

Developers confirm scientist complaint

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STAFF REPORTER

THE DEVELOPERS of the Northgate residential development have confirmed that a complaint was laid with the Department of Economic Affairs, Tourism, Environment and Conservation, that certain officials at the department were not neutral or unbiased and that they should not act on behalf of the department when reviewing the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the development.

In a statement from Rapitrade 555 t/a Northern Cape Property Investment Holdings and Group 1 Group of Companies, the developers said they also wanted to place on record "that the officials publicly confronted and opposed local government through the Save the Flamingo campaign".

"These officials are employees of local government; hence we presume that this was the cause of their suspension. The developer cannot, however, comment on the decision by DTEC as this is an internal matter which will be dealt with by the necessary appointed government officials."

Three scientists from the Department of Economic Affairs, Tourism, Environment and Conservation, Mark Anderson, Julius Koen and Eric Hermann, from the department's scientific investigations section, were suspended last week, apparently as a



THE SAVE the flamingo campaign, aimed at saving Kamfers Dam's birds, have landed government officials in hot water.

Picture: www.savetheflamingo.co.za

result of complaints received about their attempts to secure the future of the globally threatened lesser flamingo at Kamfers Dam for posterity.

In their statement, the developers said they supported the Save the Flamingo Campaign, in that it endeavoured to protect the habitat of the flamingos, "a goal which is in line with that of the developers".

"To this end the developers signed the petition and made donations to the fund. The donations were, however, returned."

They added that the flamingo island was situated within Kamfers Dam and was not on the property which was being re-

zoned for the housing development.

"An extensive EIA and EMP have been commissioned and completed to ensure the protection and conservation of the flamingos," the statement said.

Regarding recent allegations that have emerged of impropriety, the developers said that "with the exception of Advocate Sehunelo (in his previous capacity as municipal manager), no government official, local or national, past or present, family members, trusts, closed corporations or companies associated with any government official, past or present are shareholders or are represented on the Board of Directors of the development company or Group 1 Developments.

"The developer would also like to place on record that no favours, gifts or payments have been made to any government official, past or present in order to solicit support or favour in the application or approval of the Northgate development.

"The support forthcoming from government officials, municipal officials and prominent members of the public is due to the desire to supply affordable housing to the people of Kimberley and the upliftment of the Roodepan area."

The Northgate housing development consists of 6 406 residential units, shopping malls, commercial erven, schools, places of worship and public facilities.