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WET WORK: Getting their hands dirty in the stormwater infrastructure cleaning project in Bethelsdorp yesterday are, from left, roads and transport political head Bradley Murray, councillor Noline Moodley, Keithon Goliath, Alberto Damons and Rowan Schutte
Picture: EUGENE COETZEE

Metro deploys 500 workers to help clear stormwater system

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Nelson Mandela Bay's roads and transport department has deployed more than 500 expanded public works programme workers to clean stormwater infrastructure in an effort to alleviate flooding.

The project, which started on Monday, will run across sev-

eral wards in Kariega, Despatch and Gqeberha.

It will end at the end of this month.

Roads and transport political head Bradley Murray said the temporary measure was to relieve pressure on the stormwater system while the department waited for the purchase of new suction tankers and jetty machines.

"We have budgeted R20m for five suction tankers and two jetty machines, but that will only be available in the next financial period," Murray said.

Murray, who was in Bethelsdorp's Ward 35 yesterday for the cleanup, said they had reallocated savings of R1.6m within the directorate for the employment of the EPWP workers.

"We are just bringing small relief from the floods while we are in the winter period.

"We also want to make sure we spend every single cent before the financial year.

"This is creating employment. While it is small, this will go some way in helping some households in the communities.

"We will be cleaning out the drains and canals and

where needed use tractor loader backhoes."

The workers will be employed from their wards and according to demand will be deployed in teams ranging from eight to 15.

The Ward 35 cleanup started at the canal near Kroneberg Drive.

Ward councillor Noline Moodley said the canal had not

been cleared for nearly 10 years.

"We recently had to hire a backhoe from our pockets to make a trench from the [Kakora Road and Kroneberg Drive] junction because water had flooded it and drivers just could not use it," she said.

According to Moodley, houses along Kroneberg Drive were flooded because of blocked stormwater drains.