

Publication: Northcliff & Melville Times - Main

Title: Upgrade complete

Publish date: 08 Jul 2025

Page: 5

Reach: 31760

AVE: R 38674.59

Author: Waydon Jacobs

Upgrade complete

Waydon Jacobs

waydonj@caxton.co.za

After months of delays, the City of Johannesburg has officially concluded the Emmarentia Upper Dam rehabilitation project, a major public works initiative aimed at strengthening storm water infrastructure and preserving one of the city's most iconic green spaces.

After the project was completed on December 13, 2024, residents have enjoyed the space. According to Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo (JCPZ) spokesperson Jenny Moodley, the rehabilitation work, which was highlighted by the heightening of the dam wall and the extension of the spillway, aimed at increasing the dam's capacity to handle heavy water flow from the Melville catchment area, a frequent source of flash flooding during the rainy season. "The upgraded structure is now far better equipped to manage such volumes, reducing the risk of downstream flooding and enhancing safety in surrounding communities."

Moodley emphasised that the project is a critical part of building resilience into the infrastructure, while ensuring that open spaces remain accessible and safe for the public. "The upgrades are a long-term investment in both environmental sustainability and public safety."

The project was launched through a joint effort between Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) and the city's Environmental and Infrastructure Services Department. Design work was overseen by the JRA's professional service provider, under a formal service agreement, with implementation duties later handed over to JCPZ, said Moodley.

She also addressed a recurring point of confusion from residents, who are stating that it is a new bridge. "The structure is not a bridge; it is actually a new spillway. It serves a vital hydrological purpose, but it does also allow pedestrians to cross the dam wall. It was never intended to support vehicles or other forms of traffic."

Resident Mark Watson expressed his satisfaction with the improvements at the dam, stating: "The dam is much cleaner now and significantly better than before, especially the lower dam, which used to be in poor condition. This time, things



The finished Emmarentia Upper Dam.

have changed for the better."

Evan Knowles, who was initially unaware of the project, shared his thoughts on the development. "I always spent time at the lower dam, but I believe the improvements are good for the park and the community. It looks excellent and is much cleaner than before."

Sune Louw commented on the positive changes, saying: "I really like the look of the dam after the delays. The dogs can finally swim in the water. I appreciate that they take care of this park; it's always clean, and you can see that they are actively maintaining it. I always feel safe here. I think the dam is nice."

Moodley urges residents and parkgoers to take ownership of the revamped space, and to help keep it clean and well-used. "We are asking the community to take pride in what has been done here. This is more than an infrastructure upgrade; it is about preserving the character and value of Emmarentia for future generations."