

Thieves, Vandals Cost CTown Millions

Written by Rudi Prinsloo
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Theft and vandalism in informal settlements around Cape Town has cost the city more than R80 million in repairs and replacement over the past year, it said on Thursday.

"For every R3 that the city spends of its R125m annual budget for water and sanitation facilities in informal settlements, R2 is spent on repairs and replacements," mayoral committee member Clive Justus said in a statement.

In the past financial year, the council had installed 422 water stand pipes, but had to effect 5482 repairs to sabotaged or stolen pipes and taps.

"In the same year, the city's utility services installed 2458 toilets, but had to make 4302 repairs to cisterns, pans, pipes and ablutions damaged by criminals.

"Last December, 300 out of 464 toilets installed in a Delft informal settlement were broken or had parts stolen. In Philippi, vandals destroyed 26 ablution blocks containing six toilets each.

"In RR Section of Khayelitsha, chemical toilets were burned to the ground. This all happened within weeks of installation," he said.

The destruction had continued into the current financial year.

"Although we've installed 2840 toilets halfway through the year -- nearly 400 more than the previous year -- we have had to effect 1028 repairs due to theft and vandalism. And so far, we've installed 186 water standpipes, but have had to repair 1942."

Justus said the city -- which was systematically upgrading a total of 222 informal settlements across the metro -- would be able to proceed at three times its current rate if the lawlessness stopped.

"Council does not have a bottomless pit of resources. We appeal to communities to assist us by reporting all incidents of theft and vandalism," he said.

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