

# **Knysna- Plett Herald**

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## **Court ablutions 'disgraceful'**

### **Many toilets have been out of order for many months.**

KNYSNA NEWS - Members of the Knysna and Plettenberg Bay legal fraternity are demanding that maintenance staff literally clean up their act after months of complaints about the deteriorating condition of both the towns' court buildings.

Since June last year lawyers and other court staff have been lodging complaints about, among others, the “filthy and disgraceful” state of affairs – especially the men’s toilets at both courts. “It is a disgrace that a legal practitioner who has been serving the Knysna community for the past 25 years is compelled to record an official complaint,” local lawyer John Gillespie said.

He explained that over the past few months he has complained numerous about maintenance issues at both courts. He said there is a consulting room across Court A at the Knysna Magistrate’s Court, but that it is “inaccessible”. “It is mostly avoided because of the stench emanating from the men’s toilet across the passage.”

He said that the communal toilet across Court D has been covered with cardboard for months as it has been “out of order”. Gillespie said that every time he enters, water is constantly gushing from the toilet. This he believes is due to the flushing mechanism not working properly. “I have on numerous occasions flipped the flushing mechanism up to stop water from running.”

The urinals are also covered with black refuse bags. “Two cubicles are permanently locked. The reason is obvious. It has not been working for several months.” Gillespie said the men’s toilet across Court A is also continuously filthy with urinals overflowing or covered with plastic bags. Some of the cubicles here, too, are permanently locked.

He said recently the overflowing toilets became such a problem that the water made its way onto the court carpet, which left a horrible stench. “The hygiene catered for in the men’s toilets is nonexistent. Most of the time there is no soap. Some of the times soap is available, but there are no paper towels. Men can elect to wash their hands or not at all. If they do wash their hands they have nothing to wipe with.”

He added that the situation is similar in Plett. Another issue here is that light in the men’s toilet at the Plettenberg Bay Magistrate’s Court has also not been working for months. He said at one stage the Knysna Magistrate’s court landline number was also inoperative for weeks. Gillespie has not only repeatedly asked the court manager to attend to the issues, he said, but he has also since lodged a complaint with the local health inspector.

“Our complaints have, however, fallen on deaf ears.” Several other staff members and visitors from the department of correctional services have also lodged complaints. Knysna-Plett Herald was informed that maintenance of court buildings fall under the department of public works. Despite attempts to obtain comment, the department has not yet responded.

The state of toilets in the Knysna Magistrate's Court men's toilets is mirrored in the Plettenberg Bay courts, reports members of the local legal fraternity and other court staff. Photos: Supplied

Ablutions out of order.

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