

Whither low-cost housing?

With about two million people still waiting for a house, the need for low-cost sustainable houses in SA is vital. Questions however remain over the ultimate price of this imperative to roll out housing as fast as possible. And just how sustainable is government's "programme to provide sustainable human settlements"?

Joel Kopping

Housing is a priority for government. Finance Minister Trevor Manuel said in the 2008 National Budget Review that government would "step up housing delivery, focusing on coordination and synchronisation of delivery of all related community services, such as water, sanitation and electricity". Government is still working towards upgrading and eradicating informal settlements.

Manuel strengthened the department of housing's budget and said he would review the depreciation allowances for employer-provided low-cost housing to encourage such "partnerships between government, the financial sector, developers and social housing organisations that are needed for a vibrant, fast-growing affordable housing sector".

However, government, which is rolling out about 260 000 housing units a year in addition to the more than 70 000

Township property prices are rising fast. Pic: Thembinkosi Dwayisa.

