



**Dredging activity to deepen the seabed at the Gordon's Bay Harbour is nearing completion ahead of the holiday season.** Photo: Yaseen Gaffar

# New-look harbour

**Yaseen Gaffar**

**Dredging work at Gordon's Bay Harbour continues to yield excellent results, including the replenishment of the iconic Bikini Beach, which has since doubled in size in the past few weeks, and the deepening of the harbour floor allowing more boats to sail around the harbour undisturbed.**

The work is being conducted by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, which commenced with the special intervention repair and maintenance to 13 proclaimed fishing harbours, including in Gordon's Bay, in March 2016.

Speaking to *DistrictMail* this week, Rodney Walker of GMC Marine Construction explained that dredging activity has been split between two teams – one working on the entrance and boundary of the harbour and the other inside the harbour.

He said: "The barge works are separate on the outside and inside of the harbour. Inside the harbour we send two divers into the water, where they carry a pipe with a nozzle which carries the sand and discharges it onto Bikini Beach."

Walker added that the type of pipes used are similar to the ones used in diamond mining dredging.

"The engineers conducted a survey last week which concludes that our work so far has been extremely successful, and the community is extremely happy about Bikini Beach actually being a beach

again. Members of the yacht club are pleased with the ease of access they can now enjoy."

Sean de Villiers, also from GMC construction and working with teams outside the harbour, said they have moved the equivalent of 67 000 m<sup>3</sup> sand, with an estimated 5 000 m<sup>3</sup> still to be moved. He further pointed out the once rocky surface of Bikini Beach is now a larger, wider sandy beach.

"We've so far encountered no major challenges other than breakdowns and maintenance, which is rather routine with this type of operation. We are making steady progress and well on schedule to complete really soon," De Villiers said.

Gordon's Bay Yacht Club manager Elenore Baiocchi commended the teams for providing a very professional service.

"It's really interesting to see them work with all the pumps and noise, they are really a fantastic team and our members are delighted at the progress made, just in time for the holiday season."

She said all work will come to an end on Saturday 14 December, ahead of an expected peak period, with multiple vessels sailing in and out daily, and added there are currently 106 vessels at Gordon's Bay Harbour.

"This type of work can never be totally completed, as the sand may move around again with tides and waves, but we're optimistic that maintenance will be regularly conducted by the department to avoid sediment build-up to the point that it becomes an obstacle."