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Author: Vuyolwethu Sangotsha

Metro losing war on potholes, say opposition parties

'They are filling potholes and not fixing them'

By **Vuyolwethu Sangotsha**

The Buffalo City Metro has committed to filling 20,000 potholes this financial year.

Executive mayor Princess Faku said the city was winning the war on potholes, but opposition parties said that filling, and not fixing, potholes was not yielding positive results.

Addressing the ANC 2019 review manifesto rally in her capacity as the party's Dr WB Rubusana regional chair at the Sisa Dukashe Stadium in Mdantsane at the weekend, Faku claimed the metro's war on potholes was well on track.

"We have started with potholes, I'm sure you saw me in Mdantsane's ward 17. I'm hands-on because I want to have a better understanding of the work being done."

DA caucus leader Sue Bentley said there was no pro-

gramme indicating where the focus would be each week in order for oversight to be done. "The roads I travel on all over East London tell me a different story. They are filling potholes and not fixing them – a pothole needs to be prepared."

Bentley said ward councillors struggled to get their pothole teams to fill potholes because either there was no asphalt available or no trucks to transport it.

The DA in the metro last week posted two video clips on social media by its ward 3 councillor, Lorna Hali, showing pothole-riddled roads in Berea.

Bentley said like many other suburbs, Berea desperately needed road maintenance.

"I am constantly raising the issue of sealing roads at our infrastructure portfolio meetings, as well as in council, and have been told we do not have the funding."

"I have stated that given that reports say 40-45% of our roads are in a poor to very poor condition, we cannot afford not to be sealing roads to prolong



Operation Valazonke was launched by the government to deal with potholes. Valazonke means 'close them all'./SUPPLIED

their lifespans."

The EFF leader in BCM, Mziyanda Hlekiso, said the metro was losing the fight against potholes. "There are potholes everywhere," he said.

"The only thing Buffalo City should do in tackling potholes is to do away with outsourcing and employ people on a permanent basis and ensure that there is accountability and su-

pervisors do their work.

"Currently, they are just getting paid for doing absolutely nothing."

"It's not true that the executive mayor is winning the battle against potholes."

Metro spokesperson Samkelo Ngwenya said the roads and stormwater branch continuously undertook the maintenance of existing surfaced

roads within the metro with pothole patching.

"The Valazonke pothole patching programme is aimed at accelerating the fixing of potholes," he said.

"...it is gaining momentum and we are hoping that it will make a huge difference."

"The ward-based volunteers programme is continuing whereby 10 people in each ward of BCM have been employed to carry out road and stormwater maintenance."

Ngwenya said the metro's road network was a key component of the transportation system.

"A road network builds the economy," he said. "A large percentage of Buffalo City Metro road infrastructure is old, rapidly deteriorating and the municipality is implementing catalytic projects to improve the conditions."

Ngwenya said challenges ranged from insufficient budget, delays in rolling out of EPWP projects, "and most challenging are the weather conditions synonymous with Buffalo City, especially in summer".