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Throwing out Albert Park blacks not in country's best interests: Nat MP

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Political Reporter

THROWING out onto the streets the hundreds of black people who live illegally in Albert Park would not be in the interests of South Africa, says Mr Piet Matthee, National Party MP for Umbilo.

Instead he has called for a workable, possible and positive strategy to tackle the problem.

This would involve setting up free settlement areas into which to draw the black tenants of Albert Park, and an immediate crackdown on criminal behaviour in the area.

He also envisaged the Durban City Council acting energetically to uphold hygiene standards and prevent overcrowding.

Albert Park falls partly in Mr Matthee's Umbilo seat and partly in the Durban Point seat held by Mr Cliff Matthee of the National Party. Russell Street is the dividing line. In recent years hundreds of black people have moved into the Albert Park area.

Mr Piet Matthee stressed yesterday that he could not condone people breaking the Group Areas Act and he saw Albert Park as a

white area that would never be suitable for free settlement.

However, he felt that many of the black tenants had genuine housing needs and he blamed people who helped them break the Group Areas Act for the situation that had developed in Albert Park. Mr Matthee accused them of exploiting the blacks and said they should be taken to task.

But Mr Matthee said the problem "must be tackled in a positive way". He envisaged making suitable land available for housing and the rapid development of free settlement areas such as the Warwick triangle and Greyville's Block AK. He foresaw black people being persuaded to move there.

This would take time to sort out, Mr Matthee said, because "we are dealing with people, not objects".

"But in the meantime there can be no dragging down of standards especially in social behaviour and law and order."

He said he had spoken to Mr Adriaan Vlok, Minister of Law and Order, and to General Hennie de

Witt, Commissioner of the South African Police, who were to visit Albert Park to see the situation there for themselves.

Mr Matthee said residents of Albert Park, black and white, had an obligation to maintain socially acceptable living conditions, especially hygienic conditions. It was up to the Durban City Council to ensure this.

Mr Matthee said he was to take up the matter with the council as a matter of urgency. Tenants not meeting these norms "should get out irrespective of their colour," he said.

"It will not be in the best interests of South Africa to put the hundreds of black tenants out in the street without suitable alternative places to live. It is no good saying what certain white voters in Albert Park want to hear."

He accused the Conservative Party of giving white voters false hopes by claiming they would kick out all the blacks: "Let's look to a workable possible solution to this. We must be positive about it."

TREFWOORDE

1. Matthee
2. Kammann
3. K. van der ...
4. V. ...
5. S. ...
6. V. ...
7. Albert ...
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9. Political ...
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