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EXCLUSIVE

# NPOs 'stealing in name of the poor'

*Non-profit milking Gauteng purse while vulnerable clients are left in abject poverty*

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NON-GOVERNMENTAL and non-profit organisations have been milking the Gauteng government's purse while the supposed people in need are being left in destitute states. *The Star* has blown open an NGO syndicate that costs the taxpayers billions of rand.

The Gauteng Social Development Department spends a whopping R2.3 billion a year on NPOs while the Western Cape spends R1bn, KZN R600 million and the remainder of the provinces below R500m each.

Premier Panyaza Lesufi drew ire earlier this year when he announced that NPO funding would be directed towards vulnerable children, the elderly and those with disabilities but it would also have to address food insecurity, substance abuse, homelessness and environmental sustainability.

Social Development, Agriculture, Food, Development and Environment

horrifying cases of corruption involving NPOs and some officials within the department. Among those in the spotlight is a homeless shelter at 2 Struben Street in Tshwane.

What was meant to be a homeless shelter taking care of the vulnerable to get them back on their feet is a glaring environmentally non-compliant structure, filled with uncollected waste, overflowing toilets, and filthy shacks within the building where about 600 people reside.

During a police raid on the facility, a number of illegal immigrants were arrested, along with those running the illicit cigarette and alcohol businesses at the facility. Needles and weapons were also confiscated by police.

"It is a human tragedy that our vulnerable who look to the department for help and care are subjected to such conditions by the NPO in question.

"Of great pain to me is to witness the number of young children within this facility, and drug usage, prostitution and illicit alcohol selling they are exposed to," said Hlophle.

"Our premier has been unambiguous that we will not tolerate corruption and those who steal in the name of the poor. Accordingly, we will leave no stone unturned, and the department

has immediately stepped up further



THE poor state of this homeless shelter in Tshwane went un-noticed by the authorities. | Gauteng Department of Social Development

The NPO has a service level agreement (SLA) in place with the City of Tshwane for the running of the homeless shelter, while funding comes from the provincial Social Development Department.

As per the SLA in place, the NPO

Shocking, in a report seen by *The Star*, the department's monitoring and evaluation reports conducted on the NPO indicate that it is functioning well.

Although department officials presented a sterling assessment, *The Star* arrived at Struben Street to be met by a starkly different scene. The NPO's officials

private property.

The department's head, Matilda Gasela, has thus far suspended officials implicated in the investigation, and the department has reviewed its NPO application, evaluation and monitoring processes to close gaps that enabled corrupt NPOs to receive millions of rand



"The City of Tshwane, together with the NPO, have failed the poor, as they are jointly responsible for the upkeep of the building. I have engaged MMC Peggy de Bruin from the City of Tshwane and we will be closing down this facility, whilst looking for alternative accommodation to house the homeless," Hlophle said. "Our investigations continue and we will be announcing the outcomes in due course. With the amount of money our province spends on NPOs, we should not be having so many social problems in the province.

"We appreciate the NPOs doing exceptional work within communities, and this investigation seeks to ensure that those who are deserving and hard-working are supported by our department, and we rid the system of corrupt NPOs and officials. We must thank the people for being the ones of