



NEGLECTED: The mismanagement of Hout Bay harbour has lead to the sinking of numerous boats and fishing vessels, eroding the safety levels and general operation of the port. It has also become a threat to some of the marine life that lives in the surrounding waters.

PICTURE: ROSS JANSEN

Hout Bay Harbour a crime-ridden eyesore

Wrecks need to cleared away from tourist attraction, say residents

HOUT Bay Harbour, one of the jewels in Cape Town's tourism crown has turned into a derelict, crime-infested place to fear, residents said yesterday.

Not only was crime a major problem, with tourists and locals being robbed regularly, the harbour itself has become an eyesore, with at least 17 boats and trawlers having sunk to the bottom of the harbour, their wrecks peaking out of the water along the piers.

The person responsible for the upkeep and safe, efficient running of the harbour, Harbour Master Pumla Feni-Gela, was appointed by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in July.

She was aware of the dire state the harbour was in, and was working with SAPS, Community Policing Forums, Neighbour-

Bronwyn Davids

hood Watch, Law Enforcement, the traffic department and immigration officials to conduct search blitzes on the vessels and informal traders in the harbour.

"When it came to illegal immigration, the joint operations would have been unsuccessful without the help of immigration officials. They could log into their phones to check the names of people who claimed to have permits which they did not have with them. It would be great if we could have customs and immigration officials at the harbour," said Feni-Gela.

She said the new station commander at the Hout Bay police station was quick to respond to incidents of children harassment; robbing tourists and locals.

"Through police visibility, we are making some headway. By June, fencing and the

To comment on this story email arglet@inl.co.za or send a SMS to **32 027** (SMS costs R1)
Provide your physical address and phone number (not for publication).

installation of a pay point system should be up and running.

"This is a Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' initiative. And by July, we will begin installing equipment where we can see boats entering and leaving the harbour."

"Since taking office, I met with the tenants every quarter. We have a good relationship. I need them, they are my eyes and ears when it comes to security."

Feni-Gela had traced some of the owners of the sinking boats and two were pumped and removed to a slipway for repairs.

Only 11 sinking boats still have to be removed. The boats that have sunk will be

salvaged and removed from the harbour, as part of a Department of Public Works project.

Len Swimmer, chairman of the Hout Bay Residents' and Ratepayers' Association said: "Before they can develop the harbour they need to clear the harbour of at least 17 sunken ships and tackle the crime which is rampant. Everything is happening down there, drugs, poaching, mugging. Proper security is top priority," he said.

However, Roscoe Jacobs, secretary of the Hout Bay Civic Association said: "Crime is everywhere and instead of... pointing fingers, the community should rather work together to put solutions in place," he said.

Under the custodianship of the Department of Public Works, Hout Bay Harbour is set to be revamped, as part of Operation Phakisa, a R100 million rescue package for small boat harbours." **See page 6**