



## NEWSFLASH

### Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital faces funding crisis



It took R1-billion in donations to build the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital in Johannesburg, but nine months after its launch party, the world-class facility is not fully open yet and lacks funding to cover operational costs.

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The hospital was built by the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and was envisaged to be a state-of-the-art facility for children needing cancer treatment, dialysis or heart operations. It was supposed to open in December 2016, but took in its first patients only late in June 2017. The hospital boasts top-of-the-range equipment, theatres that can broadcast operations to remote locations for training or for communicating with specialists abroad.

**However, the hospital has never been part of government's long-term infrastructure or budgeting plans, and it needs half-a-billion rand to cover annual operating expenses. It received only R150-m from the Treasury for the 2017-18 financial.**

Government-owned tertiary hospitals are funded 65% by the national government and 35% by the government of the province in which they are located.

Hospital CEO Mandisa Maholwana said the government “endorsed and committed to supporting the hospital as early as 2009”. But the Treasury said it never made such an undertaking as the hospital was built by a non-profit organisation prior to receiving any formal financial commitments by government. An agreement between the trust and government was signed only in 2016.

The Treasury has not promised funding after the 2019-20 financial year, but would “re-evaluate as the commissioning takes place and in line with performance”.



The Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital could be mistaken for a "children's hotel" (Pictures from the website)