

# Barberton dumping site now a park

**Masoka Dube**

THE Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has transformed a dumping site into an attractive recreation park in Barberton. The R13.5 million Elijah Alfred Mkhize Recreational Park was officially opened by the DEA's deputy minister, Barbara Thomson, and the Mbombela Executive Mayor, Sibusiso Mathonsi.

Thompson said the park would enable members of the community to enjoy the natural environment and improve their well-being. "The open space was previously used as a dumping site and will now play a significant role in sports, entertainment and other recreational events," she said. The project was funded by the Greening and Open Space Management of Umjindi project through its Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP.)



Deputy Minister Barbara Thompson opened the multi-million Rand recreational park in Barberton.

According to Thomson, the project entailed fencing the park, installation of playing equipment, park benches, the construction of braai facilities and sporting courts and fields, as well as the development of a nursery, construction of pedestrian bridges, offices with ablution facilities, an amphitheatre, landscaping and planting of indigenous trees.

She said the project focus contributed not only to the maintenance of the integrity of the natural environment but also played a significant role in the biodiversity conservation, social and physical well-being of the human population and also created much needed job opportunities.

"Previously disadvantaged individuals have benefited from the project through the creation of at least 218 employment opportunities in the