



Keynote Speech by the MEC of the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements at the Launch of Ha Bo Rona Student Accommodation

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The contractor

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, and most importantly, the students who will call Ha Bo Rona home,

It is both a privilege and a pleasure to stand before you today as we celebrate the official launch of the Ha Bo Rona Student Accommodation. This project is not just a building; it represents our commitment to addressing the critical needs of students in Gauteng and advancing social transformation in our province. "Ha Bo Rona" means "our home", and it certainly feels like we are home.

The Gauteng Partnership Fund (GPF) plays a vital role in this journey. Tasked with the responsibility of addressing the challenges of student accommodation, the GPF has worked diligently alongside the National Department of Higher Education and Training. Together, we strive to meet the objectives that guide this project:

1. Addressing the shortage of student accommodation in Gauteng while facilitating spatial transformation for Historically Disadvantaged Individuals (HDIs) by providing affordable housing in well-connected areas.
2. Contributing towards the acceleration of social transformation by improving the quality of life for HDIs through decent shelter that is close to transport, work, and other amenities.
3. Empowering black developers to actively participate in the affordable residential property market, fostering a more inclusive economy.

Ha Bo Rona is strategically located on Hanny Street in East Pretoria Gardens, consisting of a seven-story unit block that houses 308 beds across 77 units, each measuring 53 square meters. Its proximity—just 34 kilometers from the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)—ensures that students have easy access to their educational institution, thereby enhancing their academic experience. The main campus is much closer.

Construction of this impressive facility began in May 2022 and was completed in October 2023. I am delighted to report that the building is already 80% occupied, a clear testament to the demand for quality student accommodation in our province.

As we celebrate this significant milestone, it is essential to recognize the importance of this project. Ha Bo Rona is more than a place to stay; it is a community, a space for learning, growth, and connection. I urge every occupant to take pride in this facility—guard it, care for it, and treat it as your own home. Your stewardship will ensure that future generations of students can also benefit from this remarkable space.

However, we must also acknowledge the challenges that our province faces, particularly regarding water shortages. Water is a precious resource, and it is vital that we use it responsibly. I encourage all residents to be mindful of their water consumption—whether that means taking shorter showers, using water-efficient appliances, or being conscious of how we use water in our daily routines. Every small action can contribute to a significant impact.

In closing, the launch of Ha Bo Rona is a significant step towards addressing the urgent need for student accommodation in Gauteng. Together, we are not only

providing housing but also fostering an environment where students can thrive, grow, and contribute to society.

Thank you for being part of this momentous occasion. Let us move forward together, committed to building a better future for our students and our communities.