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Illegal dumping in certain areas a health hazard

THE Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is intensifying its campaign to clear all illegal dumping in the community.

The challenge of illegal dumping in New Brighton and Bethelsdorp is a health hazard for the residents of the areas, specifically children.

In New Brighton alone, the metro's Waste Management sub-directorate clears about 13 illegal dump sites every month, removing than 500 truckloads of waste.

In Bethelsdorp the metro cleared 139 illegal dumping areas in the last financial year, and 60 illegal dump sites in the current financial year, removing more than 1 000 loads of waste.

MMC for Public Health, Thsonono Buyeye, made a plea to the community of these two areas to help mitigate this hazard, by taking ownership of the environment in which they live.

"It's only a matter of time before illegal dumping causes an outbreak of disease in these areas. We are focusing on these areas in particular, since we have noticed that whenever we clean an illegal dumping site, new waste is dumped the next day. This talks to both a lack of awareness about the hazards of this problem, and the consequences for the environment," said Buyeye.

He also addressed members of the public during an illegal dumping awareness drive held at one of the illegal dumping sites in New Brighton.

More than 20 truckloads of waste were taken away by the Waste Management sub-directorate. Buyeye said that the metro is stretching its resources to make sure residents live in a health hazard-free environment by repeatedly clearing the same areas.

"The sad part is that refuse collection in these areas takes place as per the schedule, but some residents don't want to wake up early to take their refuse out for collection. They will wait until evening when it's dark to dump it. This doesn't benefit nor help our communities; hence, we need to reprimand each other and take collective responsibility and accountability for waste management as neighbours," he added.

One of the residents, Diniso Qwambe, said that this is a serious challenge for the community. "Maybe we need to discuss the frequency and the time of collection with the metro, to limit the chances of illegal dumping. A united action by both the metro and the community can bring about a sustainable solution," said Qwambe.

Ward 17 councillor, Ludwe Mnyanda, added that following the clearing of the current illegal dump sites, more collective and consultative efforts need to be done.

"It is important to bring about sustainable solutions to this challenge. We have agreed with the community to look at such solutions."

Through the elimination of illegal dump sites and the greening programme, the metro has converted 11 open spaces that were used for illegal dumping into playgrounds for children in New Brighton and 10 in Bethelsdorp, with one coming in the next financial year.

The elimination of illegal dumping and the greening programme is a continuous programme that has already covered all the areas of the metro.

The metro has added 1 036 staff members through its Extended Public Works Programme at a cost of R10 million per financial year, to beef up waste management work that includes refuse collection, the clearing of illegal dumping sites and litter picking.

Meanwhile, a 16-year-old Grade 11 learner at Woodridge College has been hailed a local heroine after she initiated a clean-up campaign to improve the environment of thousands of KwaNobuhle residents.

Khazimla Adam engaged with Buyeye and sought an intervention with regard to the plight of Stephen Nkomo Primary School learners who have been negatively affected by the waste piling up next to their school.

As a member of the environmental committee in the NMB Junior City Council, "Councillor" Khazimla said that she could not ignore the unpleasant scene where waste has piled up against the school fence, and blocked half of the street.

"I was shocked to see waste piling up next to a primary school and I knew that I had to do something. I sent an email addressed to the mayor and his council, and MMC Buyeye responded positively on how the municipality would support my call.

"I engaged the school principal, the ward councillor and School Governing Body and we had a



MMC for Public Health, Thsonono Buyeye, embraces Khazimla Adam, who put the project to clean up the school into motion. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

meeting with community members to educate and inform them of the work that would be done," she explained.

"Schools are facilities that we should be proud of, the cornerstones of our communities. For it to be full of rubbish is not accepta-

ble. My message to all communities is for us to adopt the reduce, reuse and recycle lifestyle so that we can live in healthy and conducive communities," she added.

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