

Women repair the roads

Two teams will bring women-only road repair teams across Cape Town to 12

TNA REPORTER

THE city of Cape Town's Transport and Urban Development Authority (TDA) has established two new women-only road repair teams as part of its Women at Work programme at the depots in Ebenezer in the Cape Town CBD and Atlantis.

More teams will soon be working from road depots in the metro south east.

The TDA Training Academy is responsible for this project to empower women with skills, which will enable them to access employment opportunities at the 18 road depots across the city.

The academy worked with the city's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The number of women-only road repair teams had been steadily climbing since its inception in 2015, when the first four teams were successfully established at the road depots in Ndabeni, Fish Hoek, Heideveld and Kuils River.

Subsequently, teams were established at the depots of Hillstar, Kraaifontein, Sacks Circle, Southfield, as well as at Killarney where two teams had been appointed to fix potholes and do general road and stormwater maintenance.

The establishment of the two additional teams at Ebenezer and Atlantis would bring the number of women-only road repair teams across Cape Town to 12.

"Next on our list is to implement women-only road repair teams at the road depots in Khayelitsha, Strand, Parow, Hout Bay, Durbenville and Mitchells Plain. We expect these teams to be in place within the next two months or so," the city's mayoral committee member for transport and urban development, Brett Herron, said.

The city had excelled in the roll-out of the Women at Work Programme, exceeding its target of establishing 10 teams in the 2016-17 financial year.

"Our research shows that the women-only road repair teams are already



QUALITY DESIRED: More teams of women workers will be operating at road depots in Cape Town and surrounding areas, the city's Transport and Urban Development Authority says. PICTURE: GETTY IMAGES

setting new standards in terms of the quality of the work they are doing.

"This is an exciting result, one which we believe will inspire others to follow suit. It also confirms the success of the training programme and support that these teams receive from the TDA Training Academy," Herron said.

The roll-out of the women-only road repair teams with entry-level permanent positions at the TDA road depots would assist the city to grow the number of women in the transport and urban development realm which is traditionally a male-dominated industry.

"There is a bigger picture in mind which could benefit society, especially in changing general perceptions about the ability of women to compete equally in a male-dominated industry.

"The programme is setting national benchmarking standards in transport and urban development," Herron said.

In order to support the sustainability of the programme and its purpose, the TDA had made a decision to allocate vacant worker positions to the programme.

"Meaning, the women from the four pilot teams who were appointed as temporary workers through the expanded public works programme, have successfully applied for permanent positions at the road depots. The aim is to gradually expand the number of permanent employment opportunities so that we can appoint as many qualifying women as possible at our road depots across Cape Town," Herron said.

The Women at Work Programme has received numerous awards since its inception in 2015.

They include Women in Construction Awards: Most Innovative Women Training Programme (Midrand, city of Johannesburg); Employment Equity: Recognition of Excellence Award –

Women Empowerment and Gender Equity External Focus: Department: Initiative for Gender Equality; Employment Equity: Recognition of Excellence Award – Women Empowerment and Gender Equity: Capacity Building and Advancement of Women for Gender Equality and International Award: The 3rd Guangzhou International Award for urban innovation: certificate of recognition for its contribution to urban innovation.

"This initiative serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it is in keeping with the city's Organisational Development and Transformation Plan which aims to ensure that women enjoy economic inclusion by supporting skills development initiative in high growth sectors to create a skill base required for a growing economy.

"Secondly, it addresses the global issue of low participation by women in the transport industry," Herron said.

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