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**SOLAR POWER:** The roofs of the new eco-friendly housing project in Steenberg sport scores of solar panels and solar geysers. The first 450 units of the project are ready for tenants. PICTURE: BRENTON GEACH

# Western Cape gets sun smart with new social housing project

## Energy-conscious development in Steenberg

**ZARA NICHOLSON**

IN A FIRST for the Western Cape a new R40 million eco-friendly social housing project will see its first tenants move in tomorrow.

A year after construction on the development started on open land on Military Road opposite Steenberg Station, the first block has been completed.

The Steenberg Social Rental Housing Project is an energy-conscious development, and each one- or two-bedroomed flat has a solar geyser on the roof.

Zalisile Mbali, spokesman for the Western Cape's Department of Local Government and Housing, said the project was a rental housing option for people



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earning between R2 500 and R7 500 a month.

It would be managed by accredited social housing institutions.

"Steenberg is in a restructuring zone which means it is near public transport and in an established or expanding economic and social area. Local land was available in an area where the present property market excludes households with incomes ranging between R2 500 and R7 500," Mbali said.

The Social Housing Company is building and

managing the project in partnership with the Department of Local Government and Housing and the city of Cape Town.

The project consists of 450 units in several blocks.

The development is expected to be completed in December.

Mbali said the tenants were chosen from the city's housing demand database, and criteria included income, creditworthiness, and lack of a criminal record.

In addition, subsidy checks had been conducted to verify the credibility of applicants.

The units were not for sale, and were seen as providing a housing "stepping stone" towards home ownership until the financial position of

the households improved, Mbali said.

"This is the first social rental housing project in the Western Cape partnered by all spheres of government and the private sector," he said.

"Provinces like the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Gauteng already have social housing projects.

"Steenberg Social Rental Project has a phase two which will cater for additional 210 units.

"There are more social housing projects in the pipeline."

Another company, Communicare, is developing the Drommedaris Social Rental Project in Milnerton, which has 219 units.