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**Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 804**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 16/03/2018**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 8 OF 2018)**

**Prof B Bozolli (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education and Training:**

Whether her department has undertaken a survey of the quality of student accommodation at all (a) universities and (b) technical and vocational education and training colleges in the past three years; if not, (i) why not and (ii) is such an evaluation planned in future; if so, what were the relevant findings in each case?

**NW889E**

**REPLY:**

1. (i)-(ii) The Department has not undertaken a survey of the quality of student accommodation at all universities over the past three years, because a comprehensive review was done in 2010 at all university campuses. A Ministerial Committee undertook a review and issued a *Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities,* inSeptember 2011. The report provided a comprehensive picture of the state of student accommodation at all universities as well as a projected shortfall of the number of beds at each university. Emanating from this review, the *Policy on the Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities (hereafter referred to as Policy)* was published in Government Gazette No. 39238 in September 2015. The Policy is still used to inform the development of new infrastructure and refurbishment of old infrastructure.

The Ministerial Review Report showed that the public university sector had sufficient spaces in university owned on-campus student accommodation for approximately 107 598 or 20% of the contact student population. The report estimated that 195 815 new beds were required to effectively house students who required accommodation. Between 2012/13 and 2014/15 the Department allocated R1.748 billion from infrastructure and efficiency funds towards the development of student housing.

The Ministerial Review Report recommended that universities should ideally be providing beds for 30% to 50% of contact students on campuses in urban areas where there is available and affordable off-campus accommodation, and 60% to 80% on rural campuses where there is less or inappropriate   
off-campus accommodation. Over time, all student accommodation should meet the norms and standards for conducive living and learning spaces.

The Department is working on a long term plan to address the provision of student housing across the university sector that will enable the development of approximately 200 000 bed on-campus or close-to-campus student housing over the next ten years, depending on funding made available and the feasibility of new funding models to accelerate development.

The plan is already being implemented as described below:

* Funding of R1.3 billion was allocated to 16 universities for student housing projects in 2015/16 and 2016/17.
* A further R1.1 billion has been allocated towards student housing projects during 2017/18. The number of beds that will be provided through this funding has not as yet been determined.
* The number of additional beds for 2020 onwards will only be known once the Minister approves the infrastructure and efficiency grant budget for the fifth funding cycle (2018/19 to 2020/21).

The Department is aware that many of the existing older student residences are not well maintained and require refurbishment. The Department has made funds available for backlog maintenance and universities are expected to make use of these funds, together with their own funds, for refurbishing residences that do not meet the minimum norms and standards as indicated in the Policy. In the case of private residences, universities undertake an accreditation process of the residences before students funded by NSFAS are placed in these residences.

1. (i)-(ii) The Department has undertaken a survey of the quality of student accommodation at all Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in the past three years.

Fifteen TVET colleges confirmed to have no student accommodation.   
Thirty-five TVET colleges confirmed that 99 buildings were identified for student accommodation with an estimated 12 979 beds.

The reported conditions of the 99 buildings for student accommodation are summarised as follows:

* 8 buildings are in a poor condition (not suitable for habitation);
* 30 buildings are in a fair condition (functional but require maintenance/ refurbishment); and
* 61 buildings are in a good condition (functional and in good working order).