

SASAPA Affirms Support for NSFAS-NMU Onboarding and Rejects Private Sector Interference

23 JANUARY 2026 – The South African Student Accommodation Providers Association (SASAPA) has issued a formal statement confirming its unwavering support for the full onboarding of Nelson Mandela University (NMU) into the NSFAS Student Accommodation Project.

This follows a pivotal meeting on January 22, 2026, where NSFAS, NMU, and solution partner reached a consensus to integrate **4,000 student beds** into the centralized national portal.

A Mandate for Transparency and Accountability

SASAPA highlights that the decision to centralize student housing, originally taken in 2022, is a necessary measure for fiscal accountability. With NSFAS spending over **R14 billion annually** on accommodation, the association maintains that the state must be directly responsible for the management and oversight of these taxpayer-funded resources.

The agreement at NMU is seen as a vital step in enforcing **Circular 1 of 2023**, which directed all public universities and TVET colleges to cease entering into independent private contracts for student housing and direct payments.

Concerns Over External Interference

While SASAPA welcomes the cooperation between NSFAS and NMU, the association has raised concerns regarding a recent push by the Private Student Housing Association (PSHA) to reject the onboarding process. SASAPA characterizes this opposition as an attempt by private interests to override a national directive.

"We find it concerning that confidential details of the NMU consensus were seemingly shared with external organizations to facilitate an objection," said Inga Ncomanzi, CEO of SASAPA. "The arguments raised against the project do not reflect the views of the broader landlord community. In reality, **80% of accommodation providers support the portal** because it introduces a standardized, transparent rate and removes the inefficiencies of the previous system."

A Result of Broad Consultation

SASAPA reminded stakeholders that the centralized housing model was established following extensive consultations with the Ministry of Higher Education, USAf, SAUS, and SATVETSA. The association notes that the current move towards full onboarding is the culmination of years of engagement, intended to provide safe and conducive housing for over 400,000 disadvantaged students.

Call to Action

SASAPA urges NSFAS and NMU to proceed with the integration of the 4,000 beds as agreed, without further delay. The association calls on all institutions identified in the 2023 pilot project to follow this example, ensuring that institutional interests do not supersede the national mandate for a unified and transparent student housing sector.
