

R381m for land claims

XOLANI DLAMINI

MORE than R381m has been set aside to pay out KZN land claimants in this financial year to overcome the backlog of compensation.

This comes at a time when the government has come under fire for the slow pace of land restitution in the country.

Advocate Bheki Mbili, the chief director of restitution in KZN, said they planned to settle about 51 outstanding claims soon. He said this at the weekend when R14.6m was paid out to claimants of the St Francis Xavier community who were forcefully removed in the late 1940s and 1950s and resettled in Umlazi and Glebelands.

The community of Sibubululu and their forefathers had occupied the land now known as Bluff under Inkosi Joe Moli before the arrival of missionaries.

The community had a degree of financial independence and were economically active in agricultural and livestock farming on large tracts of land. The area was part of the so-called "mission black spot". The Mission Reserve Act No 49 of 1903 empowered the Natal Native Trust to have full and complete control

of these reserves.

Speaking about the handover, agriculture and rural development MEC Cyril Xaba applauded the settling of claims to the 912 beneficiaries, 102 of whom are women with 11 being disabled.

"People lost their property, which included livestock, houses cultivation and grazing land. They started depending more on wage labour in the industries in Durban," Xaba said.

He said the Roman Catholic Church was given permission by the Sibubululu's traditional leader to establish a mission on tribal land so that they would establish schools to benefit people.

Xaba said history had to be taught to children so they understood the pain of the past and appreciated the freedom they see today.

"I can't believe this moment is here and we are compensated for what was taken from us long ago," Luisa Lamusa said. "I am going to pay all my debts. We lodged a claim in 1998. Eventually we see the results of our struggle now."

Community chairperson Mathew Xaba said: "We advise other land claimants to be patient."

provinces@thenewage.co.za



PLANNING AHEAD: KZN MEC Cyril Xaba with land reform director Bheki Mbili handing over a compensation voucher to a beneficiary.

Where has the money gone?



SHODDY: The crumbling chicken coop at President Zuma's house in Nkandla. PICTURE: HERBERT MPANGANE.



MORE RELIABLE THAN THE HYDRANT: Fire department members demonstrate to the media how the fire pool works. PICTURE: HERBERT MPANGANE.

DUDU DUBE

THERE is dilapidation and incomplete buildings rather than the splendid opulence of a multimillion-rand presidential homestead.

This was what a shocked media

came face to face with during a tour of the controversial Nkandla presidential precinct yesterday.

According to the SAPS' Lt-Gen Mondli Zuma just a handful of about 30 structures comprise the private abode of the president and his family.



EMPTY: The consulting rooms at the clinic were bare of any furnishings. PICTURE: GCIS.



WHAT SECURITY?: Yet to be installed CCTV monitors at the police control room. PICTURE: GCIS.

A few metres from the main gate is the visitors centre. "The visitors are processed at the gate. When people talk about benefits the president is supposed to have received, they are talking about this visitors centre," Zuma said. "But the president can't meet heads of state in his house with his children."

The police commander's office and CCTV camera room are incomplete. Construction had to be stopped during cost investigations by public protector Thuli Madonsela.

The much-talked-about amphitheatre is in reality a soil retention wall and emergency gathering spot.

The police barracks, which have been unoccupied since they were completed in 2013, were said to have cost about R6m each.