

# Clarity sought on city's water loss plans

**Siyamtanda Capa**

capas@tisoblackstar.co.za

COUNCILLORS are demanding clear answers on exactly how the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality plans to tackle its water leak problem and growing backlog.

The calls come amid a water crisis in the city, with dam levels averaging at 25.96%.

The municipality is looking to the completion of the Nooitgedacht Low Level water scheme as one of its solutions to augment the water supply.

Councillors felt the metro had not properly articulated how it intends to

deal with leaks, which are costing it hundreds of millions of rand annually.

The auditor-general raised concerns about the high water and electricity loss figures in the municipality's 2016-17 financial year.

At a municipal public accounts committee (Mpac) meeting yesterday, councillors demanded answers.

DA councillor Charles Garai said the infrastructure and engineering department continuously submitted different figures on the number of plumbers required to deal with the leaks crisis.

"It is clear we are not on top of leaks in terms of hiring plumbers," Garai said.

"We are not getting clear figures of how many plumbers we need to finally tackle water leaks."

ANC councillor Ncediso Captain said: "We have an Extended Public Works Programme and we were told some of them are being trained to be plumbers.

"What is happening with that?"

"The problem with outsourcing plumbers is they refuse to go to the township because they get robbed."

As an interim solution, he suggested metro police escort contractors attending to leaks in the townships.

At the same Mpac meeting, electricity losses were thrown into the spot-

light as councillors questioned whether or not proper steps had been taken to clamp down on the problem.

They also demanded to be given a detailed report on what work had been done by Amat Security and Cleaning Service, the company contracted over a three-year period to ensure the city reduced its electricity losses.

"We can't continue awarding contracts and at the end of the day not get a report back on what the purpose was," Captain said.

Electricity and energy acting executive director Bernhardt Lamour said discussions on the closing report with Amat were in the final stages.