

# Flooded bridge stops hundreds from attending school

By **TEMBILE SGQOLANA**

HUNDREDS of pupils and teachers from three schools in Cacadu, formerly known as Lady Frere, could not go to school yesterday after a low-lying bridge that connects them to their respective schools was flooded.

About 110 pupils and teachers from Nonkqubela Senior Secondary School in Machubeni village could not make it to school, while 102 Nokwazi Primary School pupils from Qhoboshane and Helushe villages and 60 pupils and teachers from Jaho's Glen Junior Secondary were also left stranded.

The bridge always floods when there are heavy rains, putting the lives of pupils and residents from Helushe and Qhoboshane villages at risk.

The flooded bridge also resulted in

sickly people not being able to go to the clinic in Qhoboshane village.

Nonkqubela Senior Secondary School principal Zakhele Klaas said about 110 pupils and teachers had no way of making it to school yesterday. "The rest of the school is stranded on the other side of the river. This is the problem we are faced with every time when it rains," said Klaas.

"There are times when we have to release pupils early because the rain is coming. We are expected to produce good results but the conditions are not in our favour. Today only we have wasted the whole day doing nothing. Everything that we planned to do today will not be done."

Nokwazi Junior Secondary School principal Mpendulo Buthi said the school has been affected as over 100 pupils did not attend classes.

"We have nine vehicles that are

transporting pupils to school and five of those did not come and there are those pupils who are walking to school as well. Out of the 402 pupils at the school only 300 attended this morning," he said.

Jaho's Glen Junior Secondary School principal Ncediswa Dlova said about half of the school and five teachers did not arrive at school.

"The school has 120 pupils and 60 pupils went back home as they could not cross the bridge," she said.

Machubeni ward councillor Nolandisile Kraqa said the flooded bridge affected a lot of people.

"Pupils who are studying in Jaho's Glen Junior Secondary and Nokwazi Primary School and teachers who cross the river are all affected. This has been happening for a long time and it does not only affect the schools but the community as well. The river

has claimed lives and people's cars have been swept by the strong water," she said.

Contractor, Lungelo Mpongwana said they were supposed to have a meeting at Nonkqubela Senior Secondary School about building it, but the meeting could not happen as the contractors were on the other side of the flooded bridge.

Emalahleni municipality spokesman Luthando Nqumkana said the bridge was the provincial roads and public work's responsibility.

Provincial roads and public works spokesman Mphumzi Zuzile said the department has sent technicians to investigate what could have caused the water to overflow.

He said what would be done to the bridge would be determined by the technicians' report. — *themobiles@dispatch.co.za*



**NO THROUGH ROAD: Pupils and villagers could not attend schools and clinics as they were cut off by a flooded bridge in Cacadu** Picture: SUPPLIED