
The Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform

Ms Thoko Didiza

Per e-mail: PA.Minister@daff.gov.za

Dear Minister Didiza

IMPACT OF REPEATED CLOSURES OF THE CAPE TOWN DEEDS OFFICE

I am addressing this communication to you in order to highlight the dire situation in the property and related sectors in the Western Cape as a result of the repeated closures of the Deeds offices in Cape Town, and to appeal to you to intervene to ensure that the relevant officials in your department, notably the Chief Registrar, take the steps necessary to address the issue.

While it is indeed critical to prevent and minimise the spread of the coronavirus, the Covid-19 workplace safety protocols that the Deeds Office is implementing do not appear to be in alignment with the National Department of Health or Department of Employment and Labour guidelines and regulations with regards to the management of (suspected) positive cases and close contacts, cleaning and minimising infections.

In recent weeks I, as well as the Premier, Alan Winde, have had to deal with direct appeals from, and had engagements with, representatives from the various industry sectors impacted by the problem. Furthermore, officials from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) have had several engagements with management of the Deeds office in Cape Town, but the situation has recently worsened to such an extent that I have no alternative but to call on you to intervene.

The work performed by the officials of the Deeds offices around the country is of utmost importance: According to the Reserve Bank, total mortgage advances rose 6% to almost R1.5 trillion in 2019, and the mortgage market stood at 29.2% of the country's GDP. The completion of the property transactions involving these staggering figures are facilitated by your staff and it is accordingly imperative to find workable solutions to the problem. I attach hereto a letter addressed to Ms Carlize Knoesen, the Chief Registrar, by Mr Solly Fourie, the head of the DEDAT, which provides additional context to the problem.

While I am confident that Ms Knoesen will engage Mr Fourie, as per his request, it is necessary that you are apprised of the severity of the issue, in order to ensure that the necessary measures are taken to prevent the

collapse of more firms and, ultimately, sectors of the western Cape and South African economy that are vital to the economic survival and resurgence post the Covid-19 pandemic.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any additional information you may require. I will avail myself to meet, in person or virtually, should you prefer to do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Maynier', with a stylized flourish at the end.

MR DAVID MAYNIER

PROVINCIAL MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

DATE: 3 AUGUST 2020