

■ HEALTH CARE

Health MEC visits troubled health centre

NADINE FORD-KRITZINGER

FOLLOWING the closure of Hout Bay Community Day Centre recently due to unrest, Health MEC Nomafrench Mbombo did an oversight visit where she stressed that staff safety was of the utmost importance.

Staff aired their frustrations relating to safety during protest action in the area. The facility was forced to close their doors for a week when violence erupted in the area. The community clashed with police when a raid took place which resulted in the road closures which saw staff stuck at the health facility.

Speaking to Mbombo yesterday, staff member Shaheed Januarie said: "This area has five incidents of protests since last year which results in us fearing for our lives. When the protest takes place, we are held hostage inside this place because there is only one way in and one way out for us... We have families waiting for us at home."

Another staff member who has

been living and working in the area for the past 32 years also shared her frustration with people harassing her at home because the facility was closed.

She said: "I am caught in the middle of everything and it is traumatising.

"When the facility was closed, the community comes to my house to harass me, wanting answers.

"Where is the safety for me and my family?

"We had a meeting in 2015 where we requested a new facility. Can you please speed up matters for the new facility?"

Mbombo responded to the staff's safety concerns before saying that plans for the new health facility was under way.

Mbombo said: "The safety of staff comes first for me.

"We have reached an agreement with the community regarding the safety of the facility and staff.

"As for the new facility, it is out of the health department's hands currently.



NOMAFRENCH MBOMBO

"It is the hands of the City and the Department of Public Works."

Members of the public also engaged Mbombo on the closure of the health facility last week.

Lee Smith said: "I am a resident and I partake in the protest that takes

place here.

"We not once tried to close this facility. It is political issues that are creating the unrest.

"Over the past 18 months, the clinic and schools have been punished by there being closures."

The resident assured Mbombo that the health facility would not be affected by protest action in the area.

"The community gets painted as a risk to the health services facility here. The health staff will never be hurt by the community because it is not health that is the issue here.

"We will never hurt your staff," Smith added.

Community activist Roscoe Jacobs echoed the sentiments of Smith stating they would save the health care system in place.

"We are seeking commitments here. We don't want empty promises and lies from politicians.

"This clinic is here to help save lives and I am here to save their services."