

# Land owners exploiting situation

**MERVYN NAIDOO**

WITH the demand for residency in the Bottlebrush settlement growing daily, land invasions have become rife.

Some unscrupulous land owners in the area have exploited the situation and sold patches of land in a Durban Metropolitan Open Space System. Even a court order was not enough to block people from settling there.

Now, Bottlebrush is filled to the brim with some shacks encroaching on pavements. However, in 2014 the eThekweni Municipality and the Department of Human Settlements and Public Works teamed up and attempted to relocate Bottlebrush residents to Welbedacht, through a planned housing project. But the plans were scuppered by land invaders who settled on the designated land in Welbedacht.

On how they planned to quell the burning desire for homes, Kiru Naidoo-communications director for the department of Human Settlements and Public Works said, "We are keeping a close eye on recent developments in the Bottlebrush informal settlement and elsewhere in the eThekweni region.

"While we understand our people's great hunger for land, illegal invasions have to be dealt with in terms of the law. In the first instance the invasions are being addressed by the municipality but our department has an oversight function in any matters relating to housing in the province."

The eThekweni Municipality was approached for comment but had not responded at the time of going to print.