



A gate being erected outside Mariner's Wharf at Hout Bay Harbour

HOUT BAY

Harbouring ill feelings



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The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) has refuted a community activist's claim that it is perpetuating apartheid-styled town planning and economic exclusion through the Hout Bay Harbour infrastructure projects.

"This has been a hugely successful project implemented by the DPWI with great benefit to local workers and rejuvenating the economic hubs that the small harbours contribute to local economic development," says Zara Nicholson, media liaison to minister of public works and infrastructure Patricia de Lille.

On Monday 22 February, community and ANC Youth League activist Roscoe Jacobs claimed the department had gone back on its word. He claimed a notice had been released regarding the infrastructure projects on Thursday 28 January, indicating the access control aspect of the project had been put on

hold due to community dissatisfaction.

"However, today I witnessed that not all entrance aspects of the project is on hold as we were led to believe. A gate has been erected outside Mariner's Wharf and another one will be erected on the North Quay."

Jacobs said the community was dissatisfied because, in terms of the development of the harbour and the decision to put in place the security measures, there had been no community consultation. He claimed this would further lead to the economic exclusion of the people of colour in Hout Bay. He described the project as "wasteful and oppressive".

According to Nicholson, a flyer – endorsed by both the department and the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) – was printed and released to the public to inform the local communities of the decision taken to not proceed with the works that would secure the harbour at the entrances (installation of the automated access control and boom gates) until an amicable resolution is reached between all parties.

"This is specific to the two main gates at

the harbour entrances where the boom gates were to be erected as the concern was related to the harbour entrance fees," she adds.

According to Nicholson, the community feels that at some point, there was an agreement in place to allow free entry to locals. However, she says, this is regulated by the harbour regulations as gazetted by DEFF which stipulates a R5 vehicular entrance fee whilst pedestrian entrance is still free.

"Certain groupings within the community want to have free access to the harbour and especially the slipway as they feel it is their harbour, however, this is also regulated by DEFF through the harbour regulations. It should be noted that the tariffs charged in these harbours have not been reviewed for over a decade," says Nicholson.

She adds that all tariffs are in line with the harbour regulations and cannot be changed unless it is gazetted by DEFF accordingly, "as the state needs to collect revenue for the use of state infrastructure to ensure that it is maintained frequently and all harbour users are able to benefit from the maritime infrastructure".

Slamming the gate

According to Nicholson, the construction of the gates on all quays has always been part of the revitalisation programme to better manage the control of vehicles along the quayside and prevent damage to any marine infrastructure on the quays.

She says there is also illegal trade taking place along the various quays and the gates on the quays which will further assist DEFF's compliance officers in carrying out their mandate coupled with assisting the harbour master in the operations and management of the Hout Bay Harbour.

"Hout Bay has always been a hotspot for poaching and, more recently poachers, from Hawston have been coming to Hout Bay to launch their vessels and are unhappy with the security upgrades as this poses as a mitigation measure against unauthorized vessels launching to conduct poaching operations," she says.

Nicholson also points to the vandalism of infrastructure at the harbour in December last year.

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