

● Summerstrand site spruced up and safer – thanks to efforts of group of workers

# Rubbish dump transformed

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What was once a hotspot for crime and illegal dumping in the heart of affluent Port Elizabeth suburb Summerstrand has presented itself as an opportunity to create jobs, ensure a crime-free zone and beautify what was once an eyesore.

The waste-disposal site in Strandfontein Road was notorious for criminal activities but that is something of the past.

Residents can now be seen driving in and dumping refuse without incident.

So far, six men have signed contracts with the Expanded Public Works Programme, together with the department of public health, that formalised a plan to allow the group to operate from the Strandfontein dump.

Apart from sprucing up the area, the project also champions recycling.

Stephen Jonas has been undertaking landscaping at the site using palm trees and succulents to brighten up the area.

The initiative has also opened up doors and brought back dignity to people such as Lindikhaya Nqowana, 40, of Walmer township, who has been struggling to make ends meet.

“I am a father of seven. I am able to afford and support my children through the money I get here.

“To top it all, we have generous residents who sometimes give us items, which we, in return, resell to make extra cash. This is huge relief to us.”

For the past 25 years, Nqowana has worked at various dump sites around the metro but this project has giv-

en him a much-needed boost.

Endrico Plaaties, 33, a bush dweller, is among the beneficiaries of the project.

“This is daily bread for us.

“I used to go around doing gardening until I started working here.

“The money I make I send home to Grahamstown [now Makhanda] to help my three-year-old daughter,” he said.

Mfundo Nduvane, 36, teamed up with Moosa Laher, 47, to co-ordinate the Gardening and Poverty Relief Projects, aimed at poverty alleviation for residents in Walmer township, Forest Hill and Summerstrand.

Nduvane said as a physically challenged person, he was given the opportunity by the municipality to do recycling.

“As a team, we thought we must first bring stability.

“Residents used to be robbed but now that is something of the past,” he said.

“Secondly, we have decided to beautify the site.”

Members of the group also look for plants discarded by residents which they replant.

Laher said before he and his team moved on site, a number of attacks had been reported.

“The crime rate was very high. A number of bush dwellers used to come here and fight over the refuse but we have managed to bring some understanding.

“Residents no longer feel intimidated as they come in and exit the site,” he said.

Metro spokesperson Mthubanzi Mniki said the metro was working with the Expanded Public Works Programme.

“We are in the early stage to formalise all disposal sites in the metro to be compliant with government legislation.”



**SPICK AND SPAN:** The new-look waste disposal site in Strandfontein Road Picture: FREDLIN ADRIAAN