



■ **Left:** Some of the protesters staging a sit-down in Harbour Road last week outside the new electricity depot currently being built.



■ **Right:** A vehicle was turned on its side during last week's protest action when some residents clashed with police.

# 'They are spreading wrong and distorted messages'

## From page 1

The protesters' anger was fuelled when Mr Plato refused to meet with them to discuss their concerns due to their violent conduct. "Whoever is responsible for hooliganism, lawlessness and other illegal activities, I simply cannot condone that," Mr Plato said.

Tempers flared when a resident was handed an eviction notice last week, which protesters felt went against promises made by the mayor, that no evictions would take place.

"The evictions have stopped, but I cannot understand the reasoning for the protests to continue. They are spreading wrong and distorted messages to the Hangberg community," Mr Plato said.

On Thursday September 19, Mr Plato met with some leading figures in the Hangberg community,

most notably, representatives of the Hangberg Peace and Mediation Forum (PMF), to amicably discuss a way forward.

PMF spokesman Warren Abrahams, confirmed that requests had been made to council to put all evictions on hold.

The eviction notices handed to the resident, which sparked the protests, were also set aside pending investigations. The mayor was told that, while nearly 180 illegal structures had been erected, only one resident had been issued with a notice.

"As per previous communications with community members by the PMF, the City once again indicated that they do not have jurisdiction over new structures erected on SANParks, Department of Public Works and private properties and legally they do not have the right to act on these structures," Mr

Abrahams said, adding that the PMF were not behind the protest action in the area.

"We were not in agreement with damaging, looting, stealing from the schools and the indefinite ceasing of the electricity depot construction, that will service the entire Hout Bay community," Mr Abrahams said.

He called on the community to be patient and to do no further damage to infrastructure in the community, as they await news about two new housing projects. "The signing of the Terms of Reference is needed soonest as per mandated by the community," he said.

"The handing over of the 60 row houses to the long waiting tenants, as upgrade and maintenance works are almost at its end, will soon take place."

"The PMF is happy to announce that the City is not in the process

of evicting anyone in Hangberg and we herewith request all unrest action to stop," Mr Abrahams said.

Ward councillor Roberto Quintas confirmed that protest action had since died down.

"Protest seems to be calm and the community has proven it has no appetite to support a small violent protest," he said.

Some residents in the area were also furious that much of the protest action and criminal activities such as looting, had been carried out by children.

Justine Franks from Hangberg said it was sickening to see children being encouraged to do these things.

"These are children and they don't properly understand the world of politics. I actually blame the adults, because now they are being taught how to steal and cause disruptions by using an agenda,"

she said.

"Tomorrow they break into our houses and then use the fact that they are protesting as an excuse."

Ms Franks had also witnessed several of these children armed with bricks, confront police.

"I really do not have an issue with teaching our kids what to fight for at the right times. It's freedom of speech. But when they are being misled, that is another story," she said.

Another resident Joseph Grey felt that adults participating in the protests should refrain from "hiding behind the children".

"The protesters were out in the street making their voices heard, but what does stealing tools and damaging our community have to do with it? Worst of all, it's children among these adults and they are being used to do the dirty work," he said.