

# Mariannridge residents hope for better homes

**Zakithi Dlamini**

**AFTER** several attempts by Mariannridge residents to have their voices heard over better housing, officials have decided to listen to them.

The eThekweni Municipality and the Provincial Housing Department have promised Mariannridge residents that the building of houses will be speeded up. This was at a meeting with eThekweni mayor, James Nxumalo and Housing MEC, Ravi Pillay in Mariannridge community hall on Friday.



**Housing MEC, Ravi Pillay.**

The promise followed the recent riots by angry residents who have been waiting for houses for many years who also felt their grievances were not being heard.

MEC Pillay said: "The refurbishment of council flats had been budgeted for in this financial year.

"The land had been identified for housing, however, I would like to appeal to the residents to be patient as several processes had to be completed, including environmental impact assessment studies, before houses could be built. We won't take short cuts, but we will fast-track the process as we are dealing with an extraordinary case," Pillay said.

He told residents that the government



**Residents show excitement about the news delivered to them.**

was building a non-racial society and urged the residents to claim their space.

Mayor, James Nxumalo said, "There are over 500 informal settlements in eThekweni and more than 400 000 people, including you, that need housing. We build 16 000 units a year, which is not enough. It is a drop in the ocean."

During the meeting, residents formed a six-person steering committee that will meet the municipality's housing department. Residents also urged the officials to put all their promises in

black and white and that contractors, artisans and labourers from the community be given first preference.

Msizi Chonco, of the city's housing unit, said that land identified for a high-rise housing development would accommodate up to 500 people.

Katherina Kaswart, 75, a resident said she was happy about the meeting's outcome.

"It was powerful and peaceful. I hope this time the promises will be fulfilled. I've been living in the area in those flats for 36 years now. I don't want to die in them. I'm hoping for a better home."