



Werksmans Consumer Law Clinic Diepsloot

Background on Diepsloot

Diepsloot is a township in the North of Johannesburg, bordering the R511 (William Nicol Drive) between Dainfern and the N17 Highway. It is approximately 22km from Johannesburg offices. According to the community website www.diepsloot.com, the formal township Diepsloot West Extension 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 comprise of about 7139 households and the informal part (which is dotted around Extension 3, 5, 6, and the Reception area) has an estimated population of about 15 900 families. This translates to about 200 000 people. Settlement of this area dates back to the mid 90's when residents were relocated there from Zevenfontein. Further relocations from Alexandra and Honeydew have caused the growth in the township. Many residents of Diepsloot live in shacks, with an estimated half of the population in the settlement being unemployed.

Signature Project

**In February 2012,
Werksmans launched its
signature Pro Bono project
- a fully functioning law clinic
in Diepsloot township.**

There is no formal provision of free legal assistance (including via the legal aid board or legal justice centres) in the Diepsloot area. The closest available court services are in Pretoria and in Randburg.

Our Community Partner: Afrika Tikkun

Afrika Tikkun is a public benefit, non-governmental organisation that aims to transform South African communities by caring for vulnerable children and their families in six townships and informal settlements, including Diepsloot. Afrika Tikkun has identified a dire need for access to pro bono legal services in Diepsloot. Its mission is to make a meaningful difference in South Africa by caring for vulnerable children and empowering them and those who impact the lives of these children. Afrika Tikkun runs the Wings of Life Community Centre in Diepsloot, aimed at uplifting the local community. On the adjoining property is the Zikhuliseni Skills Centre, which is home to a computer training centre and sewing skills project, and now the Werksmans Consumer Law Clinic. These premises are easily accessible by members of the community – situated very near to several schools and just behind the Diepsloot Mall.

Services on offer

Diepsloot is characterised by the entrepreneurial spirit of its residents – it is a bustle of informal trading and enterprise, where goods and services range from pavement based butcheries and hair dressers to gold coin exchanges. It is for this reason that our law clinic's focus is on free legal services specifically orientated towards low income consumers.

We offer legal services relating to the following types of queries:

- > consumer protection queries in terms of the Consumer Protection Act
- > queries under the National Credit Act
- > understanding any type of contract including instalment sale agreements, cell phone contracts etc;
- > queries on retirement policies, funeral cover and insurance policies;
- > review of social grant applications that SASSA has already refused;
- > assistance with court cases or recovering debt that is owing.

Our services are available to low income consumers who are either unemployed or earning a gross monthly household income below the threshold set by the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, which is currently R7000 per month or less.

Uplifting individuals through skills creation

An exciting element of the Werksmans Consumer Law Clinic is that of skills development. Afrika Tikkun has provided us with a post matric intern who is tasked with the administration support at the law clinic. The intern is trained in basic office administration and client interaction, as well as assisting with translation when required. The practical experience gained will better equip the intern for future employment opportunities.

Educating the community

The Werksmans Consumer Law Clinic also stocks information on other resources for free legal services and assistance on consumer related issues. Our services also include educational workshops relating to responsible consumer behaviour.

About us

Established in the early 1900s, Werksmans Attorneys is a leading South African corporate and commercial law firm serving multinationals, listed companies, financial institutions, entrepreneurs and government. Werksmans operates in Gauteng and the Western Cape, and is connected to an extensive African network through Lex Africa*.

With a formidable track record in mergers and acquisitions, banking and finance, and commercial litigation and dispute resolution, the firm is distinguished by the people, clients and work that it attracts and retains.

Werksmans' more than 170 lawyers are a powerful team of independent-minded individuals who share a common service ethos. The firm's success is built on a solid foundation of insightful and innovative deal structuring and legal advice; a keen ability to understand business and economic imperatives; and a strong focus on achieving the best legal outcome for clients.

**In 1993, Werksmans co-founded the Lex Africa legal network, which now has member firms in 30 African countries.*



» Keep us close

**THE CORPORATE &
COMMERCIAL LAW FIRM**
A member of the LEX Africa Alliance
www.werksmans.com