**Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2867**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 15/09/2017**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 33 OF 2017)**

**Mr D Bergman (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education and Training:**

(a) What are the figures in respect of the shortage of beds at the University of Venda student accommodation facilities, (b) what amount has been allocated to the university for the construction of student accommodation over the past 10 years, (c) what is the status of the two residence construction projects at a cost of R135 million which are not yet housing students and (d) what steps is his department taking to address the accommodation crisis at the university?

**NW3174E**

**REPLY:**

1. The challenge of student housing at the University of Venda (Univen) is linked to the increasing student numbers at the institution. Given its rural setting, in an ideal situation accessible and affordable student accommodation facilities, whether owned by the university or privately owned, would be available for 80% of the student population. 80% of the 2016 student headcount enrolment is 10 798 students. The 2016 university bed capacity is 2165 beds. This means that student housing for approximately 8 633 students is required in addition to the current university stock.
2. Over the past 10 years R168.494 million has been allocated by the Department to Univen for the construction of student accommodation. R35.5 million was allocated over the 2010/11 to 2011/12 funding cycle and R132.994 million over the 2012/13 to 2014/15 cycle.
3. Two residence construction projects, one intended to house 320 female students and the other 314 male students, at a cost of R135 million, are unfinished. The projects have been abandoned by the contractors. The reason reported for the abandonment by the contractor, who had won the tender for both student housing projects, is that the contractor had cash flow challenges and then realised that they had under-quoted for the work and would not be able to complete the projects within the amount approved by the university. The university has launched an investigation into the circumstances that led to the abandonment. The university has calculated the funds required to complete the projects and is currently raising additional funds to do this. It should be noted that there is a further student housing project currently underway at Univen funded by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) that is progressing well. This will provide an additional 1800 beds for the 2018 academic year.
4. The need for student housing is a system wide challenge. The Department has supported Univen through its Infrastructure and Efficiency Grant as indicated in (b) above and will support them further in the next funding cycle (2018/19 to 2020/22), once it has solved the problem of the current projects and is in a position to manage a new set of projects. In addition the Department supported Univen to gain Ministerial approval to take on a loan of R300 million through DBSA for the additional R1800 beds mentioned in (c) above. The Department is currently undertaking feasibility studies at five universities and one Technical Vocational Education and Training college, supported by the Integrated Infrastructure Programme of South Africa (IIPSA), to identify effective funding models to accelerate student housing for the university sector.

COMPILER/CONTACT PERSONS:

EXT:

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

STATUS:

DATE:

QUESTION 2867 APPROVED/NOT APPROVED/AMENDED

PROF. HB MKHIZE, MP

MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

STATUS:

DATE: