

Development programme grows

City's Mayco member for urban management Grant Twigg recently visited 30 workers on the environmental and culture sector of the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The workers, who have been given an opportunity to learn about green economy, have been part of the Kader Asmal Skills Development Training Programme. The programme has been operating since 2012 and was expanded to a three-year plan by the City of Cape Town last year.

Willie Jaftha, the Urban Management Committee chairperson, accompanied Twigg to see first-hand how the programme is benefitting the workers.

The programme has a two-pronged objective: it strives to promote training, skills development and employment in the environmental sector while simultaneously improving the City's unique natural environment through various green economic activities.

The programme gives candidates the opportunity to gain field experience with different stakeholders. This helps to arm them with hands-on experience in the different spheres of government as well as the private sector.

"Quite a large skills gap exists within the environmental segment and our support is critical for effective service delivery in the public sector. Our objective is to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills and ability for sustainable opportunities, specifically in the green economy," says Twigg.

Twigg adds that the programme held various benefits for the City, including improving environmental practices through skilled



Some of the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers enrolled in the project.

staff in the sector.

"It is also well-aligned with the City's Integrated Development Plan objectives to contribute towards economic inclusion. This is achieved by maximising EPWP opportunities to develop skills and practical work experience; ensure economic growth through the development of SMMEs in the environmental sector; and improve management of invasive species.

"We committed to building an inclusive city by unlocking and providing access to economic opportunities, especially for disadvantaged communities who have been marginalised. This skills development pro-

gramme gives them the opportunity to be integrated into the City's green economy," said Twigg.

He adds that the programme would also focus on developing candidates within the middle management level as assistant conservation officers, quality controllers in the technical field, or administrative officers to provide administrative support in the environmental sector. This training spans over a period of three years.

"We have noticed an increased number of youths with university qualifications who are applying for EPWP jobs over the years. The lack of employment opportunities for

young people has impacted negatively on levels of education, skills, and work experience. Being in a professional work environment exposes young people to networks which may afford them work opportunities in the near future. The development programme aims to address the skills and experience shortage within the environmental sector. The City funds a number of institutions that provide a basket of skills development programmes. Young people are urged to find out about what's available and consider pursuing alternate skill sets as opposed to only thinking about a degree or diploma," says Twigg.