

Safety project to safeguard catwalk

STAFF REPORTER

Keen new eyes are keeping watch over the catwalk with the aim of preventing crime there.

A collaborative safety project for the Muizenberg and St James catwalk has resulted in an eagle's eye perch for crime busters.

The partnership includes Muizenberg Improvement District (MID) Law Enforcement, Metro-rail/PRASA (the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa) and the Kalk Bay St James Special Ratings Area, supported by SAPS and various neighbourhood watches.

Through this collaboration, a bright red lifeguard inspired structure has been built on a piece of the Bailey's Cottage grounds. This affords Law Enforcement the ideal perspective to see not only the walkway, but also the railway line which runs alongside it at an elevated level. The fact that the Main Road and railway lines were not visible created an environment for opportunistic crime.

Criminals were using the height advantage of the railway line to drop rocks onto unsuspecting walkers below, injuring a number of elderly walkers.

The MID approached the lessee of Bailey's Cottage, and together with Law Enforcement and Kalk Bay St James SRA, visited the area on Tuesday March 13.

"We knew that catwalk patrols



PICTURES:MID

■ Members of the City's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Sinethemba Skweyiya, Zibryr Millward and Romano Heilbron with Analodia Arends, second from left, who currently works with Law Enforcement providing much needed administration support.

had not deterred criminal activity, so we set out to identify a site that will allow for an elevated observation and could provide a communication point of activity on and around the catwalk between Muizenberg and St James. Bailey's Cottage was identified as the ideal spot," said Chevone Petersen, manager of MID.

"Often ideas come about during random conversations and brainstorming about ways in which urban management impacts on the perception of safety and opportunity for criminal activity," she said.

The most vulnerable areas were termed "no-man's land" – outside the boundaries of both improvement districts.

The matter of jurisdiction did not prevent MID from hatching a plan; with Law Enforcement taking the lead.

The outcome of the site meeting on Thursday March 13 was positive.

Permission was granted for Law Enforcement to build the elevated operational hub at Bailey's Cottage; which now allows for observation of the catwalk, the railway



■ The catwalk being patrolled by Law Enforcement and SAPS.

reserve and Main Road.

It was decided to improve lighting at the subway near Bailey's Cottage.

A site clean-up was earmarked for the area opposite Rhodes Cottage and will require community support.

There are also plans for an elevated hut at St James beach which will allow for clear line of sight across the catwalk – another elevated operational hub for Law Enforcement.

Ms Petersen said that the ongoing success of the area will also depend on community buy in.

"Whether it is a litter clean-up, painting over tagged spaces or participating in group walks to increase safety or joining the local neighbourhood watches, we really encourage the residents to invest in

the project."

She said a site visit and safety plan implementation from law enforcement authorities is but a small part of the solution to deterring opportunistic and organised criminal activity.

The City's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) sees many job seekers placed through the EPWP programme within various City departments. Muizenberg has vibrant EPWP members. Last week Sinethemba Skweyiya, Zibryr Millward and Romano Heilbron were working with Parks and Recreation. They patrolled the area between Sunrise Circle and St James Beach to assist with public safety. With them was Analodia Arends who was currently working with Law Enforcement, providing much needed administration support.