

Observatory Forensic Pathology Institute nears completion

On 2 September 2022, Western Cape Provincial Minister of Health, Nomafrench Mbombo conducted an oversight visit to Observatory Forensic Pathology Institute (OFPI).



Source: [Flxabay](#)

This new Institute will replace the Salt River mortuary, which was built during 1954.

The R280m OFPI is a large, modern three-story building that integrates the work of the provincial Forensic Pathology Services (FPS), that of National Laboratory Services, and the facilities that support the University of Cape Town's academic training field.

Mbombo welcomed the progress made at the site: "This investment will ensure we are able to expand our service offering to include a wider range of high end services such as toxicology-, molecular-, and dental laboratories services, to identify cause of death."

Mbombo stated further: “We are adamant to deliver quality services because we know that they will also help solve crimes, an issue that we as a provincial government are tackling head on. With this top-end service, we can drive the connection between criminals and crime, resulting in more convictions and a strong message to criminals that in our province, crime has consequences.”

This joint venture between the Western Cape Department of Health and the Department of Public Works, will provide Level 4 forensic services aimed at not only “storing” remains but extracting, analysing, and preserving the integrity of evidence, in support of the medico-legal investigation of death in support of the criminal justice system.

Though much progress has been made, the three-storey building is currently undergoing the final stages of practical completion, with all works, including snags, due to be finalised in February 2023.

It is important to note that FPS plays a crucial role in the delivery of essential services to people of the Western Cape in providing closure to many in determining cause of death in unnatural deaths.

Mbombo calls on the contractors to have the snags fixed with a level of urgency.

Mbombo stated that in developing this facility, considerations were given to the 2030 vision, focused to give access to person-centered quality care. With an estimated amount of 4,000 admissions per year being received, FPS officials conduct 20 autopsies a day.

With the constant case increase in the Western Cape, the new facility comes with additional dissection areas and has viewing rooms that are on an international standard.

The objective is to make the identification process for families as gentle as possible. A garden and reflection space will be available to family members who identify the bodies of the deceased.

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