

Graveyard clean-up drive a success

Residents of Alex can be proud of their cemetery once more

ANNA COX
anna.cox@inl.co.za

JOHANNESBURG City Parks and Zoo employees voluntarily pitched in to clean the Alexandra graveyard as part of the citywide A Re Sebetseng clean-up campaign.

Fully kitted with gloves, refuse bags and rakes, the employees were joined by the City of Joburg member of the mayoral committee (MMC) for community development Nonhlanhla Sifumba, MMC for corporate and shared services Ntombi Khumalo and Extended Public Works Programme workers.

It was the fourth A Re Sebetseng in 2018, which was launched by city mayor Herman Mashaba alongside leaders in business, civil society, religious institutions and community organisations last year.

Sifumba said the Alexandra Cemetery – with its overgrown shrubbery that has hidden some of the graves – had become a hideout for criminals and other wrongdoers.

“As graves are sacred, I am appealing to families to maintain the graves of their loved ones where possible, remove weeds and make sure that all the graves are well kept,” she said.

Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo, which is responsible for open spaces including cemeteries, has recently deployed additional resources from its parks maintenance units and appointed external contractors to address service delivery



COMMUNITY HELP: City of Joburg member of the mayoral committee Nonhlanhla Sifumba with Mpho Masuku, office manager in the community development department, during the clean-up.

shortfalls to 13 of its 32 cemeteries.

Following numerous complaints, work has started at Westpark Cemetery. The internal maintenance teams have cleaned large sections of the 100-hectare cemetery.

Similar maintenance operations are being carried out in Avalon, Olifantsvlei, Waterval in Midrand, Diepsloot, Nancefield, New Roodepoort, Newclare, Braamfontein, Brixton, Lenasia, Doornkop and the Panorama cemeteries.

The regional teams are working with appointed con-

tractors to ensure that all seasonal backlogs stemming from the heavy rains are resolved by the end of May.

“The cleaning of the graveyard means a lot to the community here because our loved ones are buried here. There are graves from as early as the 1900s. This place has a huge significance for the community,” said Khumalo.

“There was this big bush that thieves would come from and rob us.

“Now we can see people walking around there, thanks to the people who are participating and cleaning here today,” said Anna Ndlovu, an Alex resident.

@annacox



PRISTINE CONDITION: The Alexandra Cemetery after the clean-up.