



Parents blame council for accidents

THE funeral of Shermiel De Water, the five-year-old girl who attended the Woodlands Day Centre has brought to the surface the anger of the people of Mitchells Plain against the high rate of children's deaths in the area.

Eisleben Road is known by residents as "Kill-me-Quick" and has claimed the lives of seven children. This year, 19 people have died on the Mitchells Plain roads with a marked increase in the number of children affected.

Fifty children from the Woodlands Day Centre staged a placard demonstration at the funeral of their friend, Shermiel De Water. Some of the posters read: "Involve us in road planning", "Poor road planning", "Pede-

trian Crossings are necessary", "Drivers and children are Victims".

The chairperson of the Day Centre said: "The City Council must be held responsible because they have constructed race tracks without proper warning signs or other safety precautions.

"We demand proper traffic control and supervision".

A parent commenting on the forced removals of people under the Group Areas Act said: "We were forced to Mitchells Plain. Must we also be forced to accept the high accident rate?"

Residents are blaming the Council and bad town planning for the high accident rate. Other causes of the problem are:

- Very little or no traffic control
- Too few stop signs, pedestrian crossings and traffic lights
- The few play parks that exist are often near busy areas and places where children have to cross roads
- Shops, libraries, schools and civic centres are situated where people are forced to cross many busy roads.

Parents from the day Centre spoke to many people about what can be done to improve the situation. They have suggested the following:

- Regular patrol by traffic police
- Setting up traffic stops, pedestrian crossings near schools, shops, libraries and civic centres.
- The slowing down of

Eisleben Road before it claims more lives.

- The appointment of pensioners who are paid by the Council to assist at pedestrian crossings near schools to ensure that the children cross safely at the end of the school day.

- Starting non-working parents' committees with the aim of helping children to cross the roads after school.

- Committees that would see to it that the Council and the traffic department get busy making Mitchells Plain a safer place for its residents.

The National Road Safety Council of South Africa, publishes charts and booklets on road safety for schools

and Day Centres.

But residents feel that this is not a solution as there are very few or no pedestrian crossings, stop signs and traffic lights in the townships.

The situation in other townships is not different to what is happening in Mitchells Plain.

Higher

Compared to White areas, the townships have a much higher accident rate.

"We are only through half of this year, and already more people have died during this year than during the whole of last year. With more people constantly moving in, the death rate is going to increase unless the community does something to stop it", a spokesperson said.



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