



28 June 2016

NU press statement: Anglican Arch-Bishop Thabo Makgoba and religious leaders object to the sale of Tafelberg

Religious leaders across Cape Town have pleaded with Premier Helen Zille to stop the sale of the Tafelberg site. Along with urban planners, academics, rights organisations, and ordinary Cape Town residents they demand that the site be developed, through affordable housing delivery, as a symbol of healing and unity in our city. Their submissions constitute a strong bloc in the 937 submissions gathered by Reclaim the City, with support from Ndifuna Ukwazi (NU).

These objections to the sale of Tafelberg were delivered to the Western Cape Department of Public Works on 9 June 2016: the deadline for public participation on the proposed sale. These currently sit with Premier Helen Zille and Provincial Cabinet, who are due to decide on the proposed sale in the coming weeks.

In his objection, Anglican Arch Bishop of Cape Town Thabo Makgoba recalled that his church's parishes were devastated and fragmented by apartheid and the segregation of people under the Group Areas Act.

"We believe that when public land becomes available for development, it is crucial to the development of a stable and peaceful city for the generations to come that every possible effort is made to break the residential and social patterns forced upon the city by apartheid, and to provide for a good mix of housing in all parts of the city, including affordable housing close to the major forms of economic activity," he wrote.

Reverend Alan Storey of the Cape Town Central Methodist Church wrote that the development of affordable housing on the Tafelberg site was an opportunity for a measure of reconciliation between people across barriers of class and race.

"For people of economic privilege to live exclusively amongst other people of economic privilege is a profoundly impoverished existence," he said, lamenting the lack of desegregation in Cape Town since the end of apartheid.

Imam Rashied Omar, of Claremont Main Road Mosque, also objected to the sale, saying that it would be "unjust" and would "perpetuate" apartheid and inequality in Cape Town.

“We remain adamant that well-located land is a scarce resource. State-owned land in such locations should be preserved and used for the benefit of all the people, particularly the poor. We strongly object to the sale of this land and feel it would be a wasted opportunity to right the wrongs of the past – but more importantly to construct a future for Cape Town as a ‘City for All’ and not only for the rich,” he said.

Other religious leaders who objected include Dean Gerhard De Vries-Bock of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa; Reverend Clifford Stokes of the Catholic Church in Sea Point; Bishop Augustine Joemath of the Moravian Church in South Africa; Reverend E Theunissen of the Moravian Church in South Africa; and the Quakers in the Western Cape. Please find all these submissions attached to this statement.

For queries:

Daneel Knoetze (Communications, Ndifuna Ukwazi): 073 535 8401