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WILLS WEEK

# Government backs free wills draft

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IN commemoration of National Wills Week, South African-based lawyer firms across the country are channeling their goodwill by extending part of their services to the public free of charge.

National Wills Weeks (NWW) is an initiative organised by the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) every year between September 11 and 15. Since its inception, the week-long event has allowed members of the general public to have their basic wills drafted by qualified and experienced attorneys.

This year, in line with the objective of NWW, the Western Cape government has also added its voice, calling on the general public to make use of the week-long event.

The provincial government's Department of Infrastructure at the weekend made a call to all its housing beneficiaries to seize the opportunity and have their wills drafted.

According to the department, over time it had been noted that in many cases the transition of property ownership following the passing of a housing beneficiary can be a complex and emotional process, often leading to disputes among family members.

The department said it had chosen to utilise NWW to promote clarity and empower its housing beneficiaries.

Western Cape Department infrastructure head Jacqueline Gooch said having a legally drafted will was not merely a formality, but an essential step to ensuring that the wishes and intentions of housing beneficiaries were respected.

She said: "In the absence of a will, the beneficiary's home and any assets are distributed by the Interstate Succession Act."

Gooch said the public should be aware that the department legally cannot get involved in the allocation of a house should the recipient pass, with or without a will.

"Following the initial handover, a house becomes the personal property and asset of the housing beneficiary," she said.

For more information and assistance, the public can contact the Law Society of South Africa on 012 366 8800 or email [ssa@ssa.org.za](mailto:ssa@ssa.org.za) for a list of Western Cape Attorneys participating in National Wills Week 2023. Alternatively, please visit <https://www.ssa.org.za/our-initiatives/advocacy/national-wills-week/western-cape-attorneys-participating-in-the-ssa-national-wills-week-2023/>