

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA welcomes housing initiative and calls for inclusion of public servants affected by floods
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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing over 50,000 public sector employees in KwaZulu-Natal and over 240,000 nationally, welcomes the recent announcement by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements (DHS) regarding the acquisition and refurbishment of the Montclair Lodge to accommodate disaster-affected individuals. This intervention is a progressive step toward long-term, state-owned emergency housing solutions and marks a positive shift from over-reliance on private accommodation facilities.

The PSA commends the DHS, under MEC Siboniso Duma, for recognising the urgency of developing sustainable housing for communities displaced by floods and other disasters. The R33 million acquisition of the Montclair Lodge, with an additional R35 million earmarked for refurbishment and R4.2 million for technical assessments, reflects a welcome move toward responsible, asset-based governance and disaster response readiness.

However, the PSA strongly urges the Department to expand its inclusion criteria to accommodate public servants who were also displaced by floods in previous years. A significant number of educators, healthcare workers, police officers, and other essential workers remain stranded in temporary shelters or substandard housing due to their ineligibility for home loans and lack of access to state housing support. These individuals have continued to serve the public under trying conditions and must be prioritised in current relief allocations.

The PSA recommends the following to ensure equitable access and social justice:

- The Department should categorise vulnerable public servants affected by past and recent floods as qualifying candidates for temporary and transitional housing support.
- The Montclair Lodge and similar future facilities should reserve a portion of units specifically for public sector employees who cannot access bonded housing or other forms of state relief.
- An interdepartmental verification panel should be formed to assess and prioritise applicants fairly, using transparent and objective criteria.
- Municipalities should be required to submit data on public servants affected by disasters to ensure accurate planning and targeted responses.
- Public sector unions, including the PSA, must be included in stakeholder consultations to ensure the voices of workers are represented in housing strategies.

The PSA further urges the DHS to ensure fast-tracked completion of renovations to allow occupation ahead of the December 2025-January 2026 rainfall season. Beyond infrastructure, comprehensive wraparound services must be integrated into this relocation effort, including psychosocial support, access to schools, clinics, and local transport systems.

The PSA will continue to monitor developments and engage relevant oversight structures to ensure that public servants are not excluded from relief interventions due to technical disqualifications or administrative oversight. This investment must not only alleviate immediate suffering but also restore dignity to those who form the backbone of public service delivery in KwaZulu-Natal.

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