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THE Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Deputy Executive Mayor, Cllr Babalwa Lobishe, officially welcomed 80 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers who have been employed to boost the Metro's cleaning and greening initiatives in an effort to change the face of Despatch.

The new recruits have been employed by the Metro and Eastern Cape Department of Public Works and will play a critical role in keeping the areas from Joe Slovo to Khayamnandi clean, including main roads and government facilities.

During the official launch of the two programmes last Thursday, Deputy Mayor Lobishe urged the workers who comprise mostly youth and women to change the negative narrative associated with the EPWP as they are the face of government.

"We want to thank you for taking part in this programme as you will be making a positive change in your very own community, Ward 41. The orange overalls are associated with the perception that EPWP workers are paid for working for one hour and sleeping for the rest of the day. We want you to be the group that changes that negative perception. We welcome you and want to remind you that you are the face of government and you should portray a working government because you are part of the government," said DM Lobishe.

She added that the recruitment by Public Works showed strong intergovernmental relations between the provincial government and NMBM.

The Deputy Mayor was joined by Council Chief Whip Cllr Wandisile Jikeka, Corporate Services Mayoral Committee Member, Cllr Yoliswa Pali and Ward 41 Cllr, Luyanda Lawu, during the programme.

"You must serve your communities with excellence, you must do an outstanding job so that even the provincial government can see the need to create permanent positions for you at the facilities you have been placed in. They must feel your presence and see that need. That way the programme will continue to benefit even other deserving candidates because we are swimming in a pool of unemployment so we appreciate the contracts if it means our residents will not worry about their livelihood for some time," said Chief Whip Jikeka.

NMBM is in the process of recruiting 500 more EPWP workers that will be deployed across the Metro to enhance the cleaner City initiatives.

Joe Slovo resident, Nobuntu Magobiyane said she was grateful as a beneficiary of the EPWP programme as the reality of poverty was too much to bear.

**-ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE
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