

# Bigger housing role for councils

**BACKLOG:** Six towns to run RDP programmes

**THOBANI NGQULUNGA**

MSUNDUZI and five other municipalities have been given powers to run their own RDP housing programmes in a bid to speed up service delivery.

Human Settlement MEC Ravi Pillay said yesterday the delegation of these powers to local government was aimed at improving the delivery of low-cost housing in the province.

To date, only eThekweni Metro has powers to deliver RDP houses in KwaZulu-Natal, a function reserved for the Department of Human Settlements.

Pillay said restricting this function only to one entity (the Human Settlements Department) had slowed down delivery and created huge backlogs.

"We have come to sign the implementation protocol with the six high-capacity municipalities that have qualified for accreditation in terms of the accreditation framework," he added.

Pillay said the six municipalities were assessed by an independent "capacity, compliance assessment panel" in October 2011.

The five other accredited municipalities are Newcastle,

Emnambithi-Ladysmith, Hibiscus Coast, kwaDukuza and uMhlathuze.

Msunduzi and Hibiscus Coast were granted level one status, which gives them powers only to plan settlements but not build, while the other four received both level one and level two accreditation, giving them powers to plan and develop areas.

A total of R34,8 million has been budgeted, of which Msunduzi will get R13 million, for the municipalities to implement the project.

Pillay warned the six municipalities that the accreditation certificates could be withdrawn if they performed poorly.

However, his department would continue to monitor the performance of municipalities in this regard.

"The municipalities will be required to report monthly, quarterly and annually regarding the performance and progress of their human settlements projects," he said.

Municipal manager Mxolisi Nkosi said Pillay's announcement was good news because Msunduzi could now fast-track housing development.

• [thobani.ngqulunga@witness.co.za](mailto:thobani.ngqulunga@witness.co.za)