



**STRUGGLE SITE:** The experience of a Robben Island visit has been enhanced by several improvements.

# Robben Island upgrade pays

SIYA MITI

ALMOST 50 000 travellers visited Robben Island after infrastructure upgrades and better management of maintenance by the Coega Development Corporation (CDC).

An “overwhelming” number of positive reviews on TripAdvisor, the world’s largest travel reviews website were also recorded, CDC said.

“Robben Island could handle a record of 49738 visitors over the December/January festive season... We are delighted with the improvements to the visitor experience that we have been able to introduce since taking over the management of facilities on the island in April 2005,” Liwalethu Mondli, facilities manager at CDC said.

The CDC was appointed by the Department of Public Works (DPW)

after numerous complaints about the state of the basic infrastructure.

Upgrades under way include the repair of a wall at the bluestone slate quarry where political prisoners were forced to dig out slate, which features in the memoirs of Nelson Mandela.

The CDC is also managing the upgrading of power generators, a desalination plant, a floating jetty and an effluent plant.

“There is a constant drive to improve safety in the harbour. We see it as a responsibility to the thousands of visitors and the tourist industry in the city of Cape Town to ensure that the harbour is safe under all operating conditions,” Mondli said.

Overall maintenance standards have been improved by the establishment of an office and fully stocked store on the island, with qualified

technicians and contractors on site to attend to maintenance and repairs with the minimum delay.

“We also want to ensure the comfort and quality of experience of visitors while they are on the island and are very pleased that we went through the winter of 2016 without a single power disruption thanks to regular maintenance,” Mondli said.

“Water supplies are assured through regular maintenance of the Island’s desalination plant and reverse osmosis filtration system. Another important project has been the upgrading of the sewer system.

“The CDC has shown that it can plan, implement and manage the systems needed to ensure that a trip to the island remains a must-do activity for all visitors to the Western Cape.”

*provinces@thenewage.co.za*