

SAT STAR Oct 18 - 2014

## Community housing ombudsman announced

PERSONAL FINANCE

People who own property in sectional title and other community schemes at last have a free dispute resolution mechanism in the form of the long-awaited ombudsman for community schemes.

Themba Mthethwa, the former chief executive of the Public Protector's office, has been appointed the chief ombud. Mthethwa, an attorney, was introduced to members of the portfolio committee for human settlements this week, Makashule Gana, the shadow minister of Human Settlements for the Democratic Alliance, says.

Gana says the office of the ombud is not yet fully operational and the new ombud gave no indication when it will be up and running. The spokesperson for the Minister of Human Settlements did not respond to messages left by Personal Finance.

The Community Schemes Ombud Services Act was promulgated in June 2011, providing for the establishment of the Community Scheme Ombud Service. The service will provide a dispute resolution mechanism for people living in communal schemes and the administrators of these schemes. The ombud's powers will also cover shareblock schemes, homeowners' associations, housing cluster schemes and retirement housing schemes. - *Angelique Ardé*