

**PREMIER HELPS BLIND WOMAN**

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Hardship: Emily Tshabalala, right, tells the premier about her difficult living conditions. Picture: Maryna van Wyk

When blind 60-year-old Emily Tshabalala from Arlington slowly walked to the front of the giant tent where Free State Premier Ace Magashule was addressing the community about their service delivery problems, his heart melted.

Tshabalala told the premier in front of the thousands of people in the marquee on the sports grounds in Arlington about her hardship. She lives in a corrugated shack which is not strong enough to withstand the regular rains. As a result of her blindness, she is mostly confined to her damp home.

Magashule immediately promised the woman that she would soon be the proud owner of a new house, even if he had to pay for it from his own pocket.

The premier and his executive committee visited Arlington in October to launch social development campaign under the banner of Operation Hlasela. Hlasela is an NGO driven by Magashule and partners to raise funds to alleviate social ills suffered by people like Tshabalala.

During the visit to Arlington, the Free State government also launched a project in which the Reahola and Tiisetsang Crèche, the Lerapo Primary School, the Leratswana Clinic and 50 families will be assisted by the department of agriculture to cultivate their own vegetables.

Magashule handed over garden tools, wheelbarrows, vegetable seeds and fertiliser. He told the residents the seeds would not only grow vegetables such as beans, beetroot, cabbage, carrots and swiss chard within weeks, but also the prosperity of the Leratswana community.

Earlier, Magashule met with the different stakeholders in the community at the town hall to evaluate the progress of projects in the area. "Projects such as building a library in town, need to be sped up, along with the rehabilitation of the roads," he said.

He urged the mayor and municipal manager of the Nketoana municipality to appoint the right people in open vacancies as the municipality needed to function effectively.

"Stop the bribes. Employ the right people. The ANC needs stability," he stated.

He told councillors to communicate with their communities on a regular basis. “If you stay aloof, they will march every day,” he said.

Magashule was told the paving of streets was already underway in the township while the main access road to Arlington was 60% complete.

The premier and the MECs also visited the old police station, a feeding scheme for disadvantaged and orphaned children in Arlington and the Itumeleng Luncheon Club for the elderly.

[Source: [www.thenewage.co.za](http://www.thenewage.co.za)]