

# EPWP workers cleaning up in Settlers Park

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MORE than 80 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers have been hired by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality to maintain Port Elizabeth's Settlers Park.

The park, which is rich in bird life, small buck and other fauna, is known as the city's green lung.

The new recruits will be tasked with maintenance work in the park, attending to its invasive alien plants.

Mayor Athol Trollip said these invaders were among the contributing causes of fires in the Baakens Valley, which resulted in severe damage.

Trollip, who visited the park yesterday, said the council was trying to curb unemployment by enabling the workers with skills.

"We're eradicating alien species, which is critical to control this unbelievable natural asset.

"Tourists and schools can come here.

"We want to make sure it is safe for all," he said.

EPWP worker Akhona Mlilwane said he was grateful for the opportunity.

"We are working hard and we have learnt a lot. We have [a variety of] skills and we know how to deal with fauna."

Councillor Andrew Whitfield, the metro's portfolio head of economic development, tourism and agriculture, said the Baakens Valley precinct – which includes Settlers Park – was the green gateway that would lead into the planned waterfront development.

"Nelson Mandela Bay is positioning itself to develop a world-class waterfront. Baakens Valley is a gateway. We want it to be an attractive destination.

"This [EPWP project] helps us promote Port Elizabeth as an ecotourism destination. We want to make sure the gateway is safe and clean," he said.

Settlers Park manager Clyde Scott said the programme would teach the workers invaluable skills.

"We have a partnership with NMMU. They come to look at the marine life and fauna, and they do sampling.

"We have endangered species here. All this information is shared with the workers.

"They will be able to identify alien species and be able to work in other fields," he said.



**CLEAN-UP: EPWP worker Amanda Jordan is helping with the maintenance of Settlers Park**  
Picture: CAMAGWINI MAVOVANA