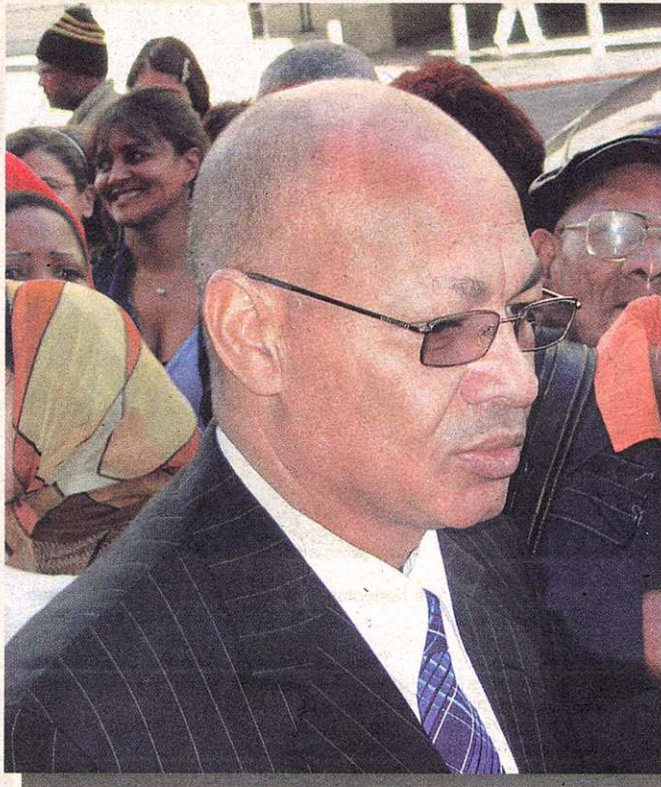


# Warrant out for Van Wyck



**GONE:** Ashraf van Wyck, who has allegedly conned thousands of people with fake housing projects in Ottery and Mitchell's Plain, is missing.

Photo: Reyana Steyn

**REYANA STEYN**

**A WARRANT of arrest has been issued for Ashraf van Wyck, the owner of Nationwide Mortgage Centre, who has allegedly conned thousands of people out of their hard-earned money.**

Van Wyck is nowhere to be found. Police are trying to track him down and have asked the public for assistance. A reward is being offered to anyone with information leading to the arrest of Van Wyck.

The offices of Nationwide Mortgage, in the Terraces Building in Cape Town, are vacant. The building was vacated in early September and the furniture has been repossessed.

In a previous article ("Housing plan a 'scam'", *People's Post*, 19 August), it was reported that Van Wyck had hundreds of people investing thousands of rands in the West Hamstead housing project, which was to be built on vacant land between Klip and Strandfontein Roads in Ottery. The project was aimed at middle-income residents and was set to kick off in 2004, but to this day no houses have been built.

In meetings with investors, Van Wyck refused to reveal where the money is being kept, but told people they would be "satisfied". People were urged by attorneys to lay criminal charges against Van Wyck; a civil case could then be started in an attempt to get the money back.

Residents in Mitchell's Plain are facing the same problem; Van Wyck was scheduled to build the Wood Green housing project on vacant land located between AZ Berman drive and the R300 highway. Van Wyck allegedly had hundreds of people investing in the project, also since 2004. In 2006, Van Wyck sold the project's land to New Age

Property Developers, but allegedly failed to mention this to the investors, and continued to accept money from them.

Superintendent Kishor Harri, from the Bellville commercial crime unit, says officers are urgently looking for Van Wyck.

"We need to question him on the series of fraud cases which have been lodged against him by numerous people. It has reached the point where Van Wyck must be arrested and brought to court.

"We have two investigators on the case full-time, and we have followed all the leads and have also contacted his family, but they say they have not heard from him."

Single parent, Cindy Smith, invested R5 000 in the West Hamstead housing project. "I got involved with the project in February last year, after hearing about it from a friend."

Smith says Van Wyck made many promises that he couldn't keep.

"He had us believing that we would get a home for our families; he sent letters every month saying that the building process would take longer as there were issues which needed to be dealt with.

"It's sad to think of what he did to poor people. I hope they find him and put him in jail."

Paralegal Sam Hristov, from the South African Law School, says attorneys are still building up a database to serve a summons on Van Wyck when he is found. "Investors are still coming to our offices on a daily basis to ask advice, and to know how they can get their money back," she says. "We have had more than 100 people here since August."

Harri advises people who are affected by the deal to lay a charge against Van Wyck at their local police station. Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Van Wyck can phone Crime Stop on 08600 10111, or Harri on 082 374 4918.