

## Big housing project coming to Jhb

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Another massive, affordable housing project on a similar scale to Cosmo City will soon emerge on the southern outskirts of Johannesburg.

Life insurance giant Old Mutual has partnered with developer Basil Read to bring some 18,000 housing units to the Greater Johannesburg market over the next eight years.

The housing units will form part of an integrated, mixed-use scheme to be named Doornkuil. The R7,8bn deal signed between Old Mutual Investment Group SA (OMIGSA) and Basil Read Developments earlier this week is believed to be the largest private sector housing development yet undertaken in SA. The project will offer prospective buyers a wide price range of houses - from around R300k to over R1m.



Derrick Msibi, executive director of OMIGSA, says some 1 462 hectares of agricultural land has already been bought for the proposed development. The Doornkuil land is adjacent to Orange Farm in the Midvaal municipal area. Stretford Station, one of Gauteng's busiest train stations, is situated on the corner of the property.

Msibi says besides affordable housing, the new suburb will offer schools, sports fields, parks, libraries, community centres and other community facilities. A retail and commercial property component for offices and shops will also be added.

Msibi expects Basil Read to break ground mid-2009 once all the zoning and municipal approvals are in place. The rollout of the project will take place over the following seven years.

OMIGSA will fund the project and provide end-user finance for buyers. Basil Read will base the design of Doornkuil on its highly successful Cosmo City development on the northwestern outskirts of Johannesburg.

Meanwhile, figures released this week by the Banking Association SA show that 2,3m families in SA still don't have access to decent shelter. Pierre Venter, head of the Banking Association SA's affordable housing initiative, maintains that annual housing delivery needs to triple if the current housing backlog of 2,3m units is to be eliminated within 10 years.

Venter says roughly 55,000 affordable homes - typically sized below 80sq m and priced below R250 000 - were built in last year. That number will have to be increased to at least 165,000 per annum to make any noticeable dent in SA's housing backlog, says Venter. - Joan Muller