

Organisations run programmes for homeless

From page 1

short-term job opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

"The City also assists registered organisations working with persons living on the street through grant-in-aid funding where possible. We are also disbursing support to 10 shelters this winter, to the value of R1 429 000, to help them cope with the increase of street people seeking out shelter support," said Dr Badroodien.

Joshua Chigome, spokesperson for Social Development MEC Sharna Fernandez, said while the department did not directly operate shelters, it provided subsidies to NGOs that provide such services.

"The department has earmarked funding for an additional 1000 funded spaces this year to the existing 1500 already funded by the department. We are also securing a building for an additional shelter space to serve the City Bowl area since existing shelters are now at capacity."

Ms Hoosain-Fielies has been working with the homeless for

two years and believes that the government is failing them.

"The City provides a safe space where the clients don't even have hot water or receive proper food. There are so many clients that don't even get the assistance they need with counselling. Both the City and the government fail at providing proper services which also include rehabilitation centres to assist the clients with their addiction problems. Everything is outpatient programmes. How does one expect the client to recover when they have to be on the streets?"

Desiré Goliath, who manages the public relations for Community Chest, said: "Official government statistics claim there are 5 000 homeless people living on the streets of Cape Town, while a recent study by NGOs found the number to be closer to 14 000. With approximately 2500 shelter beds in Cape Town, the enormity of the challenge is obvious."

According to Dr Badroodien, 771 people benefited from the EPWP in the 2020/21 financial year. "We have also had instances where persons have used these

EPWP opportunities to secure permanent employment, either with the City or external organisations or companies. The EPWP offers a variety of opportunities that cater for persons with different levels of skills. The City is not opposed to giving opportunities to persons with criminal records, provided that they are willing to honour the terms of the EPWP contracts."

There's over 80 people living in tents opposite the Sea Point police station and the numbers vary across sites on the Atlantic seaboard.

The Sea Point Fresnaye Bantry Bay Ratepayers' and Residents' Association (SFB) is funding a programme called HOPE to assist the homeless ("Hope keeps beaches, parks and streets clean", Atlantic Sun, July 1).

"We also recognise that with the impact of Covid-19, Sea Point, Bantry Bay and Fresnaye will be very different and SFB is being proactive by preparing for this challenge," said SFB chairman Michael Ender.

"Joining forces and working together as a community will allow us to succeed at implementing an effective interven-

tion strategy to deal with the increase of homeless people in our community and the many problems arising from it."

In Green Point, Liz Knight manages Friends of Green Point, a community project that involves the EPWP ("From dead spaces to hiking lanes", Atlantic Sun, June 24). "One of the primary goals is to find consensus within the neighbourhood to support the sustainable reintegration programmes for the homeless offered by the City of Cape Town and other organisations, and to acknowledge the residents' rights to an orderly, safe and clean neighbourhood. Certainly a percentage of the homeless are long-term and known to us as 'regulars'. However, the growing community and structures as a result of the pandemic is creating some challenging social issues for businesses, residents and visitors," says Ms Knight who is also a co-chair of the Green Point Ratepayers' and Residents' Association.

"Green Point neighbours have generously responded to fundraisers to support transportation for those who wish to be reunited with their families and also identity cards. For example, Peter Cookson has connected more recently with families in Tzaneen, Pretoria, Hermanus, Pietermaritzburg and East London to ensure successful reunification. Some 250 IDs have enabled residents of the Safe Spaces to be employed by the EPWP."

Fazlin Abrahams, 21, started her NPO, The Ray of Hope, to assist kids and adults on the street and this past Sunday she, and two friends, fed more than 200 people who live in the tents.

"It's about giving to those who don't have. It's an idea I shared with my cousin Ray and after he died last year I started this project. It's our way of keeping Ray's memory alive and giving hope to the homeless," Ms Abrahams said.

In February, Atlantic Sun reported that residents had raised concerns about the increase in homeless people living near the Sea Point police station ("Residents raise concerns over homeless 'invasion'", Atlantic Sun, February 11).

They said they felt threatened by some of the homeless people who have erected tents and made the council land their home.

Law Enforcement spokesperson, Wayne Dya-son had said the City's Law Enforcement department regularly responded to complaints about anti-social behaviour related to street people.

He added that the Covid-19 lockdown regulations as well as several other legal issues had put limitations on what Law Enforcement staff could do. "Once the State of Disaster is lifted, the City will re-evaluate its protocols in dealing with street people conducting themselves in a manner that is anti-social and in violation of City by-laws."