



### Rubbish piles up amid Pikitup protest

In December 2023, Pikitup advertised 300 general worker positions through an appointed external recruitment agency and consultation with the City's organised labour, throughout the recruitment process. Despite this, the deployment of new recruits in May 2024 sparked protests from current employees who felt they were unfairly overlooked.

The uncertainty over solid waste collection following the escalation of the protests in mid-May rose as the city remained scattered with garbage piles resulting from violent actions viz., burning tires outside depots, road blockages and severe disruption of waste collection service in several parts of the city namely, Norwood, Marlboro, Waterval, Selby, Randburg, Midrand, and Diepsloot etc.

Section 24 of the Constitution states that "Everyone has the right to (1) an environment which is not harmful to their health or well-being and (2) have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations..." which makes an entity such as Pikitup a critical role player in the city's infrastructure, and disruptions to its waste management services often carries far-reaching consequences for public health, safety, and well-being.



Source: Home Improvement

As an office, we have been monitoring the situation in line with other fundamental rights in the Constitution which support environmental demands such as "the right to life (Section 11) and the right to human dignity (Section 10)". Thus, failure to collect and properly treat solid waste ultimately contributes to a plethora of negative environmental problems and exposure to several (and sometimes, even fatal) diseases.

We are pleased with the way Pikitup management has actively engaged with the protesting workers and swiftly developed a comprehensive recovery plan to address the waste collection backlog.

### The impact of Outreach programmes in our communities



The Office of the Ombudsman for the City of Johannesburg is not a legislative body and its primary duty as an office of last instance, is to help accelerate service delivery by promoting good governance and advocating for the protection of the fundamental rights of the residents of the city.

It is on that premise that we strengthened our Ambassador Programme by deploying an extensively trained group of youth to embark on various Outreach activities in all seven regions of the city. These activations provide residents with an opportunity to engage with our office on our service offering and provide a platform to voice their concerns as well as address their individual issues.

For us as an office, inclusive public engagement is about building strong and sustainable partnerships and one of the key components of making our public engagement processes responsive, inclusive and culturally appropriate is building the capacity of our ambassadors (particularly because they often receive complaints falling outside of the scope of our mandate, such as councillor misconduct - which is covered by the *Municipal Structures Act* and reported to the Office of the Speaker - to complaints about legislative or executive decisions made by council, legal or arbitrary proceedings).

Through our Outreach efforts, we have been able to also offer an educational aspect to our activations by providing people with information relating to our mandate and a first-hand experience of how our complaints process works and how the revision of the Ombudsman By-Law (2023) directly affects you, the ratepayer.

Our various Outreach programmes have proven to have a significant impact by promoting the human rights of all residents, increasing the visibility of our office, raising awareness, developing a rapport with the respective communities, and providing access to cost-effective dispute resolution processes as well as assist in closing the gap between the City of Johannesburg and its citizens.

Contact us if you have an idea for a community outreach event/initiative, or if you would like to partner with our team!

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