

Helderberg payouts 'an act of goodwill'

SOUTH African Airways was under no legal obligation to pay compensation to families of people killed in the Helderberg Air disaster unless such people were breadwinners, Transport Ministry spokesman, Mr Leon Els, said yesterday.

In response to unfavourable reports about the offer SAA has made to families of the crash victims, Mr Els said the payout offered for the deaths of non-breadwinners was an act of goodwill on the part of the airline and its insurers.

SAA has offered R55 000 to families who lost non-breadwinning kin and R150 000 to those who lost breadwinners.

Public Relations manager for SAA, Mr Francois Louw, confirmed that the families had until May 11 to accept the offer. If they do not accept, they have to sign a document releasing SAA and its staff from any further liability and compensation.

Mr Louw explained Taiwanese next-of-kin had been offered higher compensation for its non-breadwinners as, according to Taiwanese custom, children were considered of far greater value than their elders.

Taiwanese next-of-kin have been offered R165 000 by Lloyds of London Insurance Underwriters. — Sapa.