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Pothole-ridden Dullstroom road considered a death trap

Michelle Boshoff

LYDENBURG - The level of life-threatening road conditions, potholes and uneven road surfaces has escalated significantly on the R540, between Lydenburg and Dullstroom.

The road has become a death trap. Lance Young, a local resident who works in Dullstroom frequently, said that nothing has been done to rectify the situation.

He wrote a letter to the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, and eight lodges on the road also sent letters to the authorities.

"Year after year the potholes are

patched. There has never been any real refurbishment of this road. I drive to Dullstroom nearly every day and it has become life-threatening. If you swerve out of the way of a pothole and the oncoming vehicle is doing the same, you are in danger of a head-on collision," said Cilla Young, a Lydenburg resident.

"We are now going into the 'silly season' and tourists and visitors will flood the Panorama Route. Some are coming to visit family at Christmas. It is horrible to think that after all these years, this is the first impression motorists will have when they are driving into Lydenburg from Dullstroom."

Every time road users drive on the R540

they are taking a huge risk.

The Ehlanzeni District Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWRT) is responsible for the upkeep of this road.

Mandla Ndlovu, a member of the electoral committee of the Ehlanzeni District Municipality, responded to an email from the DA on Friday. The letter is in the possession of Steelburger/Lydenburg News. The party member alerted Ndlovu to the dire state of the R540.

He said that he would make the road a priority and would deploy a team to ensure that the road is made more drivable as a temporary measure. The budget

does not currently allow for a full refurbishment project.

Bongani Dhlamini, the media spokesperson of the DPWRT, said although the road has reached its design life and is due for rehabilitation/reconstruction, there are currently no plans for it because of budget limitations.

In addition, the traffic volumes and heavy vehicles in particular have increased significantly on the road. However, he said the department would continue to carry out maintenance within the available budget.

Tourists and road users are warned to be extremely careful on this route.