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GAMING THE LOTTO

Tereasa Dias

MBOMBELA - The National Lottery Commission (NLC) gave a R22 million grant to a drug rehabilitation and sports centre without it being registered as a treatment centre with the Department of Social Development, a statutory requirement to operate such a facility.

Why the organisation was granted the large sum and how the Lotto ensures that the funds are spent correctly, remain unclear.

According to the head of the global investigation into Lotteries for South Africa, Raymond Joseph, the "rehab" in Mbombela is one of at least three that the NLC has funded around South Africa to the tune of around R23 million each.

Another rehab near Pretoria is still unfinished,

despite the NLC paying out R27 million. Roofs leak and doors and windows do not fit properly. A lapa on the property was converted into a "sports centre" at a cost of R5 million.

The grant for the centre on the Uitkyk Road was channelled via the South Africa Youth Movement (SAYM), a non-profit organisation (NPO). The organisation also has a sister body called the South Africa Youth Movement NPC (non-profit company). For both organisations have the same executive director, Alfred Muzwakhe Sigudhla.

He said his organisation had "gone through all the procedures" with the NLC. The grant consisted of R17 million for the rehabilitation centre and another R5 million for a sports centre on the same property.

Two years on, the area where the centre is being built is an overgrown, unfinished building site, despite the NLC saying

in September that it was "70 per cent complete" and that R20 million of a R22 million grant had been paid out to SAYM.

"We have not spent all the money yet that the Lottery Commission granted us. It is still in our account," Sigudhla said. He declined to provide the proof to *Lowvelder*.

In their financial statements for the NPO, salaries for 2016 were over R400 000. They increased to R9 million for 2017. Sigudhla stated that this was for their staff of over 200 people nationally, who are mostly builders they had to employ. "We are not just getting funding from the NLC. We are getting funding from the United Nations and we are busy with a R500 million project involving the Department of Cooperative Governance."

Lowvelder requested the application documents for the NLC grant and received ones related to a centre in the Free State and

Kuruman, Northern Cape.

Sigudhla said the Mpumalanga application was "confidential".

The provincial Department of Social Development (DSD) confirmed that SAYM was not registered to provide substance abuse treatment services in Mpumalanga. The Prevention of and Treatment of Substance Abuse Act requires this.

By his own admission, Sigudhla received the Lottery money in 2016.

He only applied to be registered as a treatment centre in May 2017. He is still awaiting this.

Sigudhla admitted that he was also not registered as a treatment centre in any other province.

Continued on page 2



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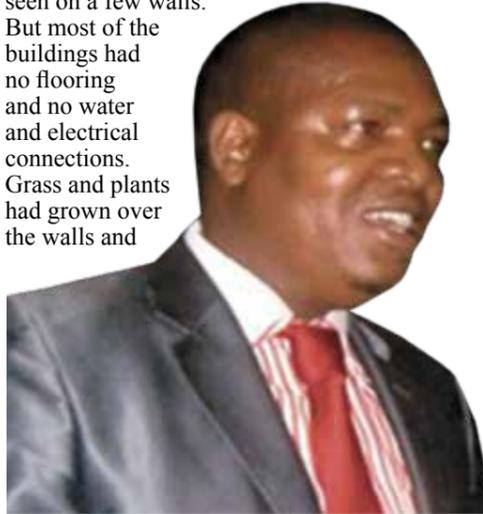
Many needy organisations receive no Lotto funding

Continued from page 1

He blamed the slow progress of the site to zoning issues. He purchased the property that September at a cost of R1,3 million, not knowing that it was zoned for agriculture. They started to build in October 2016. The municipality building inspector stopped the building in March 2017, due to the zoning problem.

Lowvelder visited the site. Neighbours confirmed that most of the structure and roof on the premises had already been built before the property was sold. Some rooms had been added and some new paint was seen on a few walls.

But most of the buildings had no flooring and no water and electrical connections. Grass and plants had grown over the walls and



Alfred Muzwakhe Sigudhla.

foundations, giving them the appearance of ruins. In September the Mbombela Property Tribunal approved the rezoning, subject to certain conditions being met.

City spokesman Joseph Ngala said such cases took a long time. "It depends on the merit of each case. The matter can go back and forth between parties, which can take years until it is resolved."

New building plans submitted by Sigudhla are now awaiting approval from the municipality, so that construction can begin again. He confirmed that he wanted the centre operational by February 2019.

Paul Schumann, the project architect, said Sigudhla's "heart was in the right place" in attempting to do the project. But he was not prepared for all the red tape when it came to building a facility of this scale.

But while some organisations receive millions in grants from the Lottery, many which are registered and able to provide the services are struggling to get money.

SANCA Lowveld's director, Marina Erasmus said while their organisation has a long-established facility, they struggled to get funding from the National Lottery Commission.

And once funding is granted, the recipient had to submit quarterly reports to prove how they were spending their grants.

"This usually accompanies a box or two of evidence of work being done on how we spend the money. Proof needs to be attached to that."

Erasmus said the province was not in need of more treatment facilities, as government was already building new ones and extending others. "We are in dire need of halfway houses for recovering addicts."

Thuli Masina, spokesman for the DSD, confirmed that their department had completed phase one of the Nkangala Inpatient Treatment Rehabilitation Centre in Ogies, which would accommodate 50 people. Once completed, the centre would accommodate 250 service users. "Phase one of the centre will not have a detoxification facility. However, the local hospital will provide the services."

The Swartfontein Rehabilitation Treatment Centre between White River and Hazyview has also been extended and now accommodates 100 patients.

Read more on page 4 and 5.

The National Lottery Commission denies the above allegations. The NLC's full response is printed on page 5.



The police officer who was injured during an unrest on Tuesday.

Anarchy at university

Bridget Mpande

MBOMBELA - The situation at the University of Mpumalanga is going from bad to worse.

On Tuesday a police officer suffered a serious injury to his head when he was hit by rocks thrown by the students.

The final exams for 2018 were stopped for the week.

There is a video circulating showing the dean of students, Paul Mamindza, and the executive director of finance, Kavin Pather, being escorted off campus by workers of the university, along with people who could not be identified.

It is alleged that the latter could be students.

The injured officer is in a stable condition in hospital.

The students and some of the workers said they are unhappy about the management at the institution.

The students have been protesting for the past few months, accusing management of corruption and nepotism.

In August they stopped classes and blocked roads, demanding that management address their grievances.

In September the university obtained an interdict against the student representative council (SRC) and students to stop protesting and violence on the campus.

They refused to do so and the president of SRC, Mcolisi Ngcamphalala, and Wandile Shabangu, the treasurer of the council and Mbombela CRC chairman, were suspended.

The university started spring recess early and sent the students home, but the court ruled that they could stay on campus.

Now they are demanding that a forensic investigation of the management committee be done and the vice-

chancellor be investigated.

Shabangu said on Tuesday the students responded to the call of the SRC that they should not show up at the examination venue.

"This is because their safety is not guaranteed, given the current situation on campus. The students want a forensic investigation to be done," he said.

Mpumalanga police commissioner, Lt Gen Mondli Zuma, condemned the incident on Tuesday.

Five people were arrested on that day for public violence. At the time of going to press they had not appeared in court.

When Themba Manana, from the university, was contacted he said he would respond to the newspaper's enquiries on Thursday. At the time of going to press, he had not yet done so.

A police officer suffered a serious injury to his head when he was hit by rocks thrown by the students

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