which involves using previously unemployed and marginalised people to remove invasive, alien "water hungry" plants from catchment areas throughout the country.

According to the 1998/99 annual report, released at the function, 23 652 people were employed on the programme - 64% of them women and 16% of them youths between 15 and 25 years old - and more than 107 000ha were cleared of aliens, with vital follow-up work being done on another 128 000ha, at a cost of R250 million.

During the past four years, more than 43 000 people have been employed for some part of the programme.

Professor Asmal described the programme as "one of the massive success stories of the first five years of democracy."

"It is difficult not to be moved by what the programme has done to try to honour the issue that has pride of place in our Constitution - dignity," he said.

"There are workers who have told me how much it means to them to have the dignity of putting food on the table of their children (and) of knowing that their children are safe while they are at work."

"The way in which the programme is helping to de-racialise the country, with brown and black and white South Africans all working towards a common goal, is evident here before us."

Professor Asmal said he had been told that the workers had gathered to thank him for developing the programme.

"But it is the wrong way around. It is I who should be here to thank you for making this programme what it is."

"This is your programme. It is your work that will make this programme succeed."

Professor Asmal and Mr Manuel were presented with gifts - including a coffee table and a wine rack bought with personal contributions made by the workers.
WATER AFFAIRS.

KADER ASMAL DECIDES IT'S TIME TO BUILD A DAM

Skuifraam a model of international best practice

There was a valedictory quality to Kader Asmal's media conference last week, his last as Minister of Water Affairs & Forestry before the election. He may return to the same job under Thabo Mbeki, or he may go elsewhere. 'We'll have to see,' he remarked cryptically.

The occasion marked Asmal's decision to proceed with the building of a new dam - the Skuifraam, on the upper Berg River in the La Motte Forest, 5 km west of Franschhoek in the Western Cape. It will be the first structure of its size and scale under the new government, and with associated water schemes the capital cost is put at R780m, to be funded on the "user pays" principle, which could mean borrowings by utilities such as affected local water authorities.

Consultation has been of the essence as the environmental impact has been assessed, and Environmental Affairs Minister Pallo Jordan has given the go-ahead though there is a two-month window for appeal. Local communities, Cape Nature Conservation and various metropolitan, farming and industrial bodies were drawn into the process, which has gone on for years.

Asmal delayed the announcement for 18 months, contemplating it from various angles. He is known as an intellectual and humanist - not without a tendency to inflame rhetoric and make provocations by humour and must be taken seriously when he says things like "Water is the essence of life. Without sufficient water in adequate quantities and acceptable quality, there will be none of the prosperity and human dignity we all aspire to. A full and healthy future will escape us and our children, and our children's children."

Yet the building of dams is a controversial matter. In SA's past, their construction has frequently been a political statement - like that of the Hendrik Verwoerd Dam at Sharpesville - with less than full consideration of their human and environmental costs. In SA, that dam, now the Ganeap, led to population removals.

Worldwide, the building of a dam is considered as but one in a range of options for securing water. So while Asmal may have dreamed of being our only Water Minister never to build a dam, the go-ahead for the Skuifraam project - the dam will be 60 m high, about a km across, store 126m m³ of water, and add 56m m³ to current supply - forms part of an integrated approach to water use in SA.

The blunt facts are that SA is water-scarce and cash-strapped. With the new National Water Act, conservation and value for money become paramount. Through a variety of means, the Cape Metropolitan Council has accepted a 10% reduction in projected water demand by the year 2005, and a 20% reduction in 2020. The process, however, is still a work in progress, and whether this approach will succeed remains to be seen.
Families promised houses six years ago still living in shacks

Mystery of R1 066 water bill for home which has no taps

JERMAINE CRAIG

Laban Basson was astonished when he got a bill for R1 066 from the Helderberg municipality for water used at a house in Smaartie Town, Macassar.

That's because Mr Basson has never lived at the house at 21 Waxberry Street and, what is more, it has no taps. The reason for the bill remains a mystery and the council is investigating.

The house was built for Mr Basson but was never completed and he has not been able to move in. It has huge holes in the walls and a pile of rubbish where the toilet is meant to be. Strangely, the account was delivered to Mr Basson's address at 17 Chris Hani Park, a shack settlement where he has been living for more than five years in anticipation of moving into his house in Smaartie Town.

Mr Basson's tale is one of a number in the Western Cape which have lifted the lid on the chaotic state of housing provision in some areas.

Western Cape African National Congress leader Ibrahim Rasool asked the Heath Commission, the Public Protector, the Auditor-General and provincial government to investigate the situation of families in the Chris Hani settlement who were promised houses six years ago but are still living in squalid shacks.

The story begins during the Easter weekend of 1994 when Zandvlei farm was flooded and 33 families who lived there were moved to the Macassar Civic Hall as an emergency measure.

The families were allowed to set up temporary structures on a site earmarked for a school, which came to be known as Chris Hani Park.

About the same time the former Western Cape Regional Services Council granted money to the then Macassar management committee to provide 488 serviced sites on a piece of land which came to be known as Smaartie Town.

Just before the 1994 election, then deputy minister in the House of Reps. remaining 225 plots in Smaartie Town would be allocated to families in Chris Hani Park and 119 to people on the official housing waiting list.

National Party councillor Janne Beukes was appointed project coordinator and the ANC alleges that the NP promised people in Chris Hani Park houses in return for their votes in the 1996 local elections.

The developer of the project, Charles Swanepoel, operating as Embu Homes, apologised to the Helderberg council in April this year for being unable to finish the job. He said his materials had been stolen and people were not prepared to pay additional money he needed to complete their homes.

He admitted he had caused discomfort to the people of Chris Hani Park and said he considered it "very important" to complete the project.

Mr Swanepoel said he had offered to complete the houses, but if the council did not find his offer acceptable he would then try to repay the money he had been paid. The bulk of the money came from housing subsidies.

The director of Helderberg's urban planning, housing and development committee, J J Degenaar, said the council had been putting pressure on the developer constantly to finish the job and would seek legal opinion on how to deal with the matter.

The Helderberg council's deputy director of revenue, Henry Dowling, said the case of Mr Basson's water bill and others similar to his were being investigated and there would be more clarity by the end of next week.

"It is a very contentious issue. There have been cases where people requested a connection, paid for it and the bill was sent for the water used. Who used the water we do not know.

"We will have to find that out in our investigation," Mr Dowling said.
ed houses six ing in shacks (124) ARG 516 99
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SQUATTER CRISIS: Ebrahim Rasool inspects houses at Smartie Town

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Mr Rasool checks an incomplete and damaged house with the owner, Laban Basson

MONDE DLAKAVU
Rates bills drive out poor residents

New home owners in South go back to old shacks because they can't pay

Poor people in the South Peninsula have been selling their new houses cheaply and going back to their old shacks after seeing their first municipal accounts.

This was disclosed by South Peninsula executive committee chairman Graham Lawrence in his budget speech - in which he announced an 8% increase in rates.

Mr Lawrence said Government policy was that, once services were provided, communities were expected to pay the full cost.

"But the reality is that many poor communities simply cannot afford to pay for even very basic services."

In spite of some remarkable achievements by local government in the Cape, it remained starved of national funding that would ensure its achievements were sustainable.

And it was not only the South Peninsula that was faced with trying to sustain its achievements.

He said it had been the dramatic withdrawal of national subsidies that had most constrained the South Peninsula from achieving its development potential.

"We had to implement a 19% rates increase in our previous budget, while shrinking our real expenditure growth by 4.6%.

"This year our subsidies from national government drop another 30%," he said.

Current policy was that the Government would fund the initial provision of basic services and facilities, and local government would cover the cost of running and maintaining the services.

"In reality, current national funding is neither sufficient to provide acceptable services in urban areas, nor is it able to satisfy community expectations."

The Government assumed that the larger local authorities were more viable and therefore more able to finance themselves.

"Because of this assumption, we find that most subsidy support is channelled into rural areas increasingly, leaving the metropolitan areas and secondary cities to fend for themselves.

"Yet nearly 87% of all outstanding arrears, R9.8 billion, are in the larger, local authority areas."

In the Western Cape alone, arrears were up from R1.2 billion to nearly R2 billion.
Dam will boost Cape water supply

Louise Cook

The new R620m Skuifraam Dam to be built in the vicinity of Franschhoek and Paarl in the Western Cape will add a yield of 56-million cubic metres a year to the current water supply system for Cape Town and surrounding areas.

Unlike past practices of simply building dams when water was needed, the building of the Skuifraam Dam was closely linked to resource demand management strategies, water affairs and forestry director Babs Naidoo said yesterday.

"There comes a time when you have to build a dam, but it has to be subject to further conservation policies to ensure the proper management of the resource," she said.

Construction of the dam as well as the Skuifraam supplement scheme on the upper Berg River would go ahead in two to three years' time.

Water conservation and demand management schemes linked to the building of the dam include the clearing of invasive alien vegetation and the establishment of a dedicated water-demand management unit by the Cape Metropolitan Council.

Also due to receive attention would be repairing leaks, improving metering and removing wasteful plumbing fixtures, the department said. Organised agriculture would also be consulted with a view to promoting more efficient water usage in the province.

The planned Skuifraam Dam will be located on the upper Berg River in the La Motte forest, about 5km west of Franschhoek.

The dam will be linked to the Theewaterskloof Dam via the Riviersonderend tunnel system.

15/6/99
SHACK ATTACK

Professor says 64 settlements around Cape Town will be a problem forever unless ‘idealistic’ policy is revamped

TOM HOOD

ONE of Cape Town’s most accomplished civil engineers has called for an overhaul of the housing policy for the city and surrounding areas.

John Abbott, professor of civil engineering at UCT, said municipalities should upgrade shacks instead of taking on the near impossible task of rehousing people in new brick homes.

Abbott was commissioned five years ago by the Cape Metropolitan Council to assess the growth of informal housing in greater Cape Town.

According to a report released this week, he identified 72 100 shacks in 64 informal settlements up to May last year. This figure was growing by about 16 percent a year.

The number of shack settlements grew two-and-half times from 28 300 to 72 100 from January 1993 to May 1998. The number of shack settlements had grown from 52, according to a council document.

Asked for comment after the release of the figures, Abbott said: “Without an urgent and clear change in policy the real issues will not be addressed.

“We have passed the point where we can talk in an idealistic way simply about rehousing everyone.”

About 25 000 shacks had been upgraded in Gauteng after the owners had received security of tenure and similar attempts were being made in Durban and Port Elizabeth.

Cape Town should adopt a similar approach instead of relying on the R15 000 government subsidy for low-income families.

Another council document showed the sub-economic housing backlog was about 220 000 and population growth would boost this to 260 000 by 2010.

This equalled housing an extra 20 000 families which would take up all the housing subsidies available a year.

Almost all the shack dwellers in greater Cape Town were from the Eastern Cape and one-third of black families lived in informal settlements.

A new tendency revealed by the survey was the growth of backyard shacks in the newly developing low-income housing areas. This indicated that migration was far higher than the 16 percent recorded by informal settlement growth.

Abbott said the growth in backyard shacks reduced the growth of informal settlements.

Abbott said the City of Cape Town had the most shacks of the six municipalities, with 42 percent of the total.

The 1998 shack count for the municipality was 31 618, a six percent growth in two years despite 4 000 new housing sites being allocated to squatters. The number is predicted to grow to 34 000 over the next two years.

Blouberg resided more shacks, as a percentage of total shack population, than other municipalities. But the number of shack dwellers there had increased.

The Marconi Baam settlement in Milnerton should have been cleared a year ago but the density was back to what it was before relocation to Joe Slovo Park because as people moved out new people moved in.

“It is clear that this is a textbook case study of failed relocation, using an imposed solution that does not recognise the forces underpinning urban migration,” said Abbott.

Bryan Watkyns, chairman of the Cape Metropolitan Council’s planning committee, said the six municipalities would be consulted before recommendations were made.
Probe into 'phantom houses' (124)

JOSEPH ARANES
STAFF REPORTER

The Helderberg Municipality has asked the Public Protector to help investigate the failure of a building contractor to complete low-cost houses in Macassar for which he was paid.

A full council meeting debated the crisis for almost three hours yesterday, before deciding it was in the interests of those left homeless that the matter be investigated at the highest level.

The Macassar housing issue began about two years ago when the provincial housing board approved individual housing subsidies for the residents of the informal settlement of Chris Hani Park.

The community, with the help of attorneys, appointed a local contractor, Embu Homes, to build their houses. In an attempt to get the funds released, the residents signed contracts indicating they had received their houses.

Helderberg Municipality's director of housing, Hans Degenaar, said problems arose when the contractor failed to deliver on his promise.

"He handed over some completed houses, others were partially completed and a lot of the 106 houses were never built at all. As a municipality, we are looking at ways of getting the people housed."

"Part of this process includes calling on the Public Protector, Selby Baqwa, to investigate," he said.

African National Congress provincial leader Ebrahim Rasool said his party commended the municipality for calling on the Public Protector to investigate the matter.

"This same contractor, in spite of the fact that the houses were not completed, has since been awarded subsequent contracts by the provincial housing board - with the knowledge of the Minister of Housing, Cécile Hareandel," he said.

The contractor could not be reached for comment.
MPs' staff kicked out of parliamentary village

Houses 'wrongly allocated' to support workers

LYNNE RIPPEBAAR
STAFF REPORTER

Employees working for Members of Parliament are being evicted from Pelican Park after houses were wrongly allocated by political parties.

Greg MacMaster, regional manager of the national Department of Public Works, said they had arranged with political parties in 1994 that each one would get a housing quota and that the party's whips would allocate houses.

However, houses which were meant for MPs had wrongly been allocated by parties to MPs' support staff.

"The accommodation in the three parliamentary villages is intended for parliamentarians and sessional officials," said Mr MacMaster.

"Some of the political parties gave some vacant houses to parliamentary support staff."

In July 1997, the department gave the "illegal" residents verbal notice to quit the houses. Two written notices were sent to residents in August and November 1997.

The matter went to court after residents failed to leave the premises and the court ruled residents had to move by June 15.

Mr MacMaster said that of the six tenants who had been served with eviction notices, four had moved while two had remained in the houses and had had to be put out.

Yesterday, Munsoer Anthony, whose wife works in one of the national government departments, said he was "very angry" about the eviction. His wife, whom he said could not be named, had asked for a 10-day extension until they could move to their new home in Grassy Park on July 1.

Some of the government employees being evicted did not want to reveal their names to the press for fear they might be reprimanded or lose their jobs.

The two families evicted yesterday had lived in Pelican Park for three years.

"Now Public Works say we are illegal occupants. We paid to stay here and they gave us keys," said Mr Anthony.

Next door to the Anthony home there are two similar empty houses, and one resident said most of the one-bedroom houses were unoccupied. Standing at the entrance to Pelican Park, Mr Anthony said that he was waiting for his children, the eldest of whom is 10, to come home from school.

"This is going to be a shock for them," said Mr Anthony. "My eldest daughter is very upset and the five-year-old said she was going to miss the place.

"We don't have a place to go."

One government employee said she had been at work when the sheriff of the court came to her house.

She had started packing her belongings with the intention of moving as soon as she found a new home for herself and her two children, but instead had found all her furniture and other belongings at the entrance to the village when she got home yesterday.

"I don't really know what to say. I am not thinking straight now," she said.

"I said I was ready to move, but they did not give me time. I told them I was looking for a place. I asked for an extension."

As the woman tossed books and other items into a rubbish bag, she said: "I don't want to look at it, because then I won't throw it away and I can't take it with me."

Mr MacMaster said residents had been told they did not meet criteria to stay.

"Two-and-a-half years is enough time to get a new home and we need the houses for MPs and sessional officials."

He said the process of getting rid of tenants had taken so long because new laws introduced in 1998 made eviction difficult.
Housing boss threatens to sue Rasool
ANC leader faces court action

NORMAN JOSEPH
Metro Reporter

Provincial Housing Minister Cecil Herandien is threatening legal action against African National Congress leader Ebrahim Rasool for making allegations about an incomplete housing development in Macassar.

Mr Rasool condemned the municipality for calling on the Public Protector to investigate. He said "This same contractor, in spite of the fact that the houses were not completed, has since been awarded subsequent contracts by the provincial housing board with the knowledge of the Minister of Housing, Cecil Herandien."

Mr Herandien said the residents had appointed the contractor themselves and that he had not been involved in this process.

Of the 106 units originally scheduled to be built, 64 were completed, 25 were still under construction and 17 had not been started.

Mr Herandien said the project had been continuously monitored and various problems had been identified, some relating to the processing of subsidy applications.

He said individual residents had paid their subsidy money to a firm of attorneys, who were in turn responsible for paying the contractor. This was normal practice.

Mr Herandien said that he was confident that the problems in Macassar would be sorted out through the correct channels.

Last night the contractor, Charles Swanepoel of Grabouw, declined to comment.
Shack-dwellers praise plan to upgrade homes

Don’t move, improve – UCT research professor

A proposal to upgrade shacks rather than replace them with brick houses is a cost-effective way of providing low cost housing, says a professor of civil engineering.

"John Abbott, professor of civil engineering at the University of Cape Town, said the idea required a new approach, but it was "a cost-effective way of development".

The idea has been welcomed by shack dwellers in a snap survey by the Cape Argus.

People said government housing subsidies might go further when it came to upgrading dwellings, rather than building new ones.

They said, also, that the brick houses that were being built were too small.

Professor Abbott said Cape Town faced a number of different housing problems, such as overcrowding in Mitchell’s Plain and Hanover Park, and a proliferation of backyard shacks and informal settlements.

He said the last meaningful housing project in Cape Town was Mitchell’s Plan.

When shack dwellers went from an informal settlement to formal housing, the vacant land was invaded by more people, and the backlog increased.

About 25,000 shacks had been upgraded in Gauteng after shack dwellers received security of tenure.

Similar efforts regarding shacks were being made in Durban and Port Elizabeth.

Cape Town should adopt a similar approach instead of relying on the R15,000 government subsidy for low-income families, said Professor Abbott.

The Cape Metropolitan Council commissioned Professor Abbott to conduct a pilot project to evaluate shacklands to see whether upgrading would be a better alternative than relocating people to low-cost housing schemes on faraway sites.

The project team is checking to see which methodology or guidelines could be used to upgrade informal settlements.

"The team is taking aerial photographs of shanty towns, looking at the demographics, identifying the number of shacks in an area and capturing details such as the structures', numbers and open spaces available for possible roadways."

A survey is then made of the residents' skills and how the settlement could be developed economically.

"Obviously, physical changes will have to be made, such as the shifting of certain families within certain settlements," said Professor Abbott.

Local authorities should develop good relationships with informal settlement communities.

Key policy principles should be mapped out and the manner in which the development will be done should be discussed with communities.

"It is a process and depends on how much funds are available."

Professor Abbott said the aim was to transform informal settlements into desirable communities and to get people involved in their own development.

There were hidden costs for people who were maintaining a home for the first time, such as rent, rates.

"Not everyone can afford it," said Professor Abbott.

In terms of his scheme, households could choose how to pay for the new venture which "makes it affordable".

The project team would forward its findings to local authorities for their study.

Provincial Housing Minister Cecil Herandien welcomed the professor's suggestions, but doubted whether shanty dwellers would be enthusiastic.

However, a snap survey by the Cape Argus proved him wrong.

Several homeless people said new brick houses were even smaller than most shacks.

Nombandazo Yawa, of Samora Machel informal settlement near Philippi said "It's a very good idea."

She said contractors always told people they could not build decent houses with the government housing subsidy.

But they said it was possible that the subsidy would go further when it came to upgrading existing dwellings.

Nomangeni Lutt, who lives in a backyard shack in NYZ2 in Guguletu, said new houses were so small people could not get all their belongings in.

Miriam Deseu of Khayelitsha said new homes had only one room and no toilet, and "contractors always complain that the subsidy is too little."
Herandien defends housing policy

KARIN SCHIMKE
POLITICAL WRITER

WESTERN Cape housing MEC Cecil Herandien has accused ANC leader Ebrahim Rasool of defaming him by saying he was condoning irregularities in a Macassar housing project.

Herandien was reacting yesterday to Rasool’s speech in the provincial legislature on Monday. Rasool said “The re-appointment of Cecil Herandien (as housing MEC) is cynical in the extreme, given that his role is being investigated by Judge Heath in the housing development in his constituency of Macassar where a contractor has admitted to receiving money more than one year ago, yet 18 houses stand incomplete and 19 have not yet been built, and people are being charged for water consumption at these plots.”

The Helderberg council this week decided to ask the Public Protector to look into the matter of uncompleted houses in Smarty Town in Macassar.

Herandien reacted yesterday by saying it was not the responsibility of the housing department or the housing MEC to pay the contractor.

“The subsidy money (for 106 houses in Smarty Town) was paid to a firm of attorneys, who were in turn responsible for paying the funds to the contractor. This is normal practice in cases such as these.”

He said the Helderberg municipality had investigated the matter.

Herandien said since the inception of the housing subsidy scheme in 1994, the province had provided around 110 000 new “housing opportunities.” More than 80 000 new houses had been built or were under construction.

Herandien added that the Macassar contractor had been appointed by the housing beneficiaries themselves.

“Of the 106 units, 64 have already been completed, 25 are under construction and 17 have not yet been started,” he said.
Spotlight on faulty homes

TOM HOOD

ST 4/7/99

The fate of 1 000 badly built council houses at Lost City, Mitchells Plain, will be discussed by Cape Town’s housing committee on Wednesday.

Every house in a sample of 20 was condemned for structural defects by independent surveyors, who said they should be demolished.

Lost City residents have rejected a council offer to repair the houses and demanded that:

- The council sell the houses voetstoots to the residents for between R5 000 and R15 000
- Failing this, the council should add a room with a door to each house
- Alternatively, the houses should be knocked down and rebuilt properly.

“At the least we want another room with an outside door,” Hendrina Sauls, chairwoman of the Lost City Civic Association Forum, told Cape Metro.

Over 90 percent of the residents have refused to pay rent because of the state of the houses.

A report by housing manager Daphne King said the council could be held liable if it failed to repair structural defects and would consider repairing the houses.
Overcrowding stunts Khayelitsha’s growth

Shacks occupy land meant for projects

Overcrowding in Khayelitsha is preventing economic development and informal settlements are occupying sites earmarked for projects such as the construction of a factory.

African National Congress councillors in the City of Tygerberg recently requested their council and the provincial housing department to make available vacant land in Delft South, so that people living in densely populated areas such as the areas in Khayelitsha could be moved to make way for new building projects.

The projects are aimed at creating jobs and stimulating economic growth in Khayelitsha.

Then Delft community not belong to the Tygerberg municipality but to the Western Cape Housing Development Board.

And National Party councillors have taken the stance that people can’t be placed on land that is not owned by the council or on a site where ownership is unknown.

The City of Tygerberg finance committee recently discussed who should pay for the transfer of people from Khayelitsha to another area in Delft South.

Tygerberg municipal spokesman Charles Cooper said the council had submitted proposals to the Western Cape Housing Development Board to acquire land and was waiting for a response.

The council’s housing and planning committee was involved in the proposals, although details were being kept under wraps at this stage.

Ria Stuurman, spokesperson for Housing Minister Goeke Hordern, said, “Discussions are taking place to transfer the people’s properties in the Delft area to the City of Tygerberg.”

“Once the process is underway, responsibility for managing the land in the area will become that of the Tygerberg council.”

She said the problem could be addressed more effectively once Tygerberg had taken over control of some parts of the Delft area.

The Tygerberg council will then be able to tackle all the problems in a co-ordinated way.

“We hope that a submission regarding the transfer of the properties will be tabled at the next board meeting,” she said.

The Tygerberg council had to accept that it would have to take over all the properties in its area of jurisdiction and not only select “blue-chip” pockets of land.

Walter Sisulu, African National Congress councilor and chairman of the urban planning committee, said the council had awarded a tender to a company to build a factory.

At the stage, it was not known what kind of factory would be planned.

He said the tender award was done in anticipation that the council would be able to transfer occupants from various sites to an alternative site.

Mr Ngcuka said, “We have made a passionate plea to the MEC for housing (Mr Hordern) to help find alternative accommodation for families who occupy informal parcels of land in areas where projects are planned.

Our discussions with the MEC are to acquire or access a piece of land in Delft South to put forward as a location.”

“On numerous occasions we have been asked to furnish more information and comply with new requirements.”

“I am unable to think that Khayelitsha is overcrowded and, as a result, it has become impossible to provide any kind of alternative accommodation.”

City housing logjam grows

Members carry plastic shields, tear gas, gum and batons as they demolish shacks that sprawl up overnight.

The long list of people waiting for houses makes it almost impossible for local government to meet the burgeoning housing need in the Western Cape.

Every year in the metropolitan area, 20,000 new families are added, of which 20,000 have income under R2,500 a month.

This figure excludes those who arrive from other areas.

The lack of jobs in the area works against the poor who are important with the slow moratorium.

Some councillors faced with this problem have set up land avassion teams that patrol open spaces daily.

Members carry plastic shields, tear gas, gum and batons as they demolish shacks that sprawl up overnight.

This is in order to avoid stages caused by the Prevention of Illegal Evictions and Unlawful Occupations of Land Act, which requires a court order to remove people once they are living on a shack.

Housing is the second most important challenge, after unemployment, for the Government.

Now officials from the sanCMM municipalities echo the same sentiments.

Many housing officials believe each council should set aside “reception areas” where homeless people can obtain temporary settling rights with a chance of getting a permanent home at some stage.

They also think that rudimentary services, including water, electricity and sanitation, should be provided.

But the officials want communities to co-operate by paying for these services.

Nick Broussard, head of housing at the Tygerberg council, said Cape Town should work together as a “city state” where banks and other business patrons are partners in housing delivery.

He said politicians should not interfere too much in the housing process because this had delayed progress in some cases.
Investor's court bid to evict squatters

A sectional investor is applying to the Cape High Court for an eviction order to remove hundreds of squatters from a Phillippi site earmarked for a R31-million Industrial estate.

Helmut Ernst’s attorney, Peter Pearson, is in the process of compiling documents for the application to evict the people from the 30ha site at Monwood in Phillippi.

Mr. Ernst, director of four companies, is also a representative for a group of German investors who are to be involved in industrial development on the site.

An eviction order would prohibit people from occupying the site they first set sail on in February.

Recently Mr. Ernst and Mr. Pearson approached political parties, the City of Cape Town and several other government departments for help, but without success. They have now opted to take the matter to court and get an eviction order.

At yesterday’s city council planning committee meeting, it was decided that a special meeting involving the committee and the housing committee would be set up to work out a plan of action regarding the invasion of about 2000 squatters on the Phillippi Industrial estate since February.

The planning committee is to investigate whether Monwood’s neighboring sites are viable for an industrial estate or should be reviewed for housing.

Councillor Belinda Walker, speaking to the planning committee, called for a full discussion on land invasions in Phillippi, in particular Monwood Industrial estate.

She asked that a report be prepared by council officials before the committee can be held within 30 days.

Mr. Walker said land invasions in the Phillippi area were affecting development, and the issue needed to be addressed as soon as possible.

Councillor David Ntshengane drew support in yesterday’s meeting when he said, “We must look at how to prevent land invasions.”

“In this building we talk and talk and take no action. There is an invasion as we speak at De Lijn (near Simpsons Medley squatter camp) and it is not a political issue.”

Planning committee member Paul Fox described the invasions as a “local emergency”, and said the committee must deliver a plan of action.

Meanwhile, it has emerged that council workers allegedly used municipal trucks recently to move building materials for squatters on vacant lots in Phillippi.

According to reliable sources, after an internal investigation several workers were given warnings. 
Shigella outbreak claims three lives

ERIC NTABAZAULA

AN outbreak of shigella, a particularly virulent form of dysentery, has occurred on the Cape Flats and has caused the deaths of at least three children in areas where the bucket system is used.

Dr Ivan Toms, medical officer of health in the City of Cape Town, confirmed the outbreak of the disease.

"There was a recent outbreak of shigella which caused the deaths of children who were exposed to human faeces. There was a high incidence of the disease in areas which were still using the bucket system," he said.

Toms said that the bucket system resulted in unpleasant odours and flies which spread diseases.

Professor of Paediatrics at Red Cross Children's Hospital, Alan Sive, described shigella as a bacteria that causes dysentery — an infection of the intestinal tract causing severe diarrhoea tainted with blood and mucus.

He said it caused an associated disease which affects the blood and kidneys, causing children to develop kidney failure and for them to bleed heavily. These conditions can lead to death.

However, he said not all patients with shigella developed kidney failure and bleeding. He said the disease attacked adults as well, but children were more at risk.

"We had a recent outbreak of the disease at the Red Cross Children's Hospital and interestingly, the majority of the patients were from Gugulethu."

See Insight Page 2

'I can't say how many people died'

"I was told my child has developed this disease because we are staying in a dirty area full of germs. I'm very worried because I have heard that the same disease can kill a child."

There are 50 other buckets scattered around Khayelitsha, while the Cape Town City Council services 600 buckets for residents from Vygieskraal, KTC, Tambo Square, Mponga Square, Mkhonto Square, Mpetha Square and Boys' Town.

Toms said: "The city council would like to move to a point where all residents are provided with flushing toilets as the bucket system is dangerous."

See Insight Page 3
Battle to restore services

A GROUP of unemployed residents from Gugulethu have vowed to continue their week-long disruption of services by the Cape Town City Council. ERIC NTABAZALILA reports.

THE Cape Town City Council and Sanco are fighting to bring services back to Gugulethu after a week-long disruption by a group of unemployed residents who threatened to disrupt the services unless they were employed permanently by the council.

But despite efforts to avert the situation, the group which claims to represent more than 500 unemployed people from Gugulethu, vowed not to stop their action until they have been permanently employed.

The group started disrupting services at the Ikapa Town Council at the old Fedeza on Monday after meeting Mike Marsden, executive director of municipal services at the Cape Town City Council last week. They gave him an ultimatum to employ them permanently by Monday or they would disrupt the services.

On Monday, they started dumping rubbish and burnt tyres at the entrance of the city council premises every day, preventing council workers from entering the premises.

The group went to see Marsden at his city council offices last Wednesday and demanded to be employed.

Marsden said yesterday that he sympathised with the unemployed residents, "but we are not going to be threatened by any group to provide jobs. I met them and explained to them that if they disrupt services in the area, the whole community would suffer and they would be held responsible for the disruption of services. We are not an employment agency and these people were not working for the city council before."

Sanco provincial chairperson Mzimai Sonto said "We believe they have a right to demand their right to have a job, but they should not do so in a manner that would deprive the community of the basic services. We do not at any stage undermine their demands to have jobs, but it is in the interests of all that services be rendered to the community."

Sanco was planning to meet the group and discuss the situation yesterday, but had not been able to establish who the group's leadership was.

Thulalakhe Mbholho, who spoke on behalf of the group yesterday, said their actions should in a way be applauded as they were trying to refrain from doing crime.

"Many of us are tired of being beaten up by taxi drivers because of being involved in criminal activities. We are tired of going to jail because of stealing. What we are demanding is to make an honest living. We are asked to pay for services but we are not given jobs. How are we expected to pay for such services and feed ourselves and our families if we don't work? We are aware what we are doing is going to affect our community, but we are appealing to people to understand our plight."

Marsden said he had been in contact with councillors in the area and his staff to inform them about the progress of the situation. Marsden said the city council has referred the matter to the police to remove the group as he believed the situation could resolve next week.
Provincial Masakhane award for Riversdale

RIVERSDALE has won the annual Masakhane Top Achiever Town award, beating other Western Cape towns such as Vredendal, Wolseley, Blaauwberg, City of Tygerberg, Oosternberg, Ceres, Wellington, Oudtshoorn and Worcester.

The Riversdale town council was presented yesterday with a cheque for R100 000 by Local Government Minister Pierre Uys.

There was a set of criteria participants had to comply with for the Masakhane award, which includes development and service delivery in communities. This award is to encourage community involvement in improving communities. This award is to encourage community involvement in improving communities.

Chris Taute, the mayor of Riversdale, said the money would be used to educate people about Masakhane — about the payment of services.

"We entered this because we wanted to uplift the standard of living in our community," Taute said Riversdale won the competition because it had taken a more humane approach. It had not forced people to pay for services, but instead involved all those in arrears in community-based projects.

Riversdale will now represent the Western Cape in the national Masakhane Awards competition.
Cape Town faces summer water restrictions - and rural districts are on the verge of being declared disaster areas more than halfway through a winter that has so far been the driest of the decade.

The Cape Metropolitan Council has asked people to use water sparingly as the main dams supplying the city are considerably lower than last year.

This week's light rains made little impression on the growing water crisis in Cape Town and failed to reach large parts of the southern Cape where farmers are suffering crop losses.

The Western Cape provincial administration is considering declaring parts of the southern Cape such as Hottentots Holland as drought areas.

Ann Singles, head of the CMC's water department, asked people to use water sparingly now to help prevent restrictions later.

Mr Singles said it was still too early to decide on restrictions because the council usually took that decision at the end of October. But he told Saturday Argus that if consumers were careful it would be possible to reduce consumption by 20%.

The major dams supplying Cape Town are the Steenbras Lower, which is 33.4% full (compared with 95.7% this time last year); Veldvlei, which is 85.8% full (66.0% last year), and Theewaterskloof, which is 73.9% full (69.4% last year).

Dam levels on Table Mountain are especially low compared with last year, but Wemmershoek and Steenbras Upper have bucked the trend and are fuller than a year ago.

Despite a very dry, hot summer last night, unusually warm weather for the past weeks has caused fruit trees to blossom prematurely, fuelling fears of global warming caused by the greenhouse effect.

The rains in the northern Cape recently have been too late to save barley, canola and wheat crops.

Embattled farmers in many areas in the northern Cape will not be able to harvest enough grain to make ends meet as what has been described as the area's lowest yield in 20 years.

"It's an absolute disaster," said Han Schoeman, head of the provincial agricultural department.

Mr Schoeman said the rains had come too late for the grain farmers, and the Western Cape's agricultural department was gathering information on to assess the extent of the disaster area.

Rainfall in the mentioned areas such as Hottentots Holland, 13% of crops are expected to be lost because of poor rainfall.

If disaster areas are declared, committees will be set up to assess farmers' financial needs.

Hugo Campbell, manager of the agricultural affairs for the Deciduous Fruit Producers' Trust, said producers were under severe financial pressure.

Fruit trees needed low temperatures to become dormant, but higher than usual winter temperatures meant trees were blossoming early. There was a fair number of lower quality fruit.

In Cape Town the question on everyone's lips is what has happened to Cape Town's winter weather. Experts say the dry spell is comparable to the drought of the 1980s that devastated agriculture during the Great Depression.

But Bruce Hewton, of the Climatology Laboratory at the University of Cape Town, said people were quick to jump to conclusions based on short-term analysis.

Although this year's winter started late and last summer was dry, the unusual weather was not totally unconnected, he said.

The Cape Town Weather Bureau reports that temperatures over the past year have been on average 7°C warmer than usual and rainfall considerably lower than average.
Cape Town's hostels of shame

Abandoned relics of apartheid era provide a life of squalor for thousands of indigent families

TOM HOOD and BASALWA SHOTA

A DAMNING report on private and council-owned hostels near Cape Town's city centre has lifted the lid on the squalor and dangerously unhygienic conditions that many of the 11,000 residents live in.

Hidden in Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu, most of the 117 hostels are relics of the apartheid era's labour policies and have been abandoned by companies as squatters moved in.

For an average R7.50 rent, up to 16 people share a toilet, 23 share a kitchen, 22 share a washbasin, 12 share a tap and up to three people share a bed.

The dismal conditions were uncovered when Cape Town's housing committee ordered an investigation.

Mondesela Ngekuna, 30, shares a tiny room with 14 other people — including her husband and eight children — at a Langa hostel.

She said she was concerned about her children's health. "This is unhygienic and no place to raise children. But we don't have a choice. There are about 60 people who share six rooms here and when my husband and I go to work we have to rely on them to look after the kids," said Ngekuna, adding that they queued "like ants" to use the single toilet and the cold shower.

Mondesela Mzamata, 37, who moved to the Cape Provincial Administration hostel in Nyanga 12 years ago from Transkei, said residents were prepared to pay rent but wanted the provision of electricity and services.

Langa hostel dwellers said this week their living conditions were worse than in the squatter camps.

Andile Mabuthela, 59, spent months in hospital after contracting pneumonia from living in a damp room next to a toilet.

His roommate, Humphrey Shikana, 59, who became ill and suffers from severe respiratory problems.

"The room is damp and mouldy, the small from the toilet drains inside and more than 50 people share six rooms, toilet and a kitchen," said Shikana, who has lived there for 12 years.

"I can't bring my wife and children from the Transkei to live in such an environment — I'd rather go to the squatter camps where life is better. We don't even have a shower or a proper kitchen," he said.

Only 12 of the 96 hostels inspected in the municipal survey have access to hot water during the cold Cape winter and only three have baths.

The overcrowded rooms have as many as four beds in a 3m by 3m space. Sometimes three families live in a 2m by 4m room intended for three labourers.

But, having been abandoned by private companies, the hostels are no longer regarded as anyone's responsibility.

Most of the hostels were built about 50 years ago and many of the owners went out of business years ago. Others simply walked away as the hostel dwellers left and squatters moved in.

Squatters have also built over 200 shacks next to the hostels for their relatives.

Only 19 companies which still own hostels have been traced. Two of the largest are Eskom and the Cape Provincial Administration.

"Eskom spokesman John Germishuizen said Eskom was nominally the owner of a hostel it built in Nyanga. But the lease expired in 1992 and in practice the hostel belonged to the council. Only six of the tenants were Eskom employees but all rents were paid to the council."

DIRT BOX: Hostel resident Mondesela Mzamata, 37, stands amid garbage outside one of Cape Town's forgotten hostels.

Picture: DAVID HENNING.
INNOVATIVE SCHEME FOR NEW HOME-OWNERS

Poor set to get ‘show’ homes

AT LEAST 200 to 300 poor families will be new homeowners before Christmas, thanks to an innovative new housing development from the Cape Town Community Housing Company, writes PRISCILLA SINGH.

The first show village — specially built and set up for prospective owners to see what they could afford — was visited in Woodlands, Mitchells Plain yesterday by Cape Town mayor Nomanda Mieke and Anglican Archbishop Nonjongkulu Ndungane, who chairs the scheme.

The housing company is a partnership between the Cape Town and the National Housing Finance Corporation, which has been set up to achieve additional “top-up” funding towards people’s houses and to open a line of credit in the form of personal or microloans to those who can afford it.

Those able to save R50 — the equivalent of the existing monthly council charges — for an initial period of six months will qualify for the council’s top-up which will be on average R5 000.

The end product will be bigger and better quality housing to qualifying beneficiaries, said Ndungane.

The show village comprises five houses of varying sizes and designs and the various house types are related to affordability profiles and the applicant’s demonstrable ability to repay the company over the minimum four-year period. The minimum repayment for a house ranges from R50 to R350.

At the launch in May, Ndungane said that having spoken out in many public forums about the levels of poverty and abysmal living conditions under which most of the city’s citizens lived, the birth of the company was a particularly joyous occasion.

The houses start from about 24 square metres, which is the product available to those who qualify for the subsidy, 40 square metres available to those who are able to save a small amount every month (R50 for council charges), a 52 square metre unit for those who are able to repay R100 per month plus the R50 for council charges, a 64 square metre unit which will be repaid at R250 a month, and then a 64 square metre house for those able to afford a repayment of R350 a month.

Company chief executive officer Mervyn Breitman said the repayment level will vary from project to project depending on size constraints, cost of finance, interest rates and inflation.

“There will also be costs such as electricity, and a factor to cover aspects such as insurance and maintenance of these units,” Breitman said.

To qualify for the council’s contribution to the subsidy, prospective home-owners will have to build up a record of saving.

As a shareholder, the City of Cape Town will be the force behind the Housing Company and ensure the delivery of houses, while a private company, KMMT Brey, will oversee the commercial and financial risks.

City manager Andrew Boraine said he believed there were about 8 000 applicants already wanting to be part of the new scheme.

“We haven’t even marketed the scheme yet, and thousands of people have filled in forms. A lot of people do qualify and have demonstrated that they can save and we know the scheme will work,” Boraine said.

The first batch of applicants will be informed in about six weeks whether they were successful in getting a house, which is scheduled to be completed by December. By that time they would have also built up a substantial savings account to prove they can pay for the houses, Breitman said.

At the end of the required four-year holding period, provided that all personal or micro-loans have been paid, the company will pass the title deeds to the beneficiaries.

“While the initial beneficiaries will qualify after a six-month savings period, the fact that we are currently limited to 5 000 top-up opportunities a year means the length of stay in the savings queue will increase over time,” Ndungane said.
Show houses for the homeless get the thumbs-up

MYRIAM GOWIE
New Republic

Thousands of Cape Town's homeless are in line to get homes after municipal and religious officials gave five show houses in Mitchell's Plain the thumbs up for both size and quality yesterday.

The Cape Town Community Housing Company show houses were built as part of an innovative partnership between the City of Cape Town, communities, financial institutions and a board of directors.

The scheme aims to address the housing shortage, which is one of the biggest challenges facing local government. The partnership was formed to speed up the delivery of houses and give low-income families in the city access to finance.

Cape Town mayor Hazel Dos Santos, Archbishop Njongintsha Ndungane, city council manager Andrew Berme and the council's executive committee chairperson Suhana Moonsar inspected the show houses and later described them as "good houses".

The successful inspection probably means the go-ahead will be given for the construction of 5,000 quality houses a year.

The city group's budget of R500

lation towards the scheme and buyers who qualify for the project stand a chance of getting R5,000 to support their purchase.

But this support will only be available to those who demonstrate the ability to save an acceptable amount.

Mr Berme said it was the council's top priority to get poor people housed and the scheme was created to give them a better product.

He said it was up to people to choose what houses they needed and those who wanted bigger houses should start saving soon.

The council, as a shareholder, is to ensure the delivery of houses while the housing company will oversee commercial and financial risks and other technical matters during the building phase.

Ms Ndungane and community deputy for houses needed to commit themselves and start saving now. She said this would be an indication that they would pay for their houses.

So far, about 10,000 people have joined the scheme. Houses range from 40m² upwards and the housing company will also help create small affordable homes.

Those interested in joining the scheme can go to their local council housing estate offices.

The scheme is expected to expand to the whole Metropolitan area.

The right stuff: Cape Town Community Housing Company executive chairperson Mervyn Bregman, Archbishop Njongintsha Ndungane and Cape Town mayor Hazel Dos Santos inspect the show houses in Mitchell's Plain.
PROJECT DOOMED FROM START

R3.9m to rescue Lost City

ONE THOUSAND crummy houses constructed by the Cape Town City Council at Lost City in Mitchell’s Plain are to be repaired. Consumer Writer GUSTAV THIEL reports.

The City of Cape Town’s top official, Salim Mowzer, has called for a system of accountability to be put in place to make members of previous city councils pay for their inability to deliver proper housing to the poor.

Mowzer, Exco Chairperson, made the call subsequent to a decision by the council to make R3.9 million available from the Social Development Capital Fund for the repair of houses in the Lost City area of Tafelsig. The city housing project, which was initiated in 1992, went badly wrong.

In April this year, independent assessors found problems with the houses—ranging from cracked walls, faulty foundations, water seepage and damp floors to leaking roofs.

The council decided not to demolish the houses, but to accept responsibility for the damage and, according to Daphne King, the existing housing stock manager of the council, they are in the process of putting the project out for tender. The housing committee recommended on Wednesday that BKS Ltd be appointed as supervising engineers on the project.

One thousand houses were constructed during 1992 and 1993, but the houses were built on raft foundations which were inadequate.

Mowzer told the Cape Times yesterday that the council’s decision to approve the recommendation of the joint housing and finance committee, which met on Wednesday, was to “one of the most historic decisions taken by the council.” We basically decided to say that it was the city’s fault that the housing project in Lost City went wrong and that we are going to do everything in our power to rectify the situation.

“IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY as an ANC council to make sure that we deliver to the poor and this decision proves our commitment.”

He added that he believed the current state of housing in the province, which includes the Lost City project, was the result of “the inactivity and attitude of the DP council which was in place at the time, to deliver proper housing to the poor.”

“We are stuck with a situation that was basically the previous council’s fault and I think we will have to look at ways to make those people financially accountable for their actions.”

Mowzer said the DP chairperson of the housing committee in 1992, Neil Ross, and Isobel Edelstein, who is now the deputy mayor in the Metropolitan Council, should specifically be made to answer for their inaction in delivering houses to the poor.

In response to Mowzer’s allegations, Ross said “he is talking crap” and added that “Mowzer should check his facts before speaking out.”

“What he fails to understand, it seems, is that we were dependent on the province at the time for money to build houses for the poor and the province decided to cut the governmental subsidy for houses.”

Ross added that “even in our darkest days we managed to build more houses for the poor than Mowzer is managing today.”

“The money that the council will use to repair the houses in Tafelsig is money that was gained from the sale of rented bungalows on Clifton beach, so in effect Mowzer’s council is using money that we made available.”

Hans Smit, who was director of project management services in the council in 1992 and is currently director of housing in the South Peninsula Municipality, also said yesterday he believed the provincial government, under NP housing ministers Cecile Herandien and Gerald Morkel, had more to do with the fact that delivery of low-cost housing to the poor did not occur the way it should have.

“The houses in Tafelsig were built on raft foundations because there simply wasn’t enough money to afford different kinds of foundations. Our engineers did not find serious problems at the time with the foundations, but the area where the houses are situated is particularly exposed to strong winds and erosion,” Smit said.

The council’s housing committee admitted this week that the project was doomed from the start. The development proposal steering committee said that at the start of the project, they had had reservations about using raft foundations.

In late 1993, before the legal tenants could take possession of the houses, 200 of them were illegally occupied. By then, they were eventually vacated, damage amounting to R900,000 was done.
W Cape faces blitz on housing subsidy rip-off merchants

Heath unit wants go-ahead to investigate

ADRIAN HADDLAND
POLITICAL EDITOR

A big crackdown on widespread fraud in the Government's housing subsidy scheme has been launched in the Western Cape.

The initiative, a joint operation by the housing ministry and the Heath anti-corruption unit, is part of a national effort to bring thousands of individuals and hundreds of development companies to book for the abuse of housing subsidies.

The Heath unit confirmed that it has applied for a presidential proclamation extending its inquiries to the Western Cape.

It said a number of allegations involving housing subsidy fraud had come to light in the province.

Evidence from other provinces, where the crackdown has already begun in earnest, have revealed the scale of the problem. In KwaZulu Natal alone, 85 000 individual applications are being scrutinised with about 40 housing projects.

In Gauteng, almost 150 projects and more than 100 individuals are being investigated.

The Government pays a subsidy of R15 000 to people wanting to own a home for the first time. It is aimed at the poor and social groups.

If successful, it will mean that the completion of houses does not happen in a timely manner.

Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele earlier this month told the committee he was aware of the extent of the fraud being unearthed since investigations began last year.

A ministry report has been forwarded to the office of President Mbeki, who has taken responsibility for co-ordinating a national anti-corruption strategy.

Subsidy fraud was said to be taking place in a number of ways, said Ms Mthembu-Mahanyele.

Some individuals who had received subsidies, for example, did not meet the criteria. These applicants had submitted false information, including, for example, the ownership of another house.

Cases of people with several identities receiving subsidies in a number of provinces had also been unearthed.

Developers who had received subsidies had to have either completed houses, or failed to complete houses, but not built them all, built them to an inaccurate standard or charged extortionate fees in some cases up to R5 000.

The Heath unit has also alerted the ministry about conveyancers duplicating IDs and applying for subsidies on behalf of beneficiaries who eventually do not get the money.

The conveyancers are given bribes of between R1 000 and R1 500 and the rest of the money is pocketed by conveyancers.

"The ministry is looking at the pattern and has worked out how to deal with the loopholes," said Ms Mthembu-Mahanyele.

A helpline would be established and she had begun to appeal on radio to subsidy applicants to report illegal activities.

"We are determined to root out the corruption in all its forms," she said.

"The ministry would be improving its subsidy assessment process. A computer database in the national housing office would be revamped to include a tracking system to identify fraudulent applications by including thumbprint checks. Monitoring of progress at housing sites would be beefed up.

Until recently, developers have to receive a "happy letter" from subsidy beneficiaries stating that they are satisfied with the completed work before they are paid.

The manager of the Heath unit's Gauteng investigation team, Tinus Rheeder, said: "They (the ministry) can do more... to get the departments to act in the right manner.

"The whole scheme is aimed at the poor, but there are guys getting rich out of this system and others who are losing out on getting a house."

Ms Mthembu-Mahanyele said prosecutions of subsidy fraudsters had begun to gather pace and many more could be expected in the coming months.
Bid to write off arrears gets nod

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The South Peninsula Council has agreed to approach the provincial MEC for housing to have the arrears on house payments for the 400 residents of St Montague Village, Lavender Hill, written off.

The council has already agreed to reduce the cost of the houses by R10 000 because of poor workmanship.

A delegation of residents of St Montague Village, Lavender Hill, heard a recent meeting of the South Peninsula Council reduce the value of their homes.

At last week's meeting the residents said they wanted all the arrears written off as well as the house prices reduced.

A report on the debate that appeared in the Cape Argus on Thursday July 29 failed to mention the arrears decision which the residents consider a major breakthrough.

The error is regretted.

AKG 218199
Council ‘shamed’ over land for shelter

PETER GOOSE

The South Peninsula
Municipality should be ashamed that it cannot find a suitable site in Grassy Park for a shelter for homeless people, says Grassy Park councillor Philip Bam.

Mr Bam said at the council’s monthly meeting last week that residents had objected so strongly to a haven in Grassy Park that the council had not dared to make any municipal-owned land available.

“We have failed the homeless people of Grassy Park because of our inability to come to grips with this problem,” he said.

“It’s a sad thing, but it’s what the community says. Now it’s our job to get the community involved to show that we do care. It’s a shameful day for this council, a shame on all of us,” he said.

In stark contrast, African National Congress councillor Vernon Seymour, in whose ward part of Grassy Park falls, seconded the recommendation to turn down the shelter application for council-owned land.

The ANC’s Duck Meter said the council had been too passive over this issue.

The New National Party’s Neville Riley said the council owned a lot of land in Grassy Park and must take the initiative to organise a land swap for suitable, privately-owned land in Victoria Road that has been turned down.

Mr Riley was backed by the Democratic Party’s Herbert Syre and the New NP’s John Mathies.

Independent councillor Nicki Holderhess said that if the council was going to turn down the Haven’s application for council land she would not support it.

The DP’s Bill Stubbe said the civic associations needed to take responsibility for finding solutions in their communities for the vagrants in their areas.

Many civic associations were only concerned with ‘Numblys’ (not in my back yard) and did little to find solutions for destitute people.
Housing subsidy plan led to disappointment

HOMELESS people of Mbekweni who hoped government housing subsidies would give them homes wait while the builders argue ERIC NTABAZALULA reports.

WHEN the government introduced the housing subsidy scheme to alleviate homelessness in 1997, many homeless Mbekweni residents thought they would finally be able to own a home.

But now, three years later, their hopes of ever becoming homeowners are fading, and the provincial housing board has threatened to allocate the money for the housing project to some other things if it is not used.

The problem arose when sub-contractor Paul Avenue of Palm Builders and contractor told the residents at a public meeting that he could build 60 houses for the same cost as the 270 houses proposed by the Port council.

Bruce Kammenezer, a former councillor and now a member of parliament, said that last year the council decided to award Atlas Civil Contractors the contract to develop the area called Project 22.

Kammenezer said the council had decided to all 86922 a house to enable the builders to build proper houses as it felt it could not let the residents stay in "water" structures.

"We consulted the community and explained everything about Project 4 to them," he said.

"When somebody said that they could build larger houses for the same amount of money, we felt we owed it to the community to discuss the matter with them.

"We had not reservations and our technical people wanted to look out!" he said. "We could build so many houses. They obviously chose the 4001 houses," he said.

He said that the residents did not want to move into the area, where the houses were to be built, and their only concern was to move into a house.

Kammenezer said that the council had decided to build 60 houses for the same amount of money, but that the residents did not want to move into the area, where the houses were to be built.

"We have no problem with the residents moving into the area, but we cannot provide them with proper houses," said Atlas Civil Contractor's housing manager Deva Rinck.

He said that the residents were concerned, but it was impossible to build a house for so little.

"And we are confusing people and playing with their expectations. The material to build a house is about R1 000 and the labour would be about R1 000 and that brings the money to R2 000. He is just confusing people who are desperate to get houses," said Rinck.

Paul mayor Mike Mbeki, who fears for his life after being accused of stalling the housing development, said that the meetings were being organised to convince the residents that Avenue's offer was "unreal".

"We have tried our best to explain the benefits of this project. It is impossible to build bigger houses with that amount of money. What we have now is that we might lose this money to another project in another area. If it is not used and the homeless people would be the ones to suffer," Mbeki said.

Shack-building rate falling in metropole

WHILE the number of shack dwellers in informal settlements across the Cape metropole has tripled in five years, the rate of increase was slowing down, according to a city council study.

The study was commissioned to establish the location, number, growth rate, and nature of informal settlements in each of the metropolitan local council areas.

The total number of shacks increased by 40% in the past 20 years, from 26,395 units in 1993 to 59,942 in 1996.

"This has since slowed to under 10% annual growth," the study said.

The study showed a compounded 1% increase in the number of shacks overall, with the Heidelberg municipality showing a growth of 2%, excluding回顾, and the Blouberg municipality 2% over the 64-month period.

The chairman of the council's Planning, Environment and Housing Committee, Brian Watkynns, said the predominant growth appeared to be around the oldest informal settlements such as Brown's Farm, RTJ, Canowood and southern Khayelitsha, and the poorer formal areas such as Langa and Goodwood.

"From this, we can infer that social housing is still prevalent over economic imperatives," Watkynns said.

The council is expected to extend the existing study to include backyard shacks and to continue monitoring trends when new aerial photographs become available in 2001.

Parliament to hail forgotten heroines of the 'struggle'

Parliament will tomorrow pay tribute to women who were active in the struggle.

The women's day celebration is being held in Cape Town this week.

"These women are not the famous heroes we have heard so much about," said a resolution that will be moved by the ANC and the Democratic Party.

"They are the women who struggled against the Apartheid system and who were not publicly acknowledged because of their gender," the resolution said.

"We need to remember that without these women, the struggle would have been impossible," it went on.

The resolution was moved by ANC MP Abigail Gachanja, who said that the women who struggled against white rule were not taken for granted.

"Women have never been in the forefront of the struggle," she said.

"It is time we remembered that in every battle, not just political, women have played an important role."
Talks help Cape employment projects to get back on track

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — At least one of the southern Cape Working for Water projects stopped last month because of poor financial controls and a lack of productivity is to reopen after talks with local authorities, Water Affairs Minister Ronnie Kasrils said yesterday.

Kasrils said a late night meeting with the mayors of the three affected towns — Mossel Bay; George and Knysna — led to an accord which Mossel Bay had signed already. The other two would follow after informing workers in their Working for Water projects. The government currently spends about R120m on hundreds of such projects across the country which provide poverty relief for about 24 000 people.

Kasrils said the reasons for the closure of the three projects last month were serious overspending in the first three months of the financial year, a refusal by workers to accept reductions in work time or numbers in the face of budget cuts, poor productivity and discipline, insufficient contributions from local authorities and inadequate financial controls.

He said the mayors, Michael Carelse of Mossel Bay, Mèlford Ntsimphu of George and Alan Koek of Knysna, had agreed to lift financial contributions and accept reductions in the number of people who could be added by the programmes. As soon as the other two signed the agreement, with workers' support, those programmes would also be reopened.
Rebels halt building at Vrygrond site

Court slaps ban on group

PETER GOOSEN
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The South Peninsula Municipality has obtained an urgent High Court interdict preventing a dissident minority group from holding up the construction of 1 600 houses for the families of the Muizenberg informal settlement, Vrygrond.

The group, the Vrygrond Community Organisation, has about 120 members in a community of about 5 000 and has been at odds with the legitimate leadership of Vrygrond and the South Peninsula for years.

Members allegedly used sharpened sticks to threaten construction workers on Wednesday, forcing work on the site to be stopped.

The construction group, Ubuntu, was awarded the R30-million contract and Cape Premier Gerald Morkel handed the 52-hectare site to the company on May 17.

Late on Thursday Mr Justice Comrie interdicted the organisation, its members or Jeremiah Thile and nine others from interfering or obstructing any construction activities at the site or intimidating, harassing, assaulting or interfering with any employees of the municipality or Ubuntu.

The organization and its members were also ordered not to damage, destroy or in any way interfere with the property of the municipality or Ubuntu, or approach within 100m of the site office or construction works.

In a sworn affidavit, the resident engineer at the site, Johann Joubert, told how Vrygrond resident Jeremiah Thile, apparent leader of the breakaway organisation, used a loud hailer to summon people to a public meeting in an open field on Wednesday.

About 120 people attended. After a memorandum was read by Mr Thile, the crowd marched on the construction site, singing and chanting, and carrying sharpened sticks, brandished in a "threatening manner".

"Mr Thile said if we did not stop work they would stop it for us," Mr Joubert said.

The south's executive director of housing services, Hans Smit, said Mr Thile and the other nine, all residents, purported to represent the Vrygrond community under the banner of the Vrygrond Community Organisation.

"Such representation is disputed by the majority of the inhabitants of Vrygrond and the Vrygrond Community Development Trust."

The Vrygrond Community Development Trust is supported by more than 90% of Vrygrond residents.

The municipality entered into a partnership with the trust and in 1996 the Vrygrond Working Group of councillors, officials and Vrygrond representatives was set up.

The social compact between the trust and the SPM breaks new ground in that all the plots for businesses and community purposes will be transferred to the trust. They will probably be sold to provide funds for further empowering work by the trust.

Vrygrond, established in 1942 for trek fishermen, is the oldest informal settlement in the Western Cape.

When Mr Morkel handed the land to the contractors, a key member of the trust, Trevor Silyear, said "The way the community has moved from outright suspicion of the local authority to a partnership with the SPM is an amazing, heartwarming story."

"This partnership and the way it has delivered to the community should be a model for the rest of South Africa."
Homeowners aim to tackle council on housing

PETER GOOSSEN
Special Correspondent

Angry residents of St Montague Village, Lavender Hill, are to attend a meeting of the South Peninsula’s Housing Committee tomorrow in a bid to air their grievances.

This follows the cancellation of a meeting last week, at which the residents were planning to discuss their problems with their councillor, James Petersen.

The residents allege Mr Petersen cancelled the meeting, scheduled to be held at the Lavender Hill clinic, without informing them, so they had turned up for nothing.

The basis of their grievances is that the South Peninsula Council has agreed to drop the value of the village’s 400 “starter” houses to R10,000 because of bad workmanship and defects. But the residents of the about 400 “full houses” claim that their houses are in just as bad a state and are demanding that the discounted price of R10,000 apply to them as well.

They also want the council to raise with the provincial government the question of cancelling their arrears, as is being done for the “starter” home residents.

Residents’ spokesman Melvyn Seegers said they were contacted by the municipality’s chairwoman of housing, Bealah Smith, who said the committee was aware of the residents’ problems and no useful purpose would be served by meeting them again.

“But we will attend the housing committee meeting, and try to be heard,” Mr Seegers said.
South spends R21m but still no houses

IRENE WEST
MUNICIPAL WRITER

THE South Peninsula Municipality’s housing services committee has spent more than R21 million a year in the past two years, but not a single low-cost house has been handed over to the poor.

The money was mainly used to pay the salaries of 173 staff, many of them at the housing offices, and for the maintenance of the council’s 8,000 rental properties.

But Hans Smit, the executive director of housing services at the municipality, said the first new houses would be handed over within the next fortnight and by Christmas more than 1,100 would be occupied.

Yesterday officials from the municipality ordered the demolition of an extension to a shack on land set aside for the development of low-cost housing at Vrygrond.

The owner of the property, fed up with waiting for a new home, decided last week to build onto his shack but soon found that his efforts had been in vain when council officials moved in to demolish it.

The shack was extended again over the weekend and council again ordered the extension demolished, leading to a confrontation between members of the community and officials.

The matter, which could have turned ugly, was settled amicably.

In the first hand-over of houses by the municipality, 120 shack dwellers at Vrygrond will be given the keys to their new homes soon.

"There are 3,680 houses under construction — including 1,600 at Vrygrond, 700 at Westlake, 800 at Lavender Hill East and 480 in Ocean View," Smit said.

"Next April we will begin work on 2,000 homes at Pelikan Park."

There were also many smaller projects in the pipeline, Smith said.

"This year we spent R38.4m of the government funding and another R3.4m from the Cape Metropolitan Council on low-cost and affordable houses."

Unless there are mitigating factors — such as at Westlake where families live in poor conditions — priority is given to people on the council’s waiting lists.
Malay Quarter is reborn

BO-KAAP, the historic area west of Buitengracht Street and north of Wale Street in central Cape Town, is to lose its Afrikaans title and return to its former name — the Malay Quarter.

The Forum for Malay Culture, which canvassed many of the area's 12 000 residents and lobbied for more than a year to have the name changed, will celebrate the event on Heritage Day, September 24, during the One City Festival.

Bo-Kaap was originally an area where white artisans were housed during the 18th century. Later the Malays — people of Indonesian descent brought to South Africa as political exiles or slaves — moved in. The area is now 90% Muslim.

The area boasts the oldest mosque in the Southern hemisphere. In 1794 Imam Abdullah Ibn Kadi Abdon Sallam (also known as Tuan Guru) established the Auwal Mosque in Dorp Street. The building was originally a warehouse. There are now five mosques in the area, all used daily for prayer and teaching.

Bo-Kaap is also home to the largest concentration of pre-1840 architecture in Cape Town.

In the years leading up to the scrapping of the Group Areas Act, whites began moving back into the area and turning the historic terraces of Victorian and Georgian cottages into upmarket homes.

The area's spectacular views over the bay, its proximity to the city and relatively cheap property prices attracted many white people working in central Cape Town.

But Bo-Kaap also has a few skeletons in its cupboards. Drug trafficking was rife in the early 90s and police were called in to stop the Mandrax, dagga, cocaine and LSD trade.

The ceremony to celebrate the rebirth of the Malay Quarter will take place outside the Bo-Kaap Museum in Upper Wale Street from 5 30pm on September 24.
Owners of defective houses fight for relief

NORMAN JOSEPH
STAFF REPORTER

There appears to be hope for hundreds of homeowners who live in defective houses in Grass Park, Ottery and St Montague Village near Lavender Hill.

Provincial housing Minister Cecile Herandien met a delegation representing homeowners from the three areas and pledged to look into the issues of the houses' initial selling price and the status of arrears.

Suurie Botes, Mr Hendriksen's spokeswoman, said: "In conjunction with the Department of Housing it will be decided which issues fall under Mr Herandien's authority, and which will have to be referred to the national minister or the Provincial Housing Board."

"Taking into account all facts available, a decision will be made regarding relief, if any, that can be provided."

The list of complaints about the houses included cracked walls and damp seeping through the walls and floors.

The South Peninsula council recently agreed to reduce the selling price of poorly-structured houses in St Montague Village. The council slashed R10 000 off the initial selling price of about R39 000.

Richard Arends, chairman of the Lotus River, Ottery, Grass Park Residents' Association said the organisation was hopeful that the issue would be sorted out.
A lifelong dream of a home of their own.

Each year 20 000 new families join the 2.8 million Capetonians already living here and local authorities appear unable to house the ever-growing population. Judy Damson reports on their frustrations and the state of housing delivery in the province.

The Lwandle/Nomzamo informal settlement on the outskirts of Goodwood's Bay was peppered with social ills – crime, disease, brutality, unemployment and abuse. It began about 20 years ago, when hundreds of coloured and African families mixed with everything they owned and settled on the wastelands of the Lwandle squatter area.

They were not welcome, but the newcomers were anxious to find stamina. Their crowded houses and social networks had been augmented three times, and they vowed it would not happen again.

After they were promised that they would be moved and again, they were promised that they would be moved and again, they were promised that they would be moved and again, they were promised that they would be moved and again.

This, however, was just the beginning of their housing frustration and now the race for better living conditions is on between the residents of Lwandle and Nomzamo.

Community activist Squencer said that the dream of having a postal address was the only thing that bound the two different communities, and could provide and end to the longstanding social issues created by the housing situation.

All they need is a fair opportunity to obtain homes and jobs to keep them – Squencer said. But with a housing backlog of over 50 000 and the addition of 20 000 new families every year, the dream of a home for everyone is still far away.

Director of Housing for the Western Cape, Seymour Bedserman said that the only way anyone was going to get a house from the state was through a housing subsidy.

Worth R16 000, a housing subsidy buys a plot, services the land and builds a 27/8 m² house. Maintenance and upgrading is left to the family. Although most of the Western Cape is flooded with money, the demand is not met.

This province received R1 3 million for housing, only enough for 3 000 families.

Of the country's money, only 25% goes into national housing and the rest is spent on community programmes.

So who gets a home? Firstly, housing delivery is based on an application-driven process for subsidies, meeting the demand instead of need.

"This means that very little housing can be delivered in the Cape Metropolitan Area," Bedserman said. "Many outside the metropolitan area, like in George, are going well without housing."

Bedserman said that there are many cases of squatter camps and giving them homes seemed to have no effect.

"Last year 8 000 families were taken out of the squatter settlements and became genuine house owners. But before we knew it, the gaps left by those families were filled."

"We don't seem to be making any real progress," Bedserman said.

A recent study has shown that each year 10 000 new individuals move into the city, mainly from the Transkei and Eastern Cape, and moved into existing settlements, filling those gaps while looking for work.

Other problems associated with providing formal housing are the animals of its beneficiaries who are largely unemployed. Some prefer to sell their homes and move back into the township or build shacks onto their new homes which they then rent to other squatters.

Another headache is the rapidly increasing crime wave triggered by drug addiction.

A housing plan that appears to be working is the continuous SLP Project in Nyanga, Crossroads, and Langa, financed with SLP bonds.

Established since the early 1990s, SLP has ensured thousands of cheap houses, schools, libraries, clinics and sports fields, but these projects only worked because of the finance from the education and health departments. Even if the province gets the estimated R2 billion to build the backlog, Bedserman questioned the building industry's capacity to provide housing in such high demand.

Kuliq said a solution would be to upgrade existing squatter camps, install basic services and let the residents build their own homes, creating jobs which is "the real solution to this problem.""Bedserman reluctantly gives the nod to this idea, saying informal upgrading of settlements brought a whole new set of problems.

"If someone's father has built under a tree that has been there for years, it is not going to be easy for him to accept having a mud slab through the bush," Kuliq said.

"You do in the process, disrupt families and you are also likely to affect social networks if you do not cater people who are large numbers of squatters in the area."

This is indeed a vexing problem associated with upgrading existing informal settlements, a challenge for the housing department, which has to be sensitive to cultural environments when developing policies.
Tale of the two Retreats...

The South Peninsula Municipality promised to deliver 100 low-cost houses before Christmas after they were accused of dragging their feet on delivery. But for some families it was too late and they have come up with plans of their own.

"Look down any road and you will see one or even two families living in someone else's yard," Overcrowding is a big problem here and it is overlooked. "It is like having two Retreats in one. But we have a plan," says Tienie Toot, from the People's Housing Project, based in Retreat.

Local authorities agree that overcrowding is one of the biggest, but most overlooked - aspects of housing in the province.

Jens Kuhn, housing researcher for the Cape Metropole Council, estimates that only 10% of Cape Town's population live in shacks, while 40% were living in unhealthily overcrowded conditions.

The remaining Capians live in low-cost housing and in single-family units. The 40% live on the Cape Flats, Nyanga, Khayelitsha and Gugulethu. The marriage between overcrowding and unemployment has largely contributed to the city's high crime rate, the highest TB rate in the world, gangsterism, street children and domestic violence.

It has also led to one of the biggest breakdowns of basic services in the city's history. Three years ago, taxpayers spent R8 million to rectify broken and overused water pipes, waterworks, sewerage systems and drainage systems.

Neglect on the part of the residents is crucial to the breakdown of these amenities and local authorities fear a repetion they can ill afford as overcrowding continues.

Presently, overcrowding is addressed through the age-old waiting list system while housing projects take off slowly because of strapped budgets.

The housing department is hoping to start a fresh list by erecting through each municipality and taking note of the number of subsidies needed to address the housing costs.

Touzid said almost 20 000 families were living in backyards or on the South Peninsula alone - the exact number of subsidies the province gets for a year.

If money is all that's standing in the way of families getting homes, South Peninsula families have been galvanised into action to find it.

A few months ago, the People's Housing Project approached black empowerment company, ABSF Markets, "to help them pay off their rent and rates arrears worth millions. They believed that this huge debt had led them to be evicted.

"With this repayment we are hoping to strike a deal with the government and get them to use those millions to build houses for these families. This must work, it's our only hope," Touzid said.

Providing more housing would be the obvious solution to overcrowding, but with the tide of subsidies to this province, only a handful will benefit.

"Overcrowding is not about how much land is on a single plot. It is about available liveable space, and we have seen plenty of Wendy houses in backyards. Why not make it liveable and upgrade that second dwelling?"

At the moment, Kuhn is trying to engage the authorities to split subsidies into two, half for new homes and the rest for remodelling.

If there is enough money to address the housing crisis, "it is the council's job to provide water, sewerage and electricity to people anyway. Accessibility would be a problem, but the biggest problem is getting enough money to get more subsidies to do this."

Children are most vulnerable

GERTRUDE SOWENTU, founder of South African Female Empowerment (SAFEm), said she spent 11 weeks searching for that. It is a link between the founding communities of Lwandle and Nomzamo.

For this she invited 24 women, whose lives are on a tattered necklace of poverty, to a sea party, where she met and interviewed them.

At the end of her research, Sowentu said she was the "most surprising woman" she had ever met. They shared their stories in their raw, unvarnished truth - reports, which she is sharing with audiences across the world.

Sowentu was trying to help her with an eight-year-old girl who was raped. She spent the details and said only that if the child had lived, "it would have been a hopeless story."

Without homes, the children are the most vulnerable, she said. In their report, the women spoke of their dreams of owning a house, how that dream was killed by poverty.

Sowentu concluded, "Emotionally, these people don't have enough money to make demands on society. Not do they have the power to initiate social amelioration on their own.

"If they start a business, it cannot grow because, in the words of a Lwandle woman, 'you have no knowledge to make things bigger, and when things do grow bigger, you have no means of controlling it.'"

"These women want to send their children to better schools. More than avoiding those children's future to a better school, they want to send the local children. They want better homes - even better than the new RDP houses they know they can own.

"They want to change their community and we must be asking, how can we serve these people so they can care for themselves and that comfort that we could ever imagine?"

"Charity, give-away housing and welfare do not help anybody. Food and work reduces to running around and begging for money. They are the most vulnerable and they are insecure."

"These people simply want to be recognised in the human beings and for the community in the workplace. That power will give them the security and resources to build their communities."

A housing subsidy worth R8,000 provides a four-bedroom house with basic services like running water and sewage facilities. Maintenance is your responsibility to get on the waiting list for a subsidised home you must:

- be a South African citizen and have an identification book to prove it;
- earn income nothing to R2,500 per month;
- have dependents;
- must be a first-time applicant or a subsidist;
- live close to a planned development area;
- have not previously owned a home or land.

For more information contact your local municipality.
Housing book will pave the way

PETER GOOSEN
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The South Peninsula Municipality this year will spend R38.4-million and build more than 3,700 new houses.

This will put it at the forefront of the drive to provide social housing in the Western Cape, says its executive director of housing services, Hans Smit.

Mr Smit, who is also president of the Institute of Housing for South Africa, was speaking yesterday at the launch of the municipality's Housing Handbook, sponsored by Absa Bank, in Constantia.

He said the housing department's new projects included 1,602 homes in Vrygrond, Munzenberg, 813 in Lavender Hill East and 701 in Westlake.

"In addition, projects which are being planned and will come on stream next year, subject to the availability of state funding, include 209 houses at Phumulani near Pelican Park and nearly 2,000 houses in Pelican Park Phase 1, while consolidation projects will add 546 homes in Nzenze Yethu at Hout Bay and 457 in Masiphumelele at Noordhoek."

Land identification and planning for housing had received increased attention during the past year with major emphasis on Pelican Park where 400ha of prime land west of Strandfontein Road could make a notable impact on the housing backlog in the south.

Mr Smit said, however, South Peninsula had to provide housing for about 28,000 families and the land available would provide only 14,000 plots.

"The Housing Handbook will be available to cvvcs in the south and a copy is available in libraries."
To halt the rapid deterioration of Cape Town's CBD, its business leaders have joined forces with local government to form a Section 21 company that aims to steer the city clear of the fate suffered by Johannesburg and Durban.

The initiative, driven by the SA Property Owners' Association (Sapoa), comes at a moment too soon as traffic congestion, crime and grime, and a growing sense of disorder, have reached unacceptable levels and the drift to the suburbs has begun.

"Property owners have invested an enormous amount of money in the CBD," says Sapoa representative Wendy Hartshorne. "They continue to do so, which shows confidence in the future of Cape Town's city centre, but we have to ensure that their risk is matched by reward. This is what the partnership aims to achieve."

The Cape Town Central City Partnership aims to revitalise the central city by developing, managing and promoting it as a leading centre for retail, commercial, residential, cultural, entertainment, educational, tourism and leisure activities.

"Though cleanliness and safety are primary concerns at the moment, the partnership will focus on much more than this," says the partnership's chairman, Waterfront CEO David Jack. "The urban environment, planning, pedestrianisation, the creation of a longer-hour shopping zone, parking issues and traffic accessibility will also form the basis of our delivery."

The idea is not to usurp the role of the Cape Town city council, but to act as a lobbying and co-ordinating body to guide decision-making and to provide expertise and resources to help solve the city's many challenges.

The partnership draws heavily on Johannesburg's experience and the success of private-public-sector partnerships in rejuvenating inner cities around the world, including New York and Washington Jack. Stressing that Cape Town's problems are a feature of many cities in both developed and developing countries, and that private-public partnerships have proved the best way to tackle them.

Key to the plan is the creation of 12 central improvement districts within the CBD. In accordance with municipal bylaws already passed by the city in line with those adopted by Gauteng, businesses in each district will be able to collect levies to top up a guaranteed minimum level of municipal services.

The plan looks great on paper, provided local companies take a long-term view, but will the partnership have the power to move city bureaucrats?

Unlike Johannesburg's initiative, where private and public representatives sit on a recognised council structure to promote inner-city development, Cape Town's initiative relies on lobbying the right people.

"From our experience, the most important thing is to ensure that it develops into a talk shop. Unless you have a clear implementation strategy and timetable that people are accountable to, it won't work," says Central Johannesburg Partnership executive director Neil Fraser, who has advised the Cape Town initiative.

He demurs that the Johannesburg initiative has been a flop, pointing to a host of new developments in the CBD, including the creation of dedicated hawker markets and taxi assembly areas, the R3m Van der Bijl Square development, and the R500m Absa Campus resettlement project.

The latter will bring 4,500 people to the Carlton area in addition to the 6,000 Transnet employees who will be moving in. But the general feeling is that Johannesburg left it too late, while Cape Town may be able to nip its deterioration in the bud.

Cape Town has got off to the right start with R450,000 in seed money from the two local authorities and business already in the bank, and commitments for R1m for the first year. It also has the likes of Jack, Cape Town city council exec chairman Saleem Mowzer, Golding Commercial MD Theodore Yach, and Interstate executive manager Kevin Roman on its board.

Founder members include the City of Cape Town, Cape Metropolitan Council, Cape Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Cape Town Tourism, Business Against Crime and the Cape Town Heritage Trust.

Roman has high hopes that the partnership will stimulate numerous infrastructural projects that have been on the city's agenda for years, like the R1bn central station redevelopment project and inner-city public transport plan.

"I'm confident that we've got the top decision-makers who want action and who believe the city's important," he says. "If they can't change the way officials think, then we've got no hope." - Duane Buskevich
KICK-START FOR URBAN RENEWAL

Upgrade for disaster areas

THE CITY COUNCIL believes the tornado that devastated parts of Manenberg, Gugulethu and Surrey Estate will help kick-start urban renewal in the city's slums. JUDITH SOAL reports.

The areas worst hit by Sunday’s freak tornado will never be the same again. Rather than restoring the former states of overcrowding and neglect, the Cape Town City Council is planning a multi-million rand project to turn them into “people-friendly” environments.

Medical Officer of Health Ivan Toms has been appointed project manager of the redevelopment.

“This is not just about patching up the damaged houses and putting up new buildings,” Toms said yesterday. “We see the disaster as a multi-million rand opportunity to reshape our city.”

“Manenberg and Gugulethu are some of the places where this is most needed, although it has been a tragedy for the people involved, in a sense God has intervened.”

Manenberg, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, has long been characterised by social disintegration. There are about 45 gangs operating in the area, two-thirds of the population is unemployed and nearly half the residents live in backyard shacks.

“Society has progressed since Manenberg was built,” said Toms. “We have new ideas on how to build better, even if not the space to build bigger.”

“GOD HAS INTERVENED”: Medical Officer of Health Ivan Toms

The project involves upgrading housing and schools, building recreational and sports facilities, creating a secure environment and facilitating business development. It has as its buzz phrase “community participation”.

“We haven’t worked out the exact details yet because those will be formulated in consultation with community organisations,” said the city’s executive director of community development, Ahmed Vawda.

The move towards urban renewal through community participation began over a year ago when Manenberg and parts of Gugulethu were identified as two of nine “zones of poverty” in need of upgrading within the city council’s jurisdiction. Vawda says the fruits of this move were seen in the response to the disaster on Sunday.

“There was a new and constructive energy — everyone from radio stations to religious groups to private businesses made themselves available to help wherever needed. There has been hardly any looting; the crime rate is down to zero.”

“The gangs have been completely excluded from the process. This is the kind of energy we need to harness for this.”

Manenberg plan

From Page 1

City manager Andrew Boraine said it is impossible to put a price tag on the project yet. “We are still assessing the extent of the damage. Once this is done we will put a budget to the cabinet.”

There are different avenues for funds: If President Thabo Mbeki declares the area a disaster zone when he visits today — as is expected — money will be available through the state budget. Insurance payouts on council homes will cover a portion of the bill. There is also the possibility of using the proceeds from the sale of the Clifton bungalo-

“Most important aspect of development projects like these is accurate information,” said Vawda. “In the past we have learnt more about these areas than if we had employed 10 sociologists.”
EFFICIENT BUILDING SYSTEM

Plan for more than 300 low-cost homes

SARAH-JANE BOSCH

A LOW-COST building process is set to make adequate housing available to a sector of the community that was previously unable to meet the requirements for conventional mortgage bonds, according to Cardinal Properties managing director Ben Kho.

Cardinal Properties plans to build more than 300 houses for lower and middle-income earners in the Western Cape using the “shutter system.”

In this system, the foundations are laid and the door and window frames, plumbing and electrical connections are put in place. Then re-usable “shutters” made of galvanised steel and laminated plywood are erected where the walls will stand.

The pre-mixed cellular lightweight concrete, reinforced with synthetic fibres, is cast continuously, either directly from the Readymix truck, pumped from a tank on site, or in buckets by hand. The concrete is left to cure in the “shutters” for at least seven hours and the next day the “shutters” are stripped for re-use on the next house.

“This efficient building system was developed and patented by the Thyssen-Hunnebeck group in Germany and has been used successfully worldwide for more than 40 years,” says Kho.

The company has already constructed several of these houses in the IDP project at Sun City in the Sir Lowry’s Pass Village and Kho says it is working well.

“A standard home with door, window frames and piping cast into can be produced in less than 24 hours. Finishing and roofing is exceptionally easy.

“Cellular lightweight concrete is an aerated mortar — a combination of sand, cement and water mixed with a highly stable, non-toxic chemical for thermal and sound insulation. Synthetic fibres are added reinforcement.”

“The building method requires no formal construction training or building skills. Unskilled workers can learn the entire process in less than a week, enabling them to get involved in projects to provide housing in their communities.”

Kho says Cardinal has signed agreements with private owners of serviced and unserviced plots in Eerste River in the Western Cape and is negotiating with provincial authorities to secure further land in the province.

The houses are being marketed to people who earn less than R3 500 a month.

With the assistance of government and Provincial Housing Board subsidies, local banks and initiatives such as the National Housing Finance Corporation’s Gateway programme and Nurcha (National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency), many low-income earners could be enabled to afford a house of their own.

Kho says the next phase of the project will include middle-income earners with salaries of up to R6 000 a month.

(124) CT 3/9/99
AID PLANS MATERIALISING

Better houses after storm

A FULL REPORT on the extent of damage in the tornado-ravaged areas of Manenberg, Gugulethu and Surrey Estate will be ready for scrutiny tomorrow. PRISCILLA SINGH and ERIC NTABAZALI report.

THIS comes after a joint initiative by local, provincial and national government to bring in a panel of experts from up-country to assess the total damage of last Sunday's freak storm.

An inter-ministerial task team will look at the report tomorrow night and pass it to a cabinet subcommittee on Wednesday morning, for a final decision on how rebuilding should be tackled.

Thousands of people were left destitute after the massive storm in the early hours last Sunday, which also left six schools damaged, one church destroyed and another damaged.

By Friday, total damage was estimated at about R153 million and expected to climb, with more than 650 families displaced.

Cape Town mayor Nommadla Mfeketo said it was imperative for families that had not yet registered as claimants to do so urgently, so that they could be compensated.

Individuals affected by the storm have access to claims, but those who had private insurance would not be eligible for compensation from public funds, said city manager Andrew Boraine.

He said the registration of survivors would form the basis of claims made in terms of the Fundraising Act, in conjunction with the national department of welfare and the provincial department of social services.

"Local committees in Cape Town will verify the claims and send it on to the national board. The local authorities will provide as much help as possible," Boraine said. He could not say how long this process would take.

In the meantime, another team, comprising local MEC for social services Peter Marais, national welfare minister Zola Skweyiya and Mfeketo, are looking at numerous possibilities, including private homes, to accommodate people as soon as possible.

Manenberg, by far the worst affected, has about 501 families displaced, 253 units destroyed and 630 units partially damaged.

Gugulethu has five severely damaged and unsafe dwellings with another 774 partially damaged and 98 families displaced.

In Surrey Estate, where houses were mostly privately insured, five homes were destroyed, 325 partially damaged and 60 families displaced.

In rebuilding these areas, their previous form and design would have to be reviewed, using the effects of the storm as part of a reconstruction and urban renewal plan for the poverty-striken communities.

Most council arrears — for services — also were found in these areas and fears were rife among people last week that, if they owed the council money, they would not get a new home.

Executive committee chairperson Suleim Mowazi said these were separate issues, and that people would not be torn between the storm and having a new home.

The issue will, however, be addressed later, he said.

"We have to change these communities from passive recipients to active participants. The key to this, in focusing on arrears, is to use a situation (such as this) to rebuild the community on its own terms," he said.

Mowazi added that they may have to demolish entire blocks of flats in order to build new structures and that this could take some time. Meanwhile, the council was hoping to repair partially damaged homes in a month's time.

Disaster relief payment of R500 per family is expected to start this week, totaling at least R1,2m.

Mfeketo yesterday told stricken Gugulethu, Manenberg and Surrey Estate residents that they will get better houses.

Addressing a multi-religious service, held at Tambo Square hall, Mfeketo told the audience that, although the tornado had killed and injured people and left thousands homeless, it had enabled authorities to find out whether the structures were safe for people to stay in.

"The only way we can honour those who died is by building proper houses," she said.

Mfeketo told the meeting, which was attended by the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town Njongonkulu Ndungane, ANC provincial leader Ebrahim Rasool, Imam of the Claremont Mosque Rashed Omar, Jim Kenney from the Parliament of the World Religions and other church leaders, that the tornado has helped to unite the people of Cape Town.
Young city blacks opt for shack life

Squatter camps are seen as preferable to bleak hostels

MOSES MINATHULE MACKAY

There comes a time in the life of most young people when they just have to leave the parental home, especially if it is a room in a grim, overcrowded hostel built in the apartheid era.

This is the reason more and more young black Capetonians are choosing to live in shack settlements, according to research by the University of Stellenbosch.

Contrary to popular belief, informal settlements are not merely being filled by a growing influx of people from the Eastern Cape. In fact the influx of squatters from the neighboring province has slowed.

But young people, many born and bred in Cape Town, are leaving their parents’ homes and setting up shacks, the only type of housing they can afford.

The trend is especially prevalent among families living in the former single-sex hostels such as those in Langa, which are now used to house families.

Entire families cram into one room, a grim place for any young adult to call home. Compared with this, a shack is heaven.

Langa hostel dwellers say many young people leave the hostel and now live in the Joe Slovo informal settlement nearby.

A few young people “revert” to the hostel rooms from their parents who return to the Eastern Cape. About 70 families live in one Langa hostel building.

The study was commissioned by the Cape Metropolitan Council to determine migration trends. It found that the traditionally circular pattern of migration of people between Cape Town and the Eastern Cape had virtually ceased, because most migrants were choosing to stay.

The study by Catherine Rosa, Sunnie Bekker and Gary Sava has far-reaching implications for housing in the city. It shows that many migrants want to return to the Eastern Cape, but are unwilling to because of the lack of jobs there. Their children are even more unlikely to return once they get used to city life.

The study shows that the streams of migrants to Cape Town slowed from 57,000 between 1990 and 1995 to 41,000 between 1996 and 1997.

Langa hostel dweller Joseph Nokoloto, 41, said he moved to Cape Town in October 1990 to look for work. “I looked for a job for five months,” he said. “I got one in 1990 as a cleaner at the Cape Town municipality.”

He lives with his wife, Nosakhob, 36, and their children, Lusindiso, 16, and Amato, 16, in one room.

Mr Nokoloto, who was born in Umtata in Transkei, said he would not stay in Cape Town permanently because he was supporting his mother in Velapha Nokoloto, 56, in Umtata.

Fellow hostel dweller Khunzithi Mxaka, 54, from in Gqamva in the Eastern Cape, is still jobless.

“We came to Cape Town in search of jobs. When we arrived we couldn’t afford to live in the Eastern Cape,” he said.

Mr Mxaka said many black people chose to stay in Cape Town for good and performed their rituals and traditional ceremonies here.
Tornado refugees now fear gangs

Site chosen for ‘container village’ in Manenberg seen as a battle ground

About 470 Khayelitsha families were supposed to get R10000 each from the provincial government after they were affected by the recent tornadoes, but many families did not receive anything because of alleged corruption.

A new provincial Department of Social Services and the City of Tyger- berg, which is acting as the disbursing agent, have stopped all payments.

It is alleged that funds did not reach the recent disaster, according to officials from the provincial government.

A report on hold until an investigation is completed and the mis-use of funds was completed.

About 470 Khayelitsha families were supposed to get R10000 each from the provincial government after they were affected by the recent tornadoes, but many families did not receive anything because of alleged corruption.

Misuse of funds for flood victims probed

Several residents who have been affected by the recent floods have expressed concern that they have not received the compensation they were promised.

Residents who were affected by the floods have complained that they have not received the compensation they were promised.

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EXCO DECISION ON DAMAGE

Rent-to-buy plan unveiled

MANY TENANTS rendered homeless by the tornado are to be encouraged by the city council to buy their new homes Metro Writer BUNTY WEST reports

Tenants whose homes were flattened by the tornado, which hit parts of Manenberg, Gugulethu and Surrey Estate three weeks ago, will not automatically get new homes, it was decided in a city council exco meeting yesterday.

Even though the houses were insured, many of the tenants will be asked to enter into a “rent-to-buy” scheme as the council will not be building rental units in future.

The new houses will be offered to the former tenants first, either for sale or bought through a government-subsidised housing programme, but if they decline the offer they will not be rehoused and will have to go back to the end of the housing queue.

When the houses were destroyed, the council’s lease with the tenants was automatically terminated, though tenants are still liable to pay back any money outstanding for services. Legally the council is not obliged to supply another home, but is prepared to do so through the two schemes.

Tenants wishing to be rehoused will be required to sign an acknowledgement of debt concerning outstanding payment for services on their old homes.

Work will start in the next few weeks on the rebuilding of houses damaged but not destroyed by the tornado. Yesterday the council gave officials the go-ahead to start the ball rolling and a list of contractors is being compiled of those companies which can tackle the jobs.

They will be required to use local labour to rebuild the units.

It is estimated that only 50 Manenberg households are up to date with their service payments while between 60 and 70 families owe as much as R7 000. A few households owe only R1 000, while most debtors have bills of over R3 000.

While the legal tenants will be looked after through the schemes, the same does not hold true for those who were in sub-let properties or living in backyards. They have no legal standing and apart from the temporary shelter they were given, the council has no obligation to look after them.

To ensure that tenants whose homes were destroyed are rehoused as soon as possible, the council is to build temporary houses on council land in Manenberg and Gugulethu. The first 50 of 200 will be erected within a month. Another 150 may also be supplied at a later stage.

The houses, measuring 25 to 30m², will consist of two rooms and will have electricity and an outside tap.

Ablution blocks consisting of three toilets, three handbasins and three showers will be provided for every 10 houses.

The cost of providing the temporary homes is R5 000 per unit and R250 000 to provide the services, and it will cost R1.7 million to hire and maintain the ablution facilities.

The houses, which can be lifted and re-used, will be used for up to 12 months while formal housing is built.
Khayelitsha boasts 98% electricity payments

ERIC NTABAZALI

The culture of not paying for services seems to be a thing of the past for the more than one million Khayelitsha residents who have become the most reliable payers in South Africa. In 1994, more than 70% of Khayelitsha residents did not pay their electricity bills.

But today more than 98% of residents are doing so.

Mac Mdingi, general manager of Phambili Nombane - an Eskom project which electrified 43,000 houses over five years, attributed the change to good customer care.

"Khayelitsha has the best customer service in the country. Independent audits showed that the customer care level was 99.5%.

"We thought nothing short of complete transformation could reverse the situation in Khayelitsha. Raising customer service was an important goal," he said.

"Community involvement and capacity-building has played a crucial role in our success. We received the full support of community organisations."

Despite the drop in the percentage of non-payers, thousands of residents still lack electricity in Khayelitsha.

Electric wires hang across main roads from brick houses to informal shacks, while other connections are made underground."

...
Common named in housing blueprint

Row erupts over plan for Rondebosch

HELEN BAMFORD
STAFF REPORTER

A draft plan naming Rondebosch Common as a site for the development of low-cost housing has raised the blood pressure of a number of city councillors.

The plan was drawn up by the Cape Town Community Housing Company, a company set up by the city council to speed up housing delivery.

The company is headed by Mervyn Bregman, the council’s former director of housing.

The company sent a report to the city council’s executive committee for approval on Tuesday and identified 115 land parcels for potential development, including the common.

Democratic Party councillor Belinda Walker said the Rondebosch Common was just one of many inappropriate tracts of land identified. She said the report was shoddy and filled with inaccuracies. “It doesn’t inspire confidence,” she said.

Councillor Brian Watkyns said the report had clearly been hastily put together, and was an ill-conceived plan which did not bode well for the future of the company.

“Two of the sites identified in my ward, one in Thornton and the other in Maitland Garden Village, are currently on long lease to a golf driving range and soccer club respectively. “Another site is in the industrial area of Epping, which is hardly an appropriate place for housing, and a sizable portion of it is used as an informal bus depot for 100 long-distance buses,” said Mr Watkyns.

Ward councillor for Rondebosch Owen Knahan said he wanted to know whether it was just a sloppy report or whether there was something more to it.

Housing had to be integrated but only in the appropriate places and where it fitted into the spatial development framework.

Mr Knahan said Rondebosch made a major contribution to the city’s rates base and that developing the common would be like “cutting their throat”.

“It’s nothing to do with race or class - its purely economics,” he said.

But Mr Bregman said the councillors could rest easy.

“Under no circumstances will we be developing Rondebosch Common. A number of tracts of land including a number of commons and golf courses were included in the first rough land inventory draft from council, who is a partner in our company, but we’re only looking at land that is feasible and affordable.”

Rondebosch Common, which is a national monument, was invaded by protesters in March 1997 by members of the Missmencedane and Kweziломso housing scheme, who were frustrated at not being able to secure land on which to build their homes.

The group of 315 people had planned to occupy the common until land had been found for them but the matter was resolved.

The status of the Rondebosch Common, which is home to more than 220 species of sand plain fynbos, cannot be altered without the approval of the National Monuments Council and the Cape Town City Council.
Council offers deals to tackle R380m arrears

Write-offs, interest sweeteners for payments

The City of Tygerberg has set up a committee to deal with the problem of residents' arrears which now total more than R380-million.

The money is owed to the council for rates, water, refuse, sewerage, electricity and rent.

As an incentive, for every R1 a resident pays on arrears, the council will write off R1 from interest accrued on the account.

Chief executive officer Dave Wilken said the council had decided that all those in arrears, who started paying their present accounts and made arrangements to pay off their arrears, would not be handed over to collecting attorneys.

The portions of the arrears debt to be agreed upon would be based on the maximum amount that the individual could afford.

Mr Wilken said that if the resident honoured the agreement, no further interest would be levied on arrears.

Those who did not stick to the agreement would find their accounts handed over to debt collectors, which could mean more costs for the individual, Mr Wilken said.

The council was installing a computer system to manage all debt agreements.

It was the residents' responsibility to approach the council and set up an arrangement to repay arrears.
Building starts on city's first 'non-racial' houses

BUNTY WEST
CT 27/10/99

"We are going to build houses on whatever space is available and we will not tolerate delays because of racial prejudices."

These stern words by the mayor of Cape Town, Nomandla Mfeketo, yesterday preceded the sod-turning for the first 400 homes being built in Cape Town by the newly formed Cape Town Community Housing Company (CTCHC).

Mfeketo was responding to the city's "Numbyas" ("not in my backyard") who continually tried to retard the process of housing delivery, by protesting about the building of low-cost houses in their area.

She warned protesters that the city was committed to housing delivery and integrating the city through the non-racial housing lists.

Lucky recipients of the first 300 houses will be in their homes by Christmas - their subsidies were approved yesterday.

The CTCHC partnership between the city council and the housing company will ensure that residents who want their own homes, and who qualify for a government subsidy, will now begin to receive them.

People who had hoped to own homes were encouraged to join a savings scheme and, after a showing commitment by depositing regular amounts into accounts at one of four approved banks, their names went on to the waiting list.

Aided by the grant (a maximum of R18 400) and a R5 000 subsidy from the Cape Town council, prospective owners chose from homes varying in size from 40m² to 64m².

The first phase of the project started at Hanover Park, where 93 homes will be erected at the corner of Greenfut and Lonedown Roads.

All the houses will be larger than the prescribed 27m², provided solely through the maximum subsidy.

Nearly 70% of the new owners selected the 64m² house, 20% the 52m², and 10% chose the 40m² house.

Also included in the first phase are 100 homes in Gugulethu and 101 in Mitchells Plain.

Trees will be planted at the sites, some parts will be paved and a park, with children's playground and seating, will be built before residents move in.

Yesterday's ceremony was attended by the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Njongonkulu Ndungane (who is also the chairman of the CTCHC), the mayor, Saleem Mowzer (chairman of the executive committee), city manager Andrew Borane, and ward councillors.

Representatives of the developers, M5, were also present.
R11m housing boost for Cape

YURIUS KEMP

The provincial government has rallied to the call of two small Western Cape communities plagued by homelessness and squatting, by providing more than R11 million for housing development.

Klapmuts, a village between Cape Town and Stellenbosch, was recently granted subsidised housing worth R6.8 million funded by the province's Housing Development Board, and construction on the 402 allocated houses is nearing completion.

Low income families in Monte Bertha, a suburb of Porterville in the Swartland, received R 4.7 million funding from the board, and construction on the 283 housing units will be completed by the end of the year.

The Klapmuts project is aimed at housing 2 000 of the village's 4 000 inhabitants.
ANC councillors in housing scam

Sanco and the ANC are facing up in Port Alfred over allegations that councillors are enriching themselves through low-cost housing schemes, writes Peter Dickson

The Eastern Cape government has launched an executive investigation into allegations that several African National Congress town councillors in Port Alfred abused their positions to enrich themselves through business interests in a mass low-cost housing scheme in the town's Nelson Mandela Township (Nteme).

Alliance partner the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco) which first accused the councillors last week of having a pecuniary interest in the year-long construction of 1,000 low-cost homes in Nteme, has already been interrogated by court from threatening the mayor and ANC councillors.

And the council which claims the housing project's steering committee could make its own rules as it "operated outside the boundaries of the council", says Sanco has "scoffed at the law" in that it is now allegedly threatening municipal staff, and resolved at a meeting last week that it no longer wishes to see "service rendering" vehicles in Nteme.

Sanco is so concerned that it has sent its members to the home of former provincial legislature speaker and new ANC for Housing and Local Government Gugile Nkwinti — who led South Africa's first township consumer boycott of white businesses in Port Alfred in 1984 while the then head of the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front leader — as “thrown troublemaker”.

Tensions between Sanco and the ANC erupted in a series of letters last week from Sanco branch chairman Eric Mangate to council chief executive Angus Schiemmer, alleging that ANC councillor David Mthembu had been a partner in Brackenfield Constructions, which sub-contracted to Grinker Housing to build the low-cost homes between March 1998 and June this year.

Mangate also alleged that local ANC chair and housing project steering committee chair Thobikile Gqobobo and ANC councillor Vubisile Balule had been partners in a concrete-block manufacturing business which sold blocks to Grinker Housing for the project. The construction company (at an average cost of R2 per block) had won about 30,000 blocks.

But Schiemmer says that in terms of a Reconstruction and Development Programme type social compact agreement between Grinker and the council the steering committee could negotiate its own procedures since it operated outside the formalities of the council.

He said this week that "no funds were managed by the council and that Grinker accounted directly from a housing board.

Sanco's chairman, Douglas Mngqotho, has been a steering committee member since the start and to all decisions, says Balule, was not yet a councillor when the committee was established but "became a councillor in March 1998" — the month in which construction began — and has business interests, if any, are not known.

Schiemer says Gqobobo had relinquished the steering committee chair after becoming involved in manufacturing and supplying bricks to the project. His successor, however, was Mthembu, "apparently a partner in a firm called Nteme Builders".

Sanco's resolution against the mayor is a "court order" that "any man of influence against himself when Grinker was selected to build houses in the coastal town's Mimosa area, Nkwinti, who has begun his investigation, could not be reached for comment this week but Schiemmer welcomes the move, saying it "will help the council to properly investigate the affairs of the steering committee".

Enriching schemes: Sanco has accused ANC councillors in Port Alfred of having a pecuniary interest in the construction of 1,000 low-cost homes in the Nelson Mandela Tavernship.

PHOTOGRAPHY: HENRIK FRANKENFIELD
Anger over housing scheme

TALE VIEW residents will lose 3.3ha of open space land which is to be turned into 114 low cost units.

The land, which will have to be purchased before the housing company can begin work, has been earmarked to accommodate 219 low cost units on the site.

'Thousands of rents paid over 50 years,' one of the residents, was quoted as saying.

'These are years one of our ratepayers tried to buy 350m² of this land, which has been offered for sale because it was an eyesore which we wanted to improve. Now we are told it will be sold for $230,000, yet the housing company will receive that and $200 more for R1,' said a ratepayer during a meeting on Monday evening.

During the meeting, residents were given a breakdown of what is being planned on the site by Chris Forster, one of the three councillors involved in the housing association.

He explained that three to five houses would be built on the site, with the rest of the land reserved for a community centre.

The ratepayers would be reimbursed and the amount earned from the rentals would help pay for new homes to be built.

Rental charges would be between $600 and $1,300.

But Andy Binkowski, the chairman of the Tangle View Residents Association, said the ratepayers could not be satisfied.

'If people are only earning $1,300 a month how can you expect them to pay $800 rent and pay for their services on top of that, what about food and transport?' he asked.

'It will end up with them having to choose between looking after their kids or services. Either way the ratepayers will end up paying through increased rates,' he said.

The only positive aspect of Monday night's meeting was that every one of the 256 people present came out against the development, Forster said.

'This is not the first time that council has attempted to push low cost housing into a residential area without proper consultation,' a resident said.

In October last year residents in Sandfield/Twyfoch were told that a low cost development was going up on land in their area.

When the story broke, the residents were both angry and confused.

'People promised then that this state of affairs would never be allowed to happen again,' a resident said.

'But I give you my solemn undertaking that I will do my level best to guard against a similar situation arising,' he said.

Now, say residents, the same process is happening again in Tangle View. 'Where are his promises now?' asked a resident.
1 000 families to get free homes (124)

TOM HOOD

A THOUSAND Franschhoek squatter families are to get fully subsidised houses that would normally cost over R35 000 each in a deal supported by property developers and the local council.

The cash will come from a R400-million development planned for the Boland town which includes an upmarket retirement village, health resort, international hotel and a golf estate designed and run by Glenneagles, a top Scottish golf resort.

The municipality has agreed to provide land on the Mooiwater farm, and the first showhouses will be built for the local community before Christmas, said Willem Steenkamp, representing the developers and municipality.

The project should house everyone living in the town's squatter camps and backyard shacks, he said.

Income from the sale of municipal land for an upmarket golf estate of 120 houses and a retirement village of 70 houses will cross-subsidise the 1 010 low-cost houses, which will also qualify for government and provincial subsidies.

A team from Glenneagles will design and manage an 18-hole international championship course with high standards, said Steenkamp.

The project is aimed at the top end of the housing market and units will cost about R1.5-million each.

The V & A Waterfront Company and New Housing Company have signed a memorandum of understanding with the municipality.
Five houses to be built in six-day blitz

Homeless in Khayelitsha encouraged by DIY project aimed at building hope as well as homes

By Mervyn Price

A housing scheme that encourages potential home-owners to help build their own homes is being seen as a celebration of the project. The project will also serve as a celebration of the project's first year of success in Khayelitsha.

The project is being led by the Khayelitsha Development Trust and is aimed at providing affordable housing to the poorest communities in the area. The project has been supported by the Department of Housing and Human Settlements, as well as by the National Housing Corporation.

The project has already built 100 houses and plans to build 100 more in the next year. The houses are built using traditional methods and are designed to be energy efficient.

The project is open to anyone who wants to build their own home, regardless of their income level. However, participants are required to contribute towards the cost of building materials and labour.

The project has received positive feedback from the community, with many participants expressing a sense of pride and ownership over their new homes.

The project has also been praised for its impact on the local economy, with many workers benefitting from the project and being able to support their families.

The project also has a focus on community development, with the aim of creating a sense of belonging and fostering social cohesion.

The project is also helping to address the housing shortage in Khayelitsha, which is one of the most densely populated areas in South Africa.

The project is expected to continue for several years, with plans to build up to 500 houses in total.

The project is led by a steering committee made up of representatives from the Department of Housing and Human Settlements, the National Housing Corporation, the Khayelitsha Development Trust, and local community organizations.
Trash may shed light on lifestyles

BUNTY WEST
METRO WRITER

FOR Capetonians, the expression "you are what you eat" is certainly true, if the contents of the humble rubbish bin are taken into account, as a family's whole lifestyle can be read in the trash.

The more affluent the suburb, the more rubbish is accumulated—and its quality is better.

According to Cape Town City's director of water and waste, Kendall Kaveney, from an inspection of people's rubbish one can determine how they live, their standard of cleanliness, their food and alcohol preferences and even their reading habits.

Capetonians are spoilt when it comes to rubbish collection. Dustmen work 365 days a year—even on Christmas Day.

They work on a "task and finish" basis, and out of season often complete their rounds by 3 pm, in the summer, especially in December, the men can still be found collecting at 7 pm.

While the city's Atlantic coast beaches accumulate at least five tons of litter daily during the festive season, it is a rare drop in the ocean to the amount collected from the suburbs, where 1,370 tons is amassed each day.

Cape Town is one of the few cities in South Africa which bales much of its rubbish and packs it off on a train. A huge landfill site at Vissershok near Malmesbury is the destination and about half of the city's rubbish ends up there at a cost of R100 per ton. The function is overseen by the Cape Metropolitan Council.

The other two landfill sites that Cape Town uses are at Swartklip (Strandfontein) and Coastal Park (Muizenberg).

Because of the influx of between 200,000 and 300,000 visitors to the city over the holidays, 150 extra staff will be taken on this year between now and January. Some of them will be employed to clean the beaches, while others will be used for street sweeping.

Two new mechanical additions to the cleaning armoury will be employed this year at Camps Bay and Strandfontein. The machines deep clean the beach to about 400 mm, and return the squeaky clean sand to the bay. They will be used two or three times a week.

Cape Town council will launch its annual beach campaign next month to make people aware of the need to keep the city's natural resources clean. It will be accompanied by a law enforcement blitz to stop dumping on the beaches.

Over New Year all staff will be on duty, but the one problem they will not be able to control is the Cape Doctor, which makes rubbish collection and containment a nightmare.

"I have seen cardboard boxes, complete newspapers and other relatively heavy items flying past my window, and I work on the 18th floor," said Kaveney.

The wind tends to dump rubbish in several areas of the city including Buitengracht Street, Adderley Street and against the wire fencing on the Foreshore.

But homeowners can do their bit to cut down on the rubbish they accumulate by following a recycling regime. Paper, plastic and tins should be separated from wet rubbish like tea leaves and vegetable matter.

About 25% of paper—a source of income for schools and charities—is recycled, but with a bit of education this figure could be brought up to 90%.

Two primary schools, in Bergvlei and Edgemead, make a profit of R60,000 each annually from the collection of paper. The money is used by the schools to fund other projects.
A secret list of the City of Cape Town's top 100 debtors shows that businesses, government institutions and sports organisations owe R67-million or 20 percent of the R330-million that remained unpaid for rates and water as of October 31. After threats of court action, some businesses are paying as much as R50 000 a month to wipe out their debts, according to the list of debtors prepared for the city's finance committee. But many bills are being disputed by firms, which have accused the council of serious errors and incompetence.

Rates, water, services, rents and housing payment arrears amounted to 40 percent of a year's rates and water bill. Of this amount, R140-million was owed in rents and housing repayments.

"There are outstanding arrears across the board and we are starting a massive campaign to recoup them," said Salim Moore, chairman of the city's executive committee. "We will make sure that big business and government institutions pay up. Arrears are often blamed on poor people in council houses, but they go right across the city."

Final letters of demand were being sent to everyone, including businesses, sports bodies and educational institutions. If they failed to pay or made arrangements, legal steps would be taken.

"We could have built thousands of houses if people paid the council services they received," Moore said.

Heading the list of "top 100 arrivers" is Transnet Pension Fund, which owes the council an immense sum owing in rates.

Doris van der Merwe, financial director of the V&A Waterfront company, said the council's valuation was being disputed because some buildings had been demolished and replaced by the Waterfront's R1-billion monthly rates were up to date.

Transnet, owing R15-million in rates, disputes the valuation of the docks.

Fairview House was owed a R1.4-million water account for a Harbour Street housing project. Fairview's managing director Mike Vieria said the house had been occupied for four years, but the water meters had not been read and the council had sent the bill to the developer. "I called in at the water department again and, nothing has happened."

Sport clubs owe more than R4.5-million in rates. They include the WP Rugby Union (R9.6-million) and WP Cricket Club (R4.7-million), both of which are claiming rates owed. The WP Cricket Club, which owed R4.7-million, had a payment for water been incorrectly credited to rates. The club agreed to pay R125 264.79 for water and balance over 12 months.

The council claims government institutions owe R4.6-million in rates and R66 000 for water. The list includes the Department of Education, the Department of Transport, the Department of Health, and the Department of Social Development. The list also includes the Department of Environmental Affairs, which owes R1.5-million in rates and R66 000 for water, and the Department of Justice, which owes R1.5-million in rates and R66 000 for water.

Managements of blocks of flats are also being pursued for unpaid rates. They include the body corporate of the Twin Towers, Sea Point (R554 000); Wellington, Cape Town (R556 000); The Smithfield Cape Town (R449 000); Five Towns Street, Observatory (R60 000); St. Peter's Place, Cape Town (R221 000); and the Rookery, Pinelands (R221 000).

Only six individuals made it to the list of top 10. They were V. Z. Pace, Kensington (R115 000 for water which was disconnected), D. O. D. Wood, Ryders Estate (R129 000 rates and water), M. N. Ball, Schap-kaap (R162 000 for water), C. K. Abecrombie, Philippolis (R59 000 rates), M. S. Dick, Philippolis (R8 000 rates) and F. Ratu, Philippolis (R63 000 rates and water).
Rent trimmed for poorest of the poor

PETER GOOSEN
Special Correspondent

The South Peninsula Municipality has become the country’s leader in innovative housing policies – introducing bug discounts on rentals for the very poor after last week’s launch of a micro-loans scheme for the upgrading of homes.

This week, the council approved a scheme to help the extremely poor pay the rent for their council homes.

The scheme, to be run for a year on an experimental basis, is likely to serve as a model for other local authorities which are battling with millions of rands in arrear housing rentals across the country.

Rental in council housing average R135 a month.

In terms of the scheme, tenants earning R300 a month or less will pay 5% of their income as rent, those earning between R301 and R500 a month 8% and those with an income of R600 will pay 9%.

This means that a household with an income of R300 a month will pay R10 a month rent and where the income is R600, the rent will be R48.

Acutely poor households will have to make a formal application for this assistance and provide proof of unemployment, low income, reduced income or medical certificates if they are unable to work.

If the new rents are paid regularly, the council will freeze the interest on any rental arrears and no action will be taken to recover the debt until the household’s circumstances change.

The chairman of the council’s housing committee, Joseph Johnson, said the municipality believed that helping extremely poor people was the task of the state, but it could not wait until a scheme for state aid was introduced.

His committee and the council understood the plight of the very poor and were determined to do something to help.

Last week, provincial housing minister Cecil Herandien put the seal of approval on the council’s micro-loans scheme which will enable a house owner with a state-subsidised house to borrow a maximum of R5,000 for improvements to the basic 27m² house, which comes with no internal walls, ceilings or hot water.

Mr Herandien, speaking at the official launch of the micro-loan scheme, said that with building costs rising, the present state housing subsidy of a maximum of R15,000 in the basic 27m² house would be too little even to build the basic house.

Up to now it had been impossible for the homeowner of a state-subsidised house to obtain a bond and the council’s loan scheme could serve as a model for the rest of the country.

So far, the municipality, with the backing of a number of institutions including the National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency, Absa Bank, Agasha Credit, Protea Finance and Summer Housing, has geared up its original R2-million from its dedicated housing funds to R12-million.

A further R6-million is also a possibility.
From Cardboard City to concrete

Fifteen squatter families leave shacks on the Foreshore for homes in Mitchell’s Plain

TASIMA VILJOEN

The long-delayed move of residents from the notorious Cardboard City settlement on the Foreshore to proper housing has begun.

Fifteen families have already moved to Montrose Park in Mitchell’s Plain from their shacks under the Western Boulevard flyover and more are to follow.

Muggers who terrorise pedestrians on the Foreshore have long been suspected of hiding out among the shacks.

The squatters’ move follows years of negotiations. The move was stopped last year when residents of Mitchell’s Plain objected to having “squatters” for neighbours.

Mayor Fortune, acting city housing director, said 16 of the 20 families had moved into the houses in Montrose Park. The houses were built with government housing subsidies of R7 900 each.

Mr Mushquana said Cape Town had encountered many problems trying to house the families.

Some of them did not meet the subsidy requirements laid down by the Housing Development Board and many did not have any form of identity feature. But the municipality had gone the extra mile to help them get the documentation they needed.

Mr Mushquana said the municipality was pleased with the progress of the move. The development at Montrose was incomplete but families were moved as soon as their houses were finished.

He said the city would make other arrangements for those who did not qualify for the subsidy.

A new home owner, who asked not to be named, said that although his house was small, he was thankful he had running water and proper sanitation facilities. He was also able to send his children to school.

Another new home owner, Fortune Fortuna, said he was delighted that his family had a roof over their heads after living in Cardboard City for seven years. He said living in the shack settlement was dangerous because all kinds of criminal elements used the area.

The area around the squatter camp was considered very dangerous to tourists. Residents were continually being blamed for mugging tourists and breaking into motor vehicles in and around the Waterfront.

The municipality erected a fence around the camp last year as an attempt to end attacks on pedestrians and tourists. Sixteen shacks were demolished when it was claimed that criminals were using the area as a hideout.

NEW START: A child plays in Montrose Park in front of houses built for the former Bridge people who used to live under the Western Boulevard flyover.
THOUSANDS of debtors flocked to Cape Town’s Civic Centre last week to pay off millions of rand owed for rates, water, electricity and rent after a blitz on debtors.

A record R13-million was paid into the city’s coffers on Thursday, well above the R5-million daily average.

Queues started before 7am, forcing cashiers to open at 7am to cope with the rush.

At Mitchell’s Plain 2 000 people called in one day to arrange to pay off arrears. Offices will also open at Langa, Guguletu, Brown’s Farm and Athlone to help people arrange to pay off what they owe.

This followed the council’s biggest blitz on defaulters to recover arrears that had piled up over years to a massive R790-million at the end of last month. "We sent out 14 000 final demand notices a few days ago, shortly after sending out 38 000," said Philip van Ryneveld, executive director of corporate finance.

"We have increased our teams to cut off water and electricity if people do not respond to the final demands. Council is committed to following all the steps required by council policies and the law. This could result in the defaulter’s property being sold in execution."
Housing cash dries up in Western Cape

Homeless turned away as grant applications soar

Housing crisis BRIEFING

- R1,4-billion was budgeted for houses from 1994 until 2000. All of this has been allocated for approved subsidies.
- So far 130,000 subsidies have been approved. About 56% of these homes have been built.
- The Western Cape's contribution to the one million homes the national Government promised in the first five years of its rule was 114,000.

The Western Cape provincial government has already blown its housing budget for the next financial year.

Every cent has been committed to existing housing projects, and the Provincial Housing and Development Board is not accepting any new housing applications until present contractual obligations ease off.

In the meantime, homeless people clutching application forms for a subsidised home are being turned away in droves, and figures show homelessness is soaring in the province.

In 1994 there were about 250,000 homeless people in the province. There are now 290,000 without homes in greater Cape Town alone.

Added to this is the provincial government's recent realisation that most of the housing budget since 1994 has not addressed housing needs in the metropolitan area, where the need has become critical.

While the provincial government tries to find ways of speeding up the slow pace of development of the existing 146 housing projects, the pile of applications accepted before June this year is already a combined total of R600-million. This is more than double the province's R361-million annual housing budget.

Approval for these applications is only expected to begin coming through in two or three years.

The Development Action Group (DAG), a non-government organisation helping homeless communities start housing projects, wants to know where this leaves the applicants who are now being turned away.

"This is devastating for communities that are all fired up to organise themselves and to supplement subsidies with the savings schemes they have organised," said DAG director Norah Walker.

“Housing projects without approved subsidies will lose momentum as members vacillate between projects in search of the shortest route to securing a house,” she predicted.

While the national housing budget is expected to remain the same next year, the Western Cape's budget hangs in the balance.

This is because 1996 census figures show the province has fewer people than expected earning less than R3,500 a month—the limit to qualify for a housing subsidy.

Ms Walker said: "Total national government expenditure on housing constitutes only 1.8% of total national expenditure. This is far short of the 5% required by the white paper on housing.

Added to the housing dilemma is the fact that housing funds since 1994 have been allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and local councils in the metropolitan areas have only recently got to the point of being able to submit applications.

Provincial housing director Charlotte Lamdro explained: "Smaller outlying towns with less complicated applications got in the queue and got approval for housing projects first. The local councils in the metro areas, which took a long time to get their act together, are only beginning to submit applications for housing projects now.

Ms Lamdro said it was expected that once the housing board started approving applications again, it would prioritise and approve urgent applications first.
Hermanus water project wins poverty-relief award

FLORENCE KARUNI
Social Worker

Fifteen government projects have earned R700 000 in a new scheme awarding innovation in showing the way to alleviating poverty.

The Greater Hermanus Water Conservation Programme is one of 10 projects to receive R60 000 from the scheme, the Impumelelo Innovations Award Programme.

Others in the country - five of which won R20 000 each - range from youth and anti-crime initiatives to solid waste management and hydroponic farming projects.

The prize money is to be spent on showing other departments and project developers how to find practicable and imaginative solutions to poverty.

Impumelelo, under the directorship of Rhodes Kadhe, functions in partnership with the Ford Foundation, the Human Sciences Research Council, the Open Society Foundation and the Dutch government.

It focuses on boosting and encouraging innovation in government departments, the agencies chiefly responsible for delivery in the campaign against poverty.

The programme is modelled on a similar scheme in the United States.

A total 176 programmes were entered, and the winners were:

- The Greater Hermanus Water Conservation Programme
- The Integrated Livestock and Crop Farming Project in Middelburg
- The Durban Solid Waste Waste Collection programme
- The Working for Water Programme
- The Mapila Hydroponics Community Co-operative
- The Stepping Stones - Reclaiming Youth at Risk in Port Elizabeth
- The PMF-Umsunduzi Anti-Crime Network in KwaZulu-Natal
- The Missionvale Community Housing Initiative in Port Elizabeth
- The Durban Metro Housing Canaan/Quarry Heights Relocation Project
- The Lulhisi Dam Development Project in the Eastern Cape
- The five R20 000 winners were
- Salvagers Waste Management in the Oti Moretele Region, North West Province
- Outreach Services in Kimberley, Northern Cape.
- Mossveld Sanitation, Nutrition and Health Worker Education Project in Ingwavuma, Northern Zululand
- Pascap after-School Initiative in Southfield, Cape Town.
- The Road to Suhebe Komkulu in the Eastern Cape.