

Scant welfare provision criticised

BY WENDY JASSON DA COSTA

There is evidence of low political prioritisation of welfare-service provision in South Africa, according to the Financial and Fiscal Commission.

The commission said yesterday only R2,4-billion was budgeted for the social/welfare services programme in the 2005/6 financial year, compared to R55,4-billion for social assistance grants and R213,8-billion for total provincial spending.

The commission also found that the formula for funding housing development had a number of shortcomings. It was found to be biased against rural provinces, as it did not include traditional housing like mud houses in the calculation of provincial backlogs.

It also failed to take into account regional peculiarities, disparities and disabilities, such as the difference in the cost of building a house to meet certain minimum standards.

The commission has also recommended, among other things, that the National School Nutrition Grant be refined.

Public hearings on the recommendations will be held tomorrow.

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