

NATIONAL TREASURY VISIT

National Treasury, accompanied by representatives from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Neighbourhood Development Partnership Programme and Provincial Treasury visited the George Municipality on a two-day programme as part of the Mid-Year Budget and Performance Assessment for Municipalities.

The George Municipality was represented by Municipal Manager Dr Michele Gratz, the Chief Financial Officer Riaan du Plessis, the directors of the George Municipality, some senior managers, and managers.

“Twice a year we have engagements with the National Treasury that assess and review our finances. We are one of the privileged intermediate cities in the country that are a non-delegated Municipality, in other words, we report directly to the national Treasury,” said Mayor van Wyk. “Our engagements with them are always valuable as we can discuss our infrastructure needs, various financing needs and the biggest challenges we face, the load shedding



Sitting in front from left: Riaan du Plessis (CFO), Dr Michele Gratz (Municipal Manager), Alderman Leon van Wyk, Councillor Dirk Wessels (Portfolio Councillor for Financial & Strategic Services) and Mandla Gilimani (Director from National Treasury responsible for George Municipality).

At the back: Senior officials from George Municipality, National Treasury, Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Neighbourhood Development Partnership Programme and Provincial Treasury.

and electricity. We, therefore, value these engagements enormously and it is then we have that opportunity to engage directly

with them and bring the major challenges that we face as Municipalities to their attention.”

The delegation visited the new 66/11 kV 40 MVA electrical substation which is currently under construction in Thembaletu.

This substation is set to be amongst the largest of its kind in the Southern Cape, and a major bulk infrastructure milestone for the city of George. It will improve reliability and provide an adequate capacity of electrical supply to the area, alleviate the load on the substations that are currently supplying Thembaletu and will serve as an important catalyst for investment funding from both the state and business.

Another site the delegation visited was the 20 Ml/d extensions to the New Water Treatment Works (New WTW). George Municipality received a Budget Facility for Infrastructure Funding (BFI) grant to the value of R1.107 billion from the National Treasury in the 2021/22 financial year. The BFI project with its various components has shown significant progress and expenditure to date in the 2022/23 financial year.

George Municipality is actively working to keep our economy on the go – by ensuring adequate long-term planning and investment in our resources – that is water, sewerage, and electricity.

“We are very impressed with the municipality’s handling of its finances. “We find other Municipalities struggling with paying creditors, but George Municipality has consistently shown its ability to pay its creditors. The Municipality is on a sustainable path; one of the other things that the municipality is doing well is the appropriateness to cushion their communities and businesses through load shedding by fast-tracking the implementation of the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) projects,” said Mandla Gilimani, director in the National Treasury who is responsible for George Municipality.

Gilimani also praised the Municipality for its well-maintained infrastructure. “Service delivery is clearly visible with well looked after roads network and cleanliness of the town. This will go a long way in attracting investments into the city.”

The Auditor-General advised late last year that George Municipality achieved a clean audit for 2021/22, this, according to Chief Financial Officer, Riaan Du Plessis, is “a testament to the hard work being put in by the administration to continuously improve service delivery whilst also maintaining the highest quality in our administrative processes”.

Another Clean Audit

George Municipality received a clean audit for 2021/22. Chief Financial Officer, Riaan Du Plessis expressed his gratitude for the results and confirmed that this is testament to the hard work being put in by the administration to continuously improve service delivery whilst also maintaining the highest quality in our administrative processes.

Municipal Manager, Dr Michele Gratz noted that the management team is working hard to create a performance-driven municipality and improve service delivery. “This Auditor-General report acknowledged the great strides which the municipality has made over the past two years and specifically commended the implementation of consequence management to ensure

officials do their work diligently and efficiently.”

Ald Leon Van Wyk offered his congratulations and expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Municipal Manager, CFO, Finance team, Directors and officials who all contributed to this team effort. “The municipality has worked towards the modernisation of systems while also tackling some major improvements in infrastructure and services as part of the turnaround. The achievement of a clean audit is therefore something special.

“The Clean Audit also cements access to additional Grant opportunities that we are applying for, that will benefit the broader George community and especially those areas requiring improvements.”



Western Cape Premier Alan Winde

Mayor joins Premier’s #ENERGY Digicon

The Executive Mayor of George, Leon van Wyk was a panellist on the Western Cape Premier Alan Winde’s weekly Digicon in March to discuss the George Municipality’s plans to become energy resilient and other related initiatives.

This was Premier Winde’s second digital media briefing of a string on energy-related issues and George was the first municipality invited to address the Digicon. Mayor van Wyk was accompanied by the Municipal Manager, Dr Michele Gratz and the Director for Electrotechnical Services, Mr Bongani Mandla.

Ald Van Wyk discussed the intentions on Energy efficiency and demand management through reduction of own consumption, Self-generation (Municipal and

private) Small scale energy wheeling, enabling Small-Scale Embedded Generation (SSEG) and restructuring of tariffs.

“We are extremely proud to have had the opportunity, as George Municipality to be able to present on this #Energy Digicon,” said Mayor van Wyk. “It is important that local municipalities despite the severe impact on their own operations, see how they can assist their citizens in fighting off the effects of load-shedding.”

Premier Winde thanked Executive Mayor, Leon Van Wyk, for joining the #EnergyDigicon.

For a recording of the latest Digicon, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/live/SpBdgg90d0?feature=share>

PV installation at Outeniqua Wastewater Treatment Works

The Executive Mayor of George, Alderman Leon van Wyk accompanied by the Portfolio Councillor for Electrotechnical Services & Fleet Management, Nosiselo Mbete, last week visited the Outeniqua Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) situated in Pacaltsdorp to see the start of the erection of the PV installation of a 400-kilowatt peak (kWp).

“We are happy to witness the commencement of the construction works for the installation of our 400 kiloWatt peak (kWp) solar PV plant that will, once erected in the next couple of months, be able to power most of the Wastewater Treatment Works electrical loads during the daytime. It is essential that we make use of renewable energy along with a battery pack which will be added in due course so that we can have the Power to operate our sewerage always works,” said Mayor van Wyk during his visit last week.

The system, according to the director for Electrotechnical Services, Bongani Mandla will comprise 736 panels, with each panel rated at 545 Watts. “Then we have the inverters that convert the DC power from the panels into AC electricity that's required by the loads. We have a total of eight (8) inverters, with each inverter rated

at 50 kilo Watts (kW).”

“The system will be grid-tied with no storage. However, it will allow for integration of battery storage to be installed in the next financial year,” Mandla added. “The power generated will be fed into the facility's main low-voltage distribution board where the loads (pumps and motors) required to operate the wastewater facility are connected.”

The expected annual energy yield is 678 680 kWhs, and at a rate of R1,60 per kWh, the cost of the annual energy generated is R1 085 888.

The calculated payback period of the system is 7 years. The lifespan of PV systems is 25 years. The system's total cost, including a 24-month operation and maintenance period and training of 4 municipal staff, is R7,8 million.

In addition, the PV system will have a weather monitoring station equipped with four (4) sensors to measure parameters such as the irradiance, wind speed and wind direction, humidity, ambient temperature, PV panels temperature, etc. This data, including the PV production data, will be pulled from there and displayed on the SCADA system, for remote monitoring (in near real-time).



From left: Rasmus Esterhuysen Manager, Projects; Portfolio Councillor Nosiselo Mbete Electrotechnical Services & Fleet Management; Alderman Leon van Wyk; Menno Sulsters (Project Manager for SEM Solutions, appointed contractor), Thabo Yiga Manager, Projects and Danie Greeff, Electro-Technical Services: Deputy Director – Planning & Design.

In terms of environmental sustainability, the carbon emissions that will be avoided using energy generated from a clean and

renewable source is 12 809 tonnes over 25 years. The installation will occupy an area of approximately 4 800 square metres.

What is George Municipality doing to alleviate ESKOM Loadshedding – and other renewable energy projects

Executive Mayor Leon Van Wyk acknowledges the challenges being faced by the Business and Agricultural Sectors currently with regard to the energy crisis.

“We are fully aware that numerous business operations in and around George require consistency in the provision of electricity during certain hours of the day or on a 24-hour basis. These needs have shaped the municipal philosophy to alleviate Stage 1 (up to 2 hours per day) and Stage 2 (up to 4 hours per day) of loadshedding as soon as possible to provide greater security of supply for these sectors.

George Municipality agrees that the current loadshedding is nothing short of a crisis, but reminds residents that the municipality is not responsible for loadshedding and has no option but to implement as received. The municipality's ability to generate power for use of our residents is limited but we are actively working on reducing our daily energy requirements from ESKOM.

George uses at peak times up to 85MVA per day. So, if the municipality can reduce our own consumption of energy by 10% (between 8MW and 10MW) continuously, we should be able to apply to ESKOM to relieve us of Stage 1 and 2 Loadshedding. This will also assist us in achieving our goal of reducing internal electricity costs and increasing sustainability.

The priority goal will be that the city and its residents will then be freed of at least one stage, that is two hours, of loadshedding.

This is however not a quick fix, and currently the plan is that for the calendar year 2023, the municipality will add 3MW of own energy and before December 2024 another 9MW should be commissioned into the system.

Director for Electrotechnical Services, Bongani Mandla explains that George Municipality is implementing a three-pronged operational approach to significantly reduce our reliance on energy supply from ESKOM.

“This approach has three focus areas; one being Energy Efficiency, another Own-Build Programme, and finally the procurement of energy from Independent Power Producers (IPPs). In order to achieve this much needed reduction of loadshedding, the city has already started its Own-Build

programme, which is intended to deliver around 30MW of energy into the grid over the next 36 months, subject to feasibility studies and environmental approval.

The city is working hard to ensure that at least 10MW is delivered by this programme within the next 18 months, as most of the smaller projects have passed the basic environmental assessment, whilst the 9MW PV Solar Plant is nearing the final stage of the Environmental Impact Assessment approval process.

George issued a Request for Proposal from IPPs and received overwhelming support in terms of potential technologies available, as well as options available to supply between 30 and 40MW.

A phased approach of IPP procurement will be followed to ensure that the city is able to secure between 30 to 40 MW from this programme within the next 36 months. Once both IPP procurement and Own-Build delivers energy to the grid, the reliance of the city on the ESKOM network would be significantly reduced. The implementation of our ongoing energy efficiency projects will further reduce this reliance.”

What has George implemented to assist residents during loadshedding

Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) units at a cost of approximately R3.6 million have been installed at 56 of the main traffic intersections. In order to keep water flowing and sewerage pumpstations operational during loadshedding, 30 large generators have been installed at sewer pump stations and 5 at various Water Treatment Works.

What has George already implemented to reduce own energy consumption

The municipality commissioned a PV Plant as a pilot project for the main municipal building in September 2021. The 300kWp (kilowatt peak) solar plant at the Civic Centre parking lot helps keep systems going during loadshedding and produces on average 41 500 kilowatt hours (kWh) of energy a month which supplies the Civic Centre building.

A battery energy storage system(BESS) will be installed by the end of July 2023 for the Civic Centre, which will allow for the plant to continue to generate energy even during loadshedding and for the storage system to support the supply to the building when

the ESKOM network is not available.

All of the George municipal buildings have had energy efficient lights installed, as well as over 111 energy efficient air conditioners.

A number of buildings are scheduled for rooftop PV solar in the 2023/24 financial year, and the preparatory work and studies are underway to have all of our municipal buildings self-sufficient by December 2026.

Over the past few years, a total of 5583 streetlights (Compact Fluorescent Lamps, High Pressure Sodium and Mercury Vapour) have been replaced by light-emitting diodes (LED) at a cost of R14 501 513 (Municipal and EEDSM Funding).

Battery Energy Storage to counter high cost of running generators

The costs of running generators are exorbitant and currently totals approximately R148 000 per day in fuel alone at Stage 4, with the fuel costs even higher when Stage 5 and 6 are implemented.

Battery energy storage is planned for all the Water and WasteWater Treatment Plants as well as the Sewer Pump stations in order to reduce the diesel costs. The Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) deployment is being fast-tracked to save costs over the long run.

What projects are underway or due to start this year and are funded by municipal own funds

Four PV Solar Projects are due to start this year and on completion will power loads with energy generated from a clean and renewable source.

These projects will be funded from various streams, including municipal own funding, external loans as well as grant funding where applicable.

1. The Outeniqua Wastewater Treatment facility will receive a 400 kWp PV plant. This plant will start physical construction mid-February and the date of commission is end June 2023.
2. The Gwaing Wastewater Treatment facility will receive a 500 kWp PV plant. This tender will need to be re-advertised due to no suppliers meeting the technical requirements. The commission date will be delayed to December 2023.

3. The Denneoord New Waterworks Facility will receive a 400 kWp PV plant. The outstanding approvals have been received, the preparatory work has been started with the plan to commission the site by March 2024.

4. The municipality will build a 1000 kWp or 1 MWp solar farm on Erf 464. The plant will be commissioned by the end of September 2023 and the power will be connected to the grid to reduce the municipal bulk purchases.

5. The 9 MW PV Solar Plant project requires additional Environmental Impact Assessment(EIA) approval. The funding is part of the three-year Medium-Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework budget.

Looking ahead and the funding required

Executive Mayor Leon Van Wyk noted that ESKOM's inability to ensure reliability in electricity supply has necessitated the development of a municipal strategy to secure alternative renewable energy for George as rapidly as possible. “Our approach has been to urgently address consistent electricity provision to our own infrastructure while at the same time providing relief for key stakeholders in the economy. Energy therefore receives constant attention as we continue in our quest to attract investment and employment into our economy. We also welcome engagements to discuss the challenges and potential solutions from IPPs and others.”

The city has embarked on various investigations which includes the building of a Solar PV Plant capable of generating 30 MW. The project is amongst those which are undergoing feasibility studies in order to identify and establish the practicality, as well as find innovative means of circumventing the space requirements. This utility scale project coupled with a Utility Scale BESS will cost in the region of R1,250 billion. The renewable projects Own-Build programme will cost the city around R2 billion, and George Municipality is continuously engaging various funding institutions both nationwide and internationally to source external funding to assist with covering the bulk of these costs.

GEORGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY COUNCILLORS

 <div>Ald Leon Van Wyk Executive Mayor PR (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Raybin Figland Executive Deputy Mayor PR (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Sean Snyman, Speaker, Ward 28 (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Marlene Barnardt, Chief Whip, Ward 4 (DA)</div>	 <div>Portfolio Cllr Brendon Adams, Community Services Social Development, Libraries and Sport, Ward 17 (DA)</div>	 <div>Portfolio Cllr Charlotte Clarke, Community Safety, PR (DA)</div>	 <div>Portfolio Cllr Browen Johnson, Civil Engineering Services, Operating Aspects Ward 23 (DA)</div>	 <div>Vacant PR (DA)</div>
 <div>Portfolio Cllr, Ald Basil Petrus, Human Settlements, Ward 8 (DA)</div>	 <div>Portfolio Cllr Nosiselo Mbete, Electrotechnical Services & Fleet Management, PR (DA)</div>	 <div>Portfolio Cllr Christiaan Neethling, Corporate Services & HR, PR (VF+)</div>	 <div>Portfolio Cllr Jean Safers, Community Services: Parks, Refuse & Environmental, Ward 1 (DA)</div>	 <div>Portfolio Cllr Jacquiquie Von Brandis, Civil Engineering Services: Capital Projects & BFI, Ward 26 (DA)</div>	 <div>Portfolio Cllr Dirk Wessels, Financial & Strategic Services, PR (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Daniel Cronje, Ward 2 (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Erika Brown, Ward 3 (DA)</div>
 <div>Cllr Monique Simmers, Ward 5 (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Jayzee Jantjies, Ward 6 (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Vulindlela Mruqhli, Ward 7 (ANC)</div>	 <div>Cllr Theminkosi Lento, Ward 9 (ANC)</div>	 <div>Cllr Zukile Gom, Ward 10 (ANC)</div>	 <div>Cllr Sifiso Ntondini, Ward 11 (ANC)</div>	 <div>Cllr Eric Mdaka, Ward 12 (ANC)</div>	 <div>Cllr Simphiwe Toto, Ward 13 (ANC)</div>
 <div>Cllr Melvin Roelfse, Ward 14 (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Bonisile Hani, Ward 15 (ANC)</div>	 <div>Vacant Ward 16 (GOOD)</div>	 <div>Cllr Donovan Gultig, Ward 18 (DA)</div>	 <div>Ald Iona Kritzinger, Ward 19 (DA)</div>	 <div>Vacant Ward 20 (GOOD)</div>	 <div>Cllr Siphelo Manxele, Ward 21 (ANC)</div>	 <div>Cllr Marais Kruger, Ward 22 (DA)</div>
 <div>Cllr Justin Fry, Ward 24 (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Jarques Esau, Ward 25 (ANC)</div>	 <div>Vacant Ward 27 (GOOD)</div>	 <div>Cllr Ebrahim America, PR (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Vivian Desmond Carolus PR (PBI)</div>	 <div>Cllr Johan Du Toit, MPAC Chairperson, PR (ACDP)</div>	 <div>Cllr Enrico Figland, PR (VF+)</div>	 <div>Ald Virgill Gericke, PR (PBI)</div>
 <div>Cllr Maria Greeff, PR (PBI)</div>	 <div>Cllr Cathleen Jansen PR (PBI)</div>	 <div>Cllr Khayaletu Lose, PR (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Rosa Louw, PR (GOOD)</div>	 <div>Cllr Given Junior Masase PR (GOOD)</div>	 <div>Cllr Faith Mdaka, PR (ANC)</div>	 <div>Cllr Luvuyo Ncamile, PR (EFF)</div>	 <div>Cllr Gert Niehaus, GIPTN Chairperson, PR (VF+)</div>
 <div>Cllr Jerome Clive Petersen, PR (PBI)</div>	 <div>Cllr Thandiswa Qatana, PR (DA)</div>	 <div>Cllr Sedric Smart, PR (PA)</div>	 <div>Ald Gert Van Niekerk, PR (VF+)</div>	 <div>Cllr Pheliswa Qampi, PR (EFF)</div>	 <div>Cllr Regina Windwaai, PR (DA)</div>	 <div>VACANT PR (GOOD)</div>	

Housing projects progressing well

George Mayor, Ald Leon van Wyk with Ald Bazil Petrus, Portfolio Councillor for Human Settlements and John Laws, Construction Manager: Ruwacon Construction Pty LTD visited the Metro Housing project in March. Mayor van Wyk said he is glad to see the good progress being made with the houses up until now and that beneficiaries on the list include disabled people and the elderly.

Ald Petrus said the fact that, as soon as the Western Cape Ministry of Infrastructure gives the go-ahead, we can hand over homes to people, is gratifying

The Reigerpark living area, also known, as Erf 325 – East, in Pacaltsdorp consists of Flisp housing and RDP or Breaking new ground (BNG) homes of which 1238 homes were built and 791 was completed and handed over to the new

owners by George Municipality and the Minister of Infrastructure, Hon Tertius Simmers.

The total homes also included homes for disabled persons. These homes need special additions such as ramps, handrails in the bathrooms, sliding doors, lower fitted taps, and more.

Flisp (Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme) homes were developed by the Department of Human Settlements to enable affordable home-ownership opportunities for South Africans. The subsidy is offered to permanent residents of South Africa earning between R 3 501 and R 22 000 per month.

Metro Housing project consists of 236 RDP homes and 200 Flisp houses. Beneficiaries of the project are from different informal settlements and families on the housing waiting list.



In front of the Metro Housing Project homes that are nearly completed are from left Ald Bazil Petrus, Wendy-Ann Mentor, Manager: New Housing, Human Settlements, Planning and Development, Mayor Leon van Wyk, John Laws, Construction Manager: Ruwacon Construction Pty LTD, Brumilda Kirchner, Project Administrator and Madoda Bokwe, Clerk of Works, Human Settlements, Planning and Development.



Ald Leon van Wyk and Alice Mostert give the improvements at her home a thumbs up!

Homeowner happy with new retaining walls

George Mayor, Ald Leon van Wyk visited Isaac Street, Rosedale in Ward 14 recently to retaining walls and gutters which had been installed to minimise water run-off at homes with steep slopes.

The mayor visited the home of Alice Mostert where retaining walls and gutters were built in front and around her house to re-route rainwater, especially during heavy downpours.

Although the sewer system in the street catches most of the water, heavy

downpours can become too much to handle. Mostert said she is very happy with the improvements at her house and it makes a huge difference when it is raining.

Ald Van Wyk said he is happy with the work that was done and is thankful for funding and grants made available to the Municipality by the Western Cape Minister of Infrastructure from the separate operating account for special projects such as this one.



Madoda Bokwe, Charne Flores, Project Administrator at Human Settlements, Planning and Development, Mayor Leon van Wyk and Wendy-Ann Mentor, Manager: New Housing from Human Settlements, Planning and Development in front of Mostert's house.

Modimolle-Mookgophong Municipality pays a technical visit to George

Marlene Van Staden, Executive Mayor for Modimolle-Mookgophong Municipality was thrilled to return to George in November last year with a team of senior management for a thorough technical visit. Modimolle-Mookgophong Municipality visited the Southern Cape in July 2023 sponsored by Friedrich Naumann Foundation, a German foundation for liberal and libertarian politics. At the time Ald Van Staden expressed the wish to return with her senior management for in-depth technical

site inspections.

The programme over the two days included in-depth presentations on a number of aspects where George Municipality has implemented technology to streamline process such as the online grave booking system, drive-through motor vehicle licencing office, fleet management, disaster management as well as extensive site visits to Civil and Electrotechnical projects including the Wastewater Treatment Works, Water Purification Plant, Municipal Roads Workshop and Glenwood Substation.



Director Civil Engineering, Mr Jannie Koegelenberg seen here at the Waste Water Treatment Works in Pacaltsdorp with Ald Van Wyk, Dr Gratz, Portfolio Councillor Jackie Von Brandis (Civil Engineering Services: Capital Projects and BFI), Portfolio Councillor Brownen Johnson (Civil Engineering Services: Operating Aspects) and the Modimolle-Mookgophong delegates.



Jacques Lawrence, Senior Manager: Substations Electrotechnical Services (right) and next to him, Bongani Mandla, Director of Electrotechnical Services as well as Portfolio Councillor for Electrotechnical Services and Fleet Management, Nosiselo Mbete (in the yellow dress) with representatives of the Modimolle-Mookgophong Municipality at the Glenwood substation that had transformer maintenance earlier in the year. Extensive maintenance of Power Transformers at various substations were done to guarantee long-term life expectancy. The importance of these preventative measures and to keep key infrastructure well maintained, was explained to the visitors to ensure consumers don't bear the brunt.



Ms Yuleen Campher, Cllr Brendon Adams, Stella Lottering, Executive Mayor Leon van Wyk and Veronique Ferndale.

Soup Kitchens receive gas stoves

Alderman Leon van Wyk, and Councillor Brendon Adams, the Portfolio Councillor for Community Services, Social Development, Libraries and Sport handed over Gas stoves to eight (8) of George’s nutritional centres, formerly known as ‘soup kitchens in December last year.

The first stop was at Dina Witbooi’s soup kitchen on Cain Road, Rosedale. Ms Witbooi serves 120 – 130 people a day four times a week. Handing over the stove to Witbooi, Mayor van Wyk said: “I am very happy that I had the opportunity to hand over this stove to Ms Dina to assist her in the noble work that she is doing for her community. I commend every soup kitchen for their amazing work and service.”

Rosina Gordon, Pacaltsdorp has been feeding her community for 30 years and that she will be 70 years old in a little over a year. Gordon feeds between 250 – 300 people twice a week (Monday & Thursday). Ms Stella Lottering in Blanco feeds 85 people



Ms. Rosina Gordon told Mayor van Wyk that she has been feeding her community for 30 years.

three times a week.

Residents of George who wish to support the nutritional centres can contact 044 802 2000.



Veronique Ferndale, Executive Mayor Leon van Wyk, Ms Dina Witbooi, Cllr Brendon Adams and Ms Yuleen Campher.

Planet Youth – a better future for all

Planet Youth, a whole-of-society programme focussed on mental health, was launched as a pilot project in George in February this year.

The programme, coordinated by the departments of Health, Education and Cultural Affairs and Sports is an Icelandic prevention concept that has proved success in reducing substance abuse and is designed to strengthen protective factors and building healthy communities, especially young people.

The aim of the programme is to enrol all children in George across the subdistrict in activities that promote protective factors to develop healthy futures. The local community aims to achieve significant reduction in youth alcohol harms which will be measured as decreased school dropout rates, improved school academic performance, and a reduction in violence.

This is projected to alleviate the burden on the overwhelmed mental healthcare system, correctional services, judiciary, education and

social development.

“I am very excited and proud that the Planet Youth programme is being launched in George. This programme will provide our youth in George with the opportunity to become part of the anticipated benefits ranging from wellness and employment, to food security and cultural and sporting achievements”, said Executive Mayor Mr Leon van Wyk

The local community aims to improve employment rates by producing employment-ready youth. By applying the Planet Youth vision of positioning the school as the hub, reducing the economic and social harms of youth substance use and by increasing employment rates, the local community aims to significantly improve food security in affected communities.

It is also aiming to achieve a significant increase in sporting and cultural achievement which will improve mental health, physical well-being and competitiveness in affected schools.

George Municipality embraces World Food Day

George Municipality embraced the concept of World Food Day recently by providing 150 homeless persons with a meal on World Food Day celebrated annually.

According to Janine Edwards from Social Development at George Municipality, people living on the streets often go for days without food and when food is available, it is not always nutritious. George Municipality appeals to Georgians and visitors to become a part of the solution of People living on the Streets by rather giving donations to organisations such as the George Night Shelter or Kidstop, instead of giving money or handouts to adults or children begging at streets intersections, as this has increasingly become a concern.

The PLOTS (People Living on The Streets) forum was established in 2018 by George Municipality to holistically address the many factors associated with homeless people.

The forum includes representatives from George Municipal Social Development Services, the South African Police Service (SAPS), Kid Stop (focuses on children living on the Streets), People Against Substance Abuse (PASA), Smoking & Alcohol Harms Alleviation & Rehabilitation Association (SAHARA), Christian Rehabilitation Ministries to the Homeless of George (Cremhog) and the National Departments of Social Development and Health.

The PLOTS Forum aims to eradicate the issue of homelessness. Night outreaches take place to quantify the number of persons currently living on the streets and these surveys also serve as a tool to identify the needs of the individuals, and to assess how they can be assisted going forward.

George Municipality continues to provide clothing and toiletries to persons living on the street. The toiletries include soap, facecloths, toothpaste, toothbrushes, roll-on and sanitary pads. The municipality maintains a clothing bank where

residents of George donate clothing for this purpose. Many of the homeless ask for clothing or toiletries to be presentable and a register is kept for this purpose. It would really assist the Municipality if more residents could donate clothing and toiletries for this purpose as no funding is available for this purpose.

The Municipal Social Development division runs a job seekers programme where we motivate the homeless to seek jobs, even if it is in the informal market. The department assists with the drawing up of CV’s and registering of the homeless on the EPWP database for job opportunities. Through other stakeholders, reunification services are

also planned for those individuals who indicate that they want to reunite with their families. The issue of homelessness is a vast challenge and assistance from all spheres is needed to address the issue properly.

“ The PLOTS (People Living on The Streets) forum was established in 2018 by George Municipality to holistically address the many factors associated with homeless people. ”

Living on the streets is not a crime and therefore these people cannot be arrested or moved without their consent. Our Social Development and Law Enforcement department’s mandate is limited as the bulk of the functions to assist people living on the streets, falls under SAPS and the National Department of Social Development.

George Residents, Business Owners and organisations, who want to help the homeless and or submit innovative ideas on how to help the homeless are invited to join the PLOTS monthly meeting. You can contact Estelle Fredericks on 044 802 2000, ext 2015 during office hours for more information.

The public may contact these organisations: Freddy Trout, PASA (People Against Substance Abuse) on 068 487 4848, Jonathan Gelderbloem, YFC Kid-stop on 044 874 2624/044 875 1794, Department of Social Services on 044 814 1920 or Andre Olivier from Cremhog on andre.olivier1962@gmail.com



Executive Mayor for George, Leon van Wyk (centre) standing next to Paul Rickerton, CEO Planet Youth Iceland (left of Ald Van Wyk, grey suit) at the launch today held in the George Civic. The programme is a joint operation by various western cape government departments, the University of Cape Town and various NGO’s and public partners.

Disability Month Visit

George Mayor, Leon Van Wyk visited the South African Mouth and Foot Painters Association in George as part of celebrating disability month and on the eve of National Disability Rights Awareness Day which was celebrated on Saturday, 3 December.

Mayor Van Wyk encouraged visitors and residents alike to support the organisations. “Please pop in and meet Patrick Botto, one of the artists, and have a look at the art that they have on display and support these artists,” the Mayor urged. The Association is situated at the Pre-Cap Centre, 16 Courtenay Street.

The South African Mouth and Foot Painters Association was established in 1958 in Kempton Park, Gauteng, after 57 years their offices moved to George in 2015. This association was started as an initiative by German painter Arnulf Erich Stegmann who lost the use of both his arms due to polio. This association now has 800 mouth and foot artists in 74 countries and this community keeps growing. Currently, there are 26 mouth and foot artists in South Africa.

Apart from doing actual painting, the work of these artists is also available in print form on t-shirts, mugs, canvas, and puzzles to name a few.

The mayor met an associate member of the Mouth and Foot Association, Patrick Botto, while at the association. Botto was employed by the police force in 1991 as a fingerprint specialist. In November 1993 he was involved in an accident, broke his neck, and was subsequently left paralysed from the neck down. In 1998 he learned



Patrick Botto busy painting with his mouth with an onlooker.

how to paint with his mouth and took art classes at the Bellville library in Cape Town for five years.

“This association has changed my life in so many ways and I am thankful to them for helping to restore the purpose in my life. I am disabled but this has not stopped my talent. It is through the help of this association that I was still able to achieve and do something with my life,” Patrick said proudly.



Cllr Erika Brown, Cllr Marlene Barnardt and Mayor Leon van Wyk with Patrick Botto, associate member of the Mouth and Foot Association and some of his brilliant paintings.

George Night Shelter

Alderman Leon van Wyk, accompanied by Councillors Marlene Barnardt, the Chief Whip, Erika Brown councillor for Ward 3 and Donovan Gultig, councillor for Ward 18 visited the George Night Shelter. This is part of a series of visits the Executive Mayor and his entourage visited to appreciate and show support for social and community development programmes and activities in the City of George.

There are about 120 people in the night shelter every evening. The night shelter opens its doors to the homeless for R25 an evening which includes a cooked meal and breakfast. There is a permanent social worker based at the shelter who assists the homeless to apply for their IDs, helps them create CVs and assists them in applying for work. The George Night Shelter enjoys the support of both the George Municipality and the Department of Social Development (DSD), as well

as donations from the community and businesses.

The assistant manager, Mr Chris Classen, gave the mayor and his delegation a tour of the shelter and spoke about their zero tolerance when it comes to the consumption of any substances.

He said that occupants are expected to leave the shelter at 08h00 and return by 15h00, upon their return they are tested with a breathalyser. He also mentioned that the social worker based at the shelter tries to reunite occupants with their families.

“I am highly grateful for the work being done at this night shelter. We have a homelessness problem in our town. Our service industry who are lending a helping hand should be commended for their work, the social workers, people like Mr Classen – you help make our town better with the selfless work you do,” said Alderman van Wyk.



Mayor Leon van Wyk in the middle with staff from the Rosemoor Old Age home from left, Nivan Papier, Emmegene Wonderlik, Cllr Brendon Adams, Sister Charmaine Titus, Mayor, Cllr Marlene Barnardt and Cllr Erika Brown.

Rosemoor Old Age Home Visit

George Mayor, Leon Van Wyk visited the Rosemoor Old Age Home to establish whether there is any assistance that the municipality can facilitate to reduce challenges faced.

The Rosemoor Old Age Home currently has 92 residents and can accommodate 98 people at full capacity.

The old age home has 67 staff members, all under the supervision of the matron, Sister Charmaine Titus, who has been at the

home for a little over a year.

Mayor Van Wyk, Cllrs Marlene Barnardt, Brendon Adams and Erika Brown took a tour of the facility and heard about the management under Sister Charmaine Titus and the staff employed there.

Mayor van Wyk had the opportunity to engage with some of the residents at the home and Aunty Cory took the time to serenade the mayor with a beautiful song.



Aunty Cory, a resident from the Rosemoor Old Age Home (in red) serenaded the mayor and delegation with song. At the back are from left, Cllr Erika Brown, Cllr Brendon Adams, Mayor Leon van Wyk, Cllr Marlene Barnardt and Sister Charmaine Titus.



From left: Cllr. Marlene Barnardt (Chief Whip), Cllr. Donovan Gultig (Ward 18 Councillor), Councillor Erika Brown (Ward 3 Councillor), Alderman Leon van Wyk (Executive Mayor of George) and Mr Chris Classen.

Themba lethu Fire Station gets facelift

Themba lethu Fire Station has received a facelift with stunning brand-new see-through doors with red framing – the red framing pays homage to the firefighters and the department whose main colour of recognition is red.

The upgrade consisted of the following; new engine room (garage) doors, removing tiles in the engine room and painting, replacing gutters and fascia Boards, fitting new aluminium windows, repairing roof leaks as well as paving. The cost of the upgrade was around R450 000.

Themba lethu Fire Station was the first fire station built after the George Fire station was established. It houses up to four firefighters at any given time and is the primary response for Themba lethu, Pacaltsdorp, Conville, Levallia and the Industrial areas, and serves as a backup for the rest of the George jurisdiction. The upgrade is part of the systematic upgrade

of all the stations serving George.

According to Neels Barnard, George Fire Chief, a professional looking facility increases confidence in the fire station's services amongst the community.

“We want residents to know that we care about all of our stations equally and that the upgrade is not just for our staff, but so that the community can receive a professional service from the Fire Department. We strive for consistency in our appearance and that is why you will see that Themba lethu also sports the beautiful red doors which has become a trademark of George Fire Stations. Some of the other upgrades are simply due to needed repairs and maintenance such as the leaking roofs and floors that needed to be replaced.

These upgrades are to ensure that our firefighters have a functional base from where they can perform their duties.”



Themba lethu Fire Station after it has received a facelift.



Event organisers representing sports clubs, schools, event companies, and NGO's attended the workshop.

Successful Events Compliance and Support Workshop

A well-attended Events Compliance and Support Workshop was hosted by the George Municipality's Tourism Department in February. Event organisers representing sports clubs, schools, event companies, and NGO's attended the workshop and were able to communicate relevant challenges and gave valuable contributions.

Various municipal departments presented information on topics ranging from the critical aspects of population certificate applications, bookings regarding municipal sports facilities, use of open spaces, regulations regarding private land-use rights for event venues, outdoor advertising, and event marketing.

The guest speakers were from various municipal sections designated to assist with applications and event support such as Tourism (posters and banners, event

funding assistance, event promotion), Emergency Services (population certificate application), Environmental (cleansing, noise control applications, open space permission applications), Sports and Corporate Sections (sports facilities and hall bookings), Building Control (outdoor advertising compliance and structural compliance), Legal Services (legal contracts), Traffic (road closures), Law Enforcement (public procession applications), Town Planning (land-use rights), and Electrotechnical Services (electrical connections and energy availability).

For more information on event compliance, as well as possible repeat workshops, you are welcome to contact Melanie Martins at the George Tourism Office or send an e-mail to events@visitgeorge.co.za

Jetrib must have for surf sea rescue

George Municipality's Fire Service and Disaster Management welcomed the pre-season arrival of the Jetrib, a 1800 CC Jetski that combined with pontoons of rubberduck. They are exclusively bought from Droomers Yamaha in Cape Town which has the patent. This is the first 1800cc Jetrib in South Africa.

“This rescue vessel is a must-have for surf sea rescue,” says the George Municipality's Chief Fire Officer and Disaster Management, Cornelius Barnard. “The agility of the larger engine allows for faster response and movement in between the waves, the safety of the pontoon floating on top of the water increases the rescue capabilities of the Jetrib in shallow surf much more efficiently than what a normal

or smaller rubber duck would provide.”

The Jetrib is operated by two people, a skipper and a rescue swimmer and can then carry a third person as a victim. “The Jetrib is an extremely versatile sea vessel, and we are very proud to have it as part of the George Municipality's fleet of rescue equipment. The Skipper, Fire Fighter Johan Troskie, is a very well-versed and skilled skipper for these vessels” Mr Cornelius Barnard added.



The Jetrib is operated by two people, a skipper and a rescue swimmer and then can carry a third person as a victim. INSERT: 1800 CC Jetski that is combined with pontoons of rubberduck which is now called a Jetrib.

WORLD TRAVEL MARKET AFRICA 2023 – A great Garden Route Collaboration

George, Wilderness and Uniondale Tourism successfully represented the destination at the World Travel Market Africa tourism trade show held in Cape Town last week.

The Garden Route stand was a great collaboration, with areas George, Knysna, Hessequa, Plettenberg Bay and Oudtshoorn represented. Other exhibitors on the stand included Redberry Farm and Woodlands Villa from George, where Woodlands Villa was a first-time exhibitor at the show. The stand was well positioned opposite SATSA, who represent over 1,100 inbound tourism products in Southern Africa. Other Garden Route exhibitors spotted at the show included Knysna Elephant Park, Highgate Ostrich Show Farm, Tsitsikamma Canopy Tours, Lilypond

Lodge, Ocean Sailing Charters. This resulted in a strong Garden Route offering being represented to the tourism trade interested in Africa.

This year a Sustainability segment was included in the destination overview, which was identified as one of the most talked about themes on the buyer profiles.

Buyers who George Tourism met with, based on our destination overview, were mostly interested in adventure, cultural exchange, mountain biking and hiking, nature and scenery, power van, National Park, Redberry Farm, gastronomy, nature guides, Dine with a Local, sporting events in the destination, wine, wellness experiences, and golf.

Across the board, interest by tour operators is mostly for 4 and 5 Star

properties that include breakfast.

A number of buyers are new to selling South Africa and or the Garden Route and were on a ‘fact finding mission’ where George Tourism was able to provide destination awareness and positioning.

Where buyers know the Garden Route area quite well they used the trade show to understand what George, Wilderness and Uniondale has to offer their clients. Clients of the tour operators met with are from a wide variety of source markets covering Spain, India, Argentina, Australia, Netherlands, USA, South Korea, Russian, Belgium, Germany, France, UK, Nigeria, SA, Cameroon, Congo, Swiss, Austria, Malaysia, Norway, Scandinavian.



Managing Director, Chris Ndlovu, from Boyang Gape Tours and Travel who represents Indian and US group tour markets with Sharon House, Senior Tourism Officer for George.

Drive-through MVR Renewal Centre Launched

The Western Cape’s first drive-through service for motor vehicle license renewals was officially launched in George late last year. The municipality’s traffic services turned what was a dilapidated building into a brand-new Motor Vehicle and Registration (MVR) satellite office which includes a drive-through service for the renewal of motor vehicle licenses.

This MVR centre, which is located at 9 George Street in Blanco, a suburb situated north-easterly of George is an extension of the existing MVR centre and will handle drive-through service for customers to renew up to a maximum of two Motor Vehicle Licence’s at a time and will also handle bulk MVR services at the inside counters.

Daylin Mitchel, the then Western Cape MEC for Mobility congratulated the George Municipality for pushing the boundaries to establish the first drive-through Motor vehicle registration centre in the Western Cape to make services easily and conveniently accessible to the citizens.



“George is growing at a rapid pace and what we found at our existing motor vehicle registration centre is that it was starting to get cramped, and people that came for services needed to stand in a queue. This situation forced us to think creatively and innovatively, and so we started improving the services by providing an undercover space for the customers, thereafter, introducing an online system so that a customer can pay online and come to collect the actual licence afterwards,” said Mayor van Wyk.



“I feel very special!” said an ecstatic senior citizen, John Allenby Stoffels, the first resident to renew his motor vehicle licence in a brand new and the first drive-through service for licence disk renewals in George. “I never thought that I’d renew my car disk in the comfort of my car, just like buying food from a drive-thru restaurant, it’s is always a challenge for us senior citizens to stand in long queues waiting for a service; the George Municipality has now made it easily accessible for us, this is great, and I’m happy to have been the first to experience this,” said an obviously delighted Stoffels who experienced this special moment in the presence of his wife and daughter who were in the car with him.



From left (Back row): Suretha Pick (Superintendent MVR), Portfolio Cllr Jacquique Von Brandis (Civil Engineering Services: Capital Projects & BFI), Portfolio Cllr Brendon Adams, (Community Services, Social Development, Libraries and Sport), Mr Vernon Petersen (then Acting Manager: Traffic Services), Portfolio Cllr Brown Johnson (Civil Engineering Services: Operating Aspects), Portfolio Cllr Jean Safers (Community Services: Parks, Refuse & Environmental) and Mr Sivuyile Mtila (Acting Director: Community Services). From left (Front row): Cllr. Marlene Barnardt (Chief Whip), Western Cape Minister of Mobility MEC Daylin Mitchell, Alderman Leon van Wyk (Executive Mayor of George), Dr Michele Gratz (Municipal Manager) and Portfolio Cllr Charlotte Clarke (Community Safety).


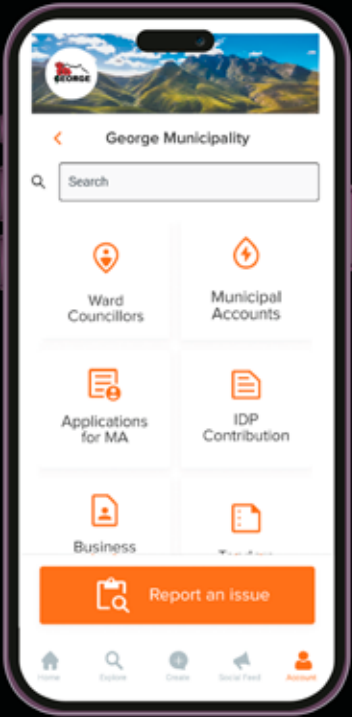


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Small-scale embedded generation online application platform

An online Small Scale Embedded Generation (SSEG) Application Platform has been developed with support from Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA) to streamline the process of submitting and approving applications. George Municipality is once again a leader in the process as it is one of the pilot municipalities, in keeping with its proactive promotion of sustainable energy. The platform will be made available for all municipalities to use.

Small Scale embedded generator (SSEG) refers to the power generated in residential, commercial or industrial areas.

These are mainly the photovoltaic (PV) systems that include other technologies such as inverters, Bi-directional meters and battery storage. An SSEG customer generates electricity on the side and synchronises with the municipal grid. Up to now, almost all municipalities have only allowed for a manual SSEG application submission.

Due to the manual application process, a number of applications were delayed due to incorrect or incomplete information being submitted, causing significant delays in the approval process.

According to the Director for Electrotechnical Services. Bongani Mandla, the Online Platform simplifies and speeds up the process considerably.

“It immediately notifies the applicant if the information is incomplete or incorrect and will not submit the application until these and other parameters have been checked and verified,” he said.

A GIS facility allows officials to see all registered installations to help keep an eye on network congestion in particular areas,” Mandla added. Importantly, it alerts municipal



On the left is Mphielo Ramotsamai, from the George Municipality’s Electrotechnical Services and Josh Dippenaar from Sustainable Energy Africa.

officials of the arrival of new applications and keeps the applicant informed of stages in the process by automating email communications.

A common complaint of applicants is that they have no idea if their application has been accepted, is being looked at, or needs correcting. This communication automation helps address the issue. It further helps municipalities by keeping a record of data from all applications, making reporting to NERSA easy and enabling quick totalling of SSEG capacity registered on the platform.

Mphielo Ramotsamai, from the George Municipality’s Electrotechnical Services, has been driving this process with the help of Sustainable Energy. “Since George municipality accepts or allows the SSEG on the network, I coordinate the process from the municipality side, Ramotsamai said.

“Last year we were invited by Sustainable Energy Africa to be part of the Online Platform Pilot for SSEG; this was followed by a series of meetings and training. We are happy to confirm that the system is available already to the public. <http://apply.sseg.org.za>

BFI Water Projects progressing well

National Treasury, accompanied by the representatives from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Neighbourhood Development Partnership Programme and Provincial Treasury visited the 20 MI/d extensions to the New Water Treatment Works (New WTW) earlier in March 2023.

George Municipality received a Budget Facility for Infrastructure Funding (BFI) grant to the value of R1.107 billion from the National Treasury in the 2021/22 financial year.

The BFI project with its various components has shown significant progress and expenditure to date in the 2022/23 financial year. George Municipality is actively working to keep our economy on the go – by ensuring adequate long-term planning and investment in our resources with the current main focus on water, sewerage, and electricity. National Treasury praised the Municipality for its well-maintained infrastructure. “Service delivery is clearly visible with well looked after roads networks and cleanliness of the town. This will go a long way in attracting investments into the city.”

The full BFI project is to be completed in the next twenty seven (27) months. George Municipality provides water services to over 212 120 residents from 62 722 households (STATSSA 2017) across 28 wards including the coastal areas of Kleinkrantz, Wilderness, Victoria Bay, Herold’s Bay and Gwaing in the city of George area. The objectives of the project are to ensure adequate potable water supply to meet the demand of the current population and to provide security for future development, both social and economic, and to reduce pollution of certain main water courses.

Updates on the Potable Water Security and Remedial Works components funded by BFI

The project consists of 12 components, some of which will be executed in more than one construction phase.

Component 1 and 2

Residuals Handling Facility and the 20 MI/d extension to the New Water Treatment Works (New WTW).

Status: The first contract, valued at R263 million, was awarded for the civil engineering works and construction is progressing on site. The second contract, for the mechanical, electrical and instrumentation (MEI) works, was awarded for R217 million. Component 2 is the largest single component of the BFI project. The completed earthworks for the Water Treatment Works extension consisted of some 20 000 metric cubes of earth material that has been stockpiled on site for re-use elsewhere on other components of the BFI project as well as other municipal projects. Placing of concrete is progressing well and the structures are now above ground level. The construction on the 600m long, 900mm diameter, clear water HDPE pipeline commenced towards the end of 2022 and is currently nearing 50% completion.

The forestry permit was issued in early January 2023 and the remaining construction through sensitive indigenous forest can now proceed. The dewatering facility for the water treatment process residuals is also progressing well and the concrete wall of two of the three tanks was cast while the third tank will be done shortly. This facility will eliminate the abrasive residuals from being discharged to the sewer system and therefore reduce the load on the sewage conveyance system and pumpstations, reduce the abrasive effect on pumpstation mechanical equipment as well as reduce the load on the wastewater treatment processes and the main sludge dewatering facility. The aim of this facility is to free up capacity that is currently being utilized by

residuals discharged to the Eden, Meul and Schaapkop sewage pump station system as well as the Outeniqua Wastewater Treatment Works.

Component 3

The refurbishment of the existing Sludge Discharge System Phases 1 and 2 commenced at the Eden, Meul and Schaapkop Pumpstations.

Status: Construction of the first phase is progressing well at the Meul and Eden Pump Stations
Phase 1: The first phase of the upgrading and refurbishment of the Meul Sewage pumpstation is well progressed and certain components have been completed, including a standby generator and new motor control center panels. The new Motor Control Centre at the Eden Sewage pumpstation has been completed. Civil construction on the Meul Sewage Pumpstation is progressing well and over-pumping is currently taking place, involving a temporary pumping installation to allow work to be done in the pump sump and in the pump room. Phase 1 of the Schaapkop Sewage Pumpstation implementation was delayed, and the design process is now under way to incorporate both phases 1 and 2 to be implemented as a single project.

Phase 2: Consultants have been appointed for the design of the second phase of the pump station upgrades of the Meul and Eden sewage pump stations.

Component 4

The upgrading of the Garden Route Dam Outlet and Supply project includes the replacement of the existing 600 mm diameter raw water pipeline from the intake tower at the Garden Route Dam to the raw water pumpstations, with a new 800 mm diameter stainless steel pipeline to accommodate a higher flowrate in accordance with the future raw water flow requirements.

Status: Tenders were requested and have closed, with construction planned to commence in June 2023.

Component 5

2 x 1250 kVA generators are being installed at the Garden Route Dam raw water pumpstation. Once completed, it will ensure that during loadshedding or any other power outage, raw water can continue to be pumped uninterrupted to the Water Treatment Works for processing for drinking water supply.

Status: Construction is well progressed, the generators and associated equipment are currently being installed, and full operation of the generators is scheduled for the end of June 2023.

Component 6

An additional approximately 30 mega litre raw water storage balancing dam, including a 340m long 800mm diameter raw water pipeline, will be constructed to secure sufficient raw water storage capacity to supply the 20MI/day extension to the Water Treatment Works. The new raw water dam will supplement the 60MI provided by the two existing storage dams that provide raw water to the two water treatment plants.

Status: The preliminary design process has been completed with consideration of two alternative positions in order to select the most cost-effective solution. Final designs are nearing completion, to be followed by the procurement of a Contractor to construct the works.



Component 7

The rehabilitation of the Old Water Treatment Works, located at 9th Avenue in Denneoord includes the refurbishment of the 25 MI/d treatment plant which is currently rated at only 20.5 MI/ per day.

Status: This component consists of four separate contracts and the tenders. Construction is under way at the Old WTW and some condition assessments of the existing infrastructure necessitated design changes at the start of the contract, causing unforeseen delays.

The air extraction from the filter galleries was completed and the emergency chlorine scrubbers have been ordered, and delivery is scheduled for July 2023, but with a possible further slight delay due to shipping from the United States. Both shipments of filter media have been delivered and fencing construction is practically complete.

A temporary package water treatment plant was installed and commissioned in mid-December 2022 to facilitate scheduled plant shutdowns to enable work to proceed uninterrupted.

This temporary plant also increased the volume of potable water available to meet the peak holiday season demand. Partial plant shutdowns will take place at the old WTW during April 2023. Remedial works is scheduled to be done at the Old WTW and the existing New WTW, and water demand will have to be very carefully managed during any of the planned partial shutdowns to ensure that potable water demand can be met.

Component 8

Refurbishment of the Kaaiman’s River Pumpstation equipment will include the

installation of six (6) new submersible vortex impeller pumps in the sump, a strainer system and six (6) new high lift centrifugal pumps, with the replacement of the electrical control equipment also included in the upgrade.

The Kaaiman’s Pumpstation discharges raw water into the Garden Route Dam and contributes significantly to the George raw water resource requirements.

Status: Tenders have been requested and closed, and construction is planned to commence in May 2023.

Component 9 and 10

The new 14,5 MI Pacaltsdorp West Reservoir; 3 MI Pacaltsdorp East Reservoir, 300 kl Tower and pumpstation will address the inadequate emergency and balancing storage in this suburb.

Status: The designs are in process for both sites, to be followed by the procurement of a contractor for the construction of the works. The detailed design process will be aligned with the environmental and town planning processes.

Component 11 and 12

A new pumpstation and control valves will be provided at the existing Thembaletu West reservoir and tower; a new 8 MI Thembaletu East Reservoir, 1000 kl tower and pumpstation will provide adequate potable water storage and increase security of potable water supply to Thembaletu as well as provide capacity to meet future development water demands.

Status: The design of both the works is in progress and will be followed by the procurement of a contractor for the construction of the works, scheduled for early 2024.

South Africa’s first free-to-use electricity smart meter software

George Municipality is the first electricity provider in the country to pilot freely licensed software that automates the reading, processing, and billing of electricity smart meter data. The wheeling pilot that was approved by Council and offered limited wheeling as a service is open to everyone who wants to wheel energy.

The first wheeling transaction took place in May 2022 at George Municipality, following the signing of the use-of-system agreements in July 2021. The billing process has for many years been done manually, requiring extensive time for verification and preparation of bills once the data was retrieved from the meters. “The need for this freely licensed software pilot became evident when we considered the scaling of wheeling and renewable energy on the George Municipality’s electricity grid. The manual billing process was one of the main challenges and resolving this meant reducing reliance and pressure on key human resources, reducing potential errors that could occur in the billing process. Engagement with Open Access Energy on showcasing their software that they license for free, has assisted in addressing the challenge for us and we are now piloting the automation of our metering and billing services.” said Mr Bongani Mandla, the director of electrotechnical services at George Municipality.

Wheeling is the delivery of electricity generated by a private operator in one location to a buyer or off-taker in another location via a third-party network (Utility or Municipality).

According to Gerjo Hoffman, Chief-Executive-Officer and co-founder of Open Access Energy, the software company aims to boost the use of renewable energy by simplifying wheeling. “Our products aim to automate wheeling and serve the needs of anyone that wants to wheel energy. Our initial focus is South Africa, but our future aspiration is to offer solutions in all emerging markets globally,” says Hoffman.

Access Energy is a freely licensed software solution that reads smart meters, stores the meter data in a meter data sharing system, and exposes that data to municipalities. The software allows the Municipality to create and load their electricity tariffs and then apply them to a bill. The final bill is sent to the municipalities Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, which then sends the bill to the end customer.

“Mr Bongani Mandla highlighted that the current George Municipality wheeling pilot consists of trade between one generator and four off-takers through Enpower Trading (a NERSA licensed Energy Trader) and this entire process has now been automated using Open Access Energy’s software. The Municipality is working on further improvements to its wheeling



From left to right are Gerjo Hoffman, Chief-Executive-Officer and co-founder at Open Access Energy; Bongani Mandla, Director of Electrotechnical Services, Nicholas Rixon, Chief-Operations-Officer at Open Access Energy, and Louise Botha, George Municipality Electrotechnical Services.

projects and to incentivise the private sector (both generators and off-takers) to participate in this program.

These include creating a platform for customers to view their accounts and access their consumption and billing data in real-time, forming various committees to expedite the process of standardising the use-of-system contracts as well as moving from the 30-minute reconciliation to a Time-of-Use reconciliation.

“It is essential to thank our Engineering Services team under the leadership of Mr Kobus Wilken and Mr Derek Baxter for their determination in driving this process, as well as Open Access Energy leadership for piloting this freely licensed software with George Municipality. We will continuously keep pushing hard to provide the people of George an improved electricity service,” said Mr Bongani Mandla.

Wheeling and trading symposium in George

George Municipality’s move to explore alternative energy-generating sources is gaining impetus, as the Executive Mayor of George Alderman Leon van Wyk accompanied by the Municipality’s Electrotechnical Services team participated in a Wheeling and Trading Symposium that was held on February 2023 in partnership with a private electricity trading company, Enpower Trading.

Energy Wheeling is generally defined as the delivery of electricity generated by a private operator in one location to a buyer or off-taker in another location via a third-party network (Utility or Municipality). Therefore, the George Municipality intends to do wheeling services to explore available energy sources, steering them towards the Municipal grid, while also looking at a cheaper cost of electricity than Eskom’s current cost. With all the privately generated energy coming into the grid, the Municipality hopes to lessen reliance on Eskom as well as become energy secure.

The speakers and panellists during the discussions included Phillip van Niekerk from George Municipality, Enpower Trading, Jeandre van Zyl from Solar Energy Africa, Gerjo Hoffman from Open Access Energy, Josh Dippenaar from Sustainable Energy Africa, Nhlanhla Ngidi from SALGA, Bernhard Teuteberg from DEDAT Western Cape and Jemaine Cupido from Bitou Municipality facilitated the proceedings of the symposium.

Welcoming the attendees, the Executive Mayor of George Alderman Leon van Wyk said in his opening remarks that the unreliability of Eskom’s electricity supply and the increasing intensity of load shedding is causing huge disruption and damage across many production sections and the economy. “From a municipal perspective, our KWH sales have naturally declined even with households having to do their chores at times when electricity is available.”

“While we are encountering power supply disruption, we need to look to innovation to take us forward into new opportunities. Today we will be discussing Wheeling. This

new topic is the disruptive radical change that will take us forward into a new era of trading in electricity, creating generating facilities and transporting electricity to where it is needed,” van Wyk added.

“I am very proud of our team here in George which has moved the boundaries in their quest to find solutions. Last year as a team we set new challenges in saying we needed to mitigate the risks that our municipal infrastructure faced, i.e., water treatment works, wastewater treatment works, and pump stations during load shedding. As 2022 progressed we also concluded that the Solar PV route needed to be supplemented by the rapid introduction of Battery Energy Storage.”

The first wheeling transaction took place in May 2022 at George Municipality, following the signing of the use-of-system agreements in July 2021. The billing process has for many years been done manually, requiring extensive time for verification and preparation of bills once the data was retrieved from the meters.

“The need for this freely licensed software pilot became evident when we considered wheeling and renewable energy scaling on the George Municipality’s electricity grid. The manual billing process was one of the main challenges and resolving this meant reducing reliance and pressure on key human resources, reducing potential errors that could occur in the billing process,” said Mr Bongani Mandla, the director of electrotechnical services at George Municipality.

Mr Bongani Mandla highlighted that the current George Municipality wheeling pilot consists of trade between one generator and four off-takers through Enpower Trading (a NERSA licensed Energy Trader) and this entire process has now been automated using Open Access Energy’s software.

“The Municipality is working on further improvements to its wheeling projects and to incentivise the private sector (both generators and off-takers) to participate in this program. These include creating a platform for customers to view their



From left: Gerjo Hoffman (Chief-Executive-Officer and co-founder at Open Access Energy), Phillip van Niekerk (EnPower Trading), Cllr. Mzimkhulu Thebolla (Executive Mayor of Msunduzi Municipality from the City of Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal), Ald Leon van Wyk (Executive Mayor of George), Bongani Mandla (Director for Electrotechnical Services – George Municipality) Jeandre van Zyl (Solar Energy Africa), Josh Dippenaar (Sustainable Energy Africa) and Jemaine Cupido (Bitou Municipality).



From left: Jemaine Cupido (Facilitator from Bitou Municipality), Gerjo Hoffman (Chief-Executive-Officer and co-founder at Open Access Energy), Josh Dippenaar (Sustainable Energy Africa), Phillip van Niekerk (EnPower Trading), and Jeandre van Zyl (Solar Energy Africa).

accounts and access their consumption and billing data in real-time on a portal, working with DEDAT Western Cape Government to speed up standardising the use-of-system

contracts as well as moving from the 30-minute reconciliation to a Time-of-Use reconciliation by latest end of March 2023,” Mandla concluded.

NYDA grant beneficiaries meet Mayor

Ald Leon van Wyk met with National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) grant beneficiaries in his office to congratulate them on their achievements and also to encourage other young entrepreneurs to apply for assistance with NYDA.

According to Jonel Kerspuy, Coordinator of George Municipality Youth Office, the municipality has a long-standing working relationship with NYDA. She urged the youth to go for assistance to NYDA or visit the George Municipality Youth Development office for guidance.

Judy Morrison, District Manager: National Youth Development Agency, says they ask the youth to see their applications through when they apply to the organisation for assistance because most of them don't do that currently.

One of the NYDA beneficiaries is Olivia Nomdoe, owner of Be Mesmerised beauty parlour operating at Playhouse in Levalia. She was assisted in March with stock and

equipment to the value of R49 600. At the time of funding the business was already operating but could not reach as many clients as envisaged. After funding the business picked up and she was able to move to a new business location to attract new clients.

Ntobeko Nowata is operating a Tshisanyama that sells meat in Zone 8, Thembaletu. The business has been operating on a small scale for a year and struggling to meet the needs of its clientele.

He has been financed with the stock and equipment to the value of R49 900.45. The business is operating from home and has employed 1 young person on a part-time basis. Grand Claassen, a 27-year-old residing in Pacaltsdorp started as a freelance videographer and after seeing a gap in the market, registered his own company. Bomenslike Produksies has been operating for 2 years with minimal



NYDA beneficiaries meeting George Mayor Leon van Wyk in the week. From left are Jonel Kerspuy, Coordinator of the Youth office at George Municipality, Cllr Brendon Adams, Portfolio Councillor for Social Development, and Judy Morrison, District Manager: National Youth Development Agency, Mayor van Wyk, and NYDA beneficiaries, Olivia Nomdoe, Masixole Zibeko and Ntobeko Nowata.

equipment that the owner has bought. The business grew and attracted more clients, meaning they needed more professional equipment. NYDA bought the company equipment to the value of R49 788. The

company does music video productions, family photoshoots, web development, audio production and film production. The company is doing well and has employed 2 young people.



Youth Stakeholders Forum Established

The Youth Development section of George Municipality held a Youth Summit recently with various stakeholders from within the George Municipal area to take the youth agenda forward and a Youth Stakeholder's Forum has been established. In future, the forum will provide the necessary platform for networking, growth and stronger partnerships. A Youth Directory has been developed and will remain a working document as details of more organisations will be added. Jonel Kerspuy, Coordinator of the Youth Development section at the Municipality invites more organisations, that are working with young people, to make contact with them at (044) 802 2000. Discussions took place under the following Commissions: Education/ Training and Skills Development, Economic Development and Entrepreneurship, Health and well-being, Social Cohesion and National well-being, Sport and Recreation, Media and Arts and Government Services. Various stakeholders were in attendance, with Councillors Melvin Roelfse, Thandiswa Qatana and Marais Kruger giving messages of support at the George Civic Centre where the summit was held. Dr Zille North from the Department of Health informed the plenary about the Planet Youth programme, with support provided by the Department of Social Development and Education. The Various stakeholders were able to share the valuable work that they are doing within the community of George. In the photo are some of the stakeholders attending the summit.

Innovative project to transform Thembaletu: Node 1

The George Municipality in partnership with National Treasury initiated the Thembaletu Node 1 Development Project to create a vibrant sustainable community node in Thembaletu, which can attract new investment into the area and stimulate downstream economic activity.

The ward councillor of Thembaletu and Ward Committee for Ward 13 branded the precinct as "Ilisoletu", meaning "Our eye" and supported a possible brand logo for the area.

The nodal area lies along Nelson Mandela Boulevard and includes the area referred to as the Thembaletu Central Business District (CBD). Several workshops with councillors, the ward committee, municipal departments, and key stakeholders were held to identify potential projects and receive feedback.

The planning for "Ilisoletu" has reached a stage where detailed plans for project implementation are being prepared. These include:

- An investment plan which includes a selection of possible project- and investment partners;
- A development plan which will place the identified projects on-site in an integrated manner and includes an

analysis of the required engineering and road infrastructure to support a pedestrian-friendly Nelson Mandela Boulevard and an integrated node; and

- An area management strategy which will set the scene to mobilize the positive participation of all the role-players and ensure that the node will be managed sustainably.

Mayor van Wyk says the George Municipality has secured funding from the National Treasury through the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Programme to initiate the technical investigation stage of the project.

The objective is to facilitate inclusionary economic opportunities, create high-quality public spaces and link funders to catalytic projects which will benefit the lives of the residents of Thembaletu.

This project will enable the George Council to forge partnerships with state and private benefactors and activate an area management structure that will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the project plan.

"This is a ground-breaking initiative which will be a valuable community asset and benefit to the entire region," says Ms Waring.



Communication team among the top three in the country

The George Municipality's Communication team was nominated as one of the top three most proactive communication teams in local municipalities in South Africa during the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Communications Awards last week.

The other two nominees were Umzimvubu Local Municipality from the Eastern Cape towns of Mount Frere and Mount Alyliff (the winners) and Thaba Chweu Local Municipality from Mashishing, previously called Lydenburg, in the north-western region of Mpumalanga.

The Awards Ceremony formed part of the SALGA 6th Annual National Communicators' Forum that took place between 12 - 14 April 2023 at Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC). SALGA's National Communicators Forum offers a platform for Municipal Communicators to share insights, developments, and the latest trends in the communications industry. Municipalities across South Africa are nominated for various Communication Awards at the forum.

According to SALGA, the award for which the George Municipal Communications team was nominated, is for a communications team that is always proactive in its work. "It ensures that it takes part in information sharing, creates more awareness, or even profiles certain service delivery programmes and events. This team remains committed to actively participating in various platforms and programmes in the three spheres of Government. This is quite an outstanding team indeed!"

"We would like to congratulate our communication team for doing outstanding work that caught the attention of the SALGA adjudication team, as there was no entry submitted. This certainly is a sign that the George Municipal Communication team strives to ensure that the municipality communicates in an effective, transparent, coordinated and professional manner, which increases public confidence in the municipality and participation in the municipal processes," said Dr Michele Gratz, George Municipal Manager.



The George Municipal Communication team comprises Chantel Edwards, Communications Manager; Ntobeko Mangqwengqwe, Senior Communication Officer and Debra Sauer, Communication Officer.

On-site sanitation technology in informal settlements

The George Municipality's drive to improve the quality-of-service delivery is yielding good results said the Executive Mayor of George, Alderman Leon van Wyk after visiting two pilot projects in Syferfontein, an informal settlement South of Pacaltsdorp, aimed at introducing alternatives on-site sanitation technology in informal settlements to replace chemical toilets.

"Today we went on-site to Syferfontein to view the pilot project of a new technology toilet instead of the chemical toilets," said Mayor van Wyk during his visit on Thursday, 13 April 2023.

"These new toilets get erected on-site and make use of enzymes to dissolve solids and it also makes use of water, so there's a water flush mechanism that is able to drain away into tanks underneath the ground and this improves the whole service routing where previously chemical toilets had to be serviced two to three times a week, this type of toilet would only require servicing once a month."

George Municipality solicited proposals from suitably experienced service providers to implement a pilot project for alternative on-site sanitation technology in Informal Settlements to replace chemical toilets. The hiring and maintenance of chemical toilets is an expensive and unsustainable sanitation commodity which is unfortunately also the quickest method to respond to when an emergency situation presents itself.

It was thus imperative that sustainable alternative sanitation solutions be tested to replace chemical toilets in informal settlements where there is no sewer network and to alleviate the heavy financial burden on



From left: Charne Floris, Human Settlements; Brumilda Kirchner, Human Settlements; Councillor Basil Petrus, Portfolio Councillor for Human Settlements; Madoda Boke, Clerk of Works; Jurgen Graupe, Buffalo Tanks (Pty) Ltd; Alderman Leon van Wyk; Wendy Mentor, Manager Human Settlements; Mxolisi Ngwane, Racing Heart Group (Pty) Ltd; Siegfried Graupe, Buffalo Tanks; Lehlohonolo Mandlazi, Racing Group (Pty) Ltd. Left: Councillor Basil Petrus, Portfolio Councillor for Human Settlements; Wendy Mentor; Alderman Leon van Wyk and Jacques Rust, Envirosan.

the Municipality and the Department of Infrastructure.

The Human Settlements, Planning and Development and Property Management Directorate of the George Municipality confirmed that this is a pilot project

which will be tested for three months and the sanitation solution which is found to be most successful and sustainable will be extended to other informal settlement areas in the George Municipal precincts.

"For this pilot project, we will be

installing 3 different alternative sanitation units in Syferfontein, three in Wilderness Heights Informal Settlement and 9 units in Thembaletu in various Settlements," said Lauren Waring, the department's director.

Agile auditing pilot project

The George Municipality was selected by the Western Cape Provincial Treasury to pilot the implementation of Agile Auditing in local municipalities.

The project will entail appointing a service provider to conduct awareness and coaching workshops with the Internal Audit Activity, Executive Management, and the Audit Committee on the concepts of agile auditing and test its application at George Municipality. This will ensure that the stakeholders are provided with adequate tools, techniques, and support to fully implement Agile Auditing methodologies that can be utilised in the

strategic planning, engagement planning, fieldwork, and reporting phases of internal audit.

The internal audit profession is evolving, accelerating the pace to provide real-time assurance. The George Municipality in partnership with the Provincial Treasury supports the continuous improvement of municipal internal audit activities and is therefore exploring the practicalities of applying agile auditing in small internal audit activities, as in the municipal environment. With the roll out of the Agile Auditing project the municipality envisages an improved efficiency of

the internal audit functions, real time assurance provided to all stakeholders, team effectiveness and an overall close interaction between internal audit functions and management.

Mr JP Rossouw (Chief Audit Executive) indicated that he is very excited about the pilot project, if implemented successfully, George will be one of the first local municipalities to implement an Agile Auditing approach. This is an innovative and forward-thinking auditing process, to ensure that the Internal Audit Department adds value and meet the expectations of its stakeholders.



JP Rossouw, Chief Audit Executive at George Municipality.

George Water Treatment plants win awards

Members of the George Municipality Directorate of Civil Engineering Services, Water and Sanitation department scooped four major awards in different categories at the Western Cape Process Controller Awards Ceremony 2023, hosted by the Western Cape Department of Water and Sanitation in Saldanha.

The Civil Engineering Directorate won Best Water Treatment Works with a design capacity greater than 10 MI/day for George New Water Treatment Works; Best Water Treatment Works with a design capacity less than 10MI/day for Uniondale Water Treatment Works and first runner-up for Best Water Treatment works with a design capacity less than 10 MI/day for Wilderness Water Treatment Works. Suzanne Laido won the individual prize as first runner-up in the category, Best Process Controller at a Water Treatment Works George with a design capacity greater than 10MI/day.

“These awards are stellar achievements and testimony of our team’s hard work over the last 18 months to constantly improve our water quality. “Well done to our teams, you make us proud,” Mayor van Wyk said.

Cllr Jacquique von Brandis (DA), Portfolio Councillor: Civil Engineering Services: Capital Expenditure said she is very proud of the Civil Engineering team for the awards they have received for excellent work done and want to thank everyone for their hard work.

Jannie Koegelenberg, Director of Civil Engineering Services, congratulated every team member for the awards they brought home. “I am proud of everyone who puts in the hard work and extra hours to make service delivery possible to the residents of George,” Koegelenberg said. He especially congratulated the winning water works, Uniondale, Wilderness and George as well as Suzanne Laido, who won an individual award.



Award winners representing the Water and Sanitation department from the Civil Engineering Directorate, George Municipality are from left, Fesiwe Xhengwana, Suney Leeuw, Sherwin Hannie, Ntombekhaya Tembu-Makuyekwe, Winston Meiring, Hadrian Jansen, Susanne Laido, Curtley Meas, Siphokazi Papiso, Maxwell Appels, Mxolisi Lingani and Gerrit Goliath.



Mayor Leon van Wyk (middle) with Cllr Jacquique von Brandis , Portfolio Councillor: Civil Engineering Services: Capital Expenditure and Geoffrey Bredenkamp, Senior Manager: Water Treatment (to the left). At the back are from left Melvin Koopman: Superintendent: New Water Treatment Works Uniondale and Haarlem and Gerrit Goliath: Superintendent: Old Water Treatment Works Wilderness.



George Municipality individual winner, Suzanne Laido won the individual prize as first runner-up in the category, Best Process Controller at a Water Treatment Works with a design capacity greater than 10MI/day George. She shares the position with Melissa Dantu from Kloofnek Water Treatment Works, City of Cape Town (to her right). With them are far left, Heinrich Mettler, Municipal Manager: Saldanha Bay Municipality and Boniswa Hene, Director: Department of Water and Sanitation Western Cape.

George on track for Smart City with new Smart Water Meters

Striving towards the goal of becoming a Smart City the George Municipality has embarked on an initiative to drastically improve customer service delivery and revenue collection while reducing the overall revenue and non-revenue associated with water losses.

New smart ultrasonic water meters will be installed throughout George over a period of three to four years. The first 2000 meters are expected to be installed by April this year and the initial areas include Blanco, Heather park, Dormehlsdrift and George South. Approximately 10 000 meters will be installed initially with an engineering consultant firm (Zutari) appointed to assist with the process and certify each smart water meter following installation.

Council agreed on a strategy to address ageing infrastructure and this included addressing water leaks and meter readings. The tender for the project was awarded to Ontec Systems and will allow for the new, Kamstrup ultrasonic SMART water meters to be installed by replacing the existing meter, and at the same time provides an opportunity for various issues to be addressed by plumbing teams as they do the installations. Homeowners will be contacted by the installation teams should there be any issues regarding access to the existing meter in terms of its location.

The SMART meters are not pre-paid water meters and will not disconnect consumer’s water supply. Actual live consumption data is sent via a radio signal to the service provider Sigfox South Africa and the municipality can access the Ontec Pyxis Platform webpage with the live data per meter.

Chief Strategy Officer for Ontec, Dhasi Naidoo says “these SMART water meters enable a multitude of benefits for both George Municipality and it’s citizens by automating its meter reading and billing cycle, providing daily consumption



Celebrating the first 2000 Smart Ultrasonic Water Meters to be installed are from left Dhasi Naidoo, Chief Strategy and Commercial Officer Ontec Systems; Charles Jackson, Senior Manager Operations Ontec Systems; Deon De Jager, Deputy Director Water and Sanitation, Civil Engineering Services; Executive Mayor Leon Van Wyk; Jacobus Lane, Assistant Supervisor Water Networks, Civil Engineering Services; Brown Johnson, Portfolio Councillor Civil Engineering Services; Pieter Erasmus, Associate Specialist, Zutari,; Petrus van Heerden, Regional Manager Africa Kamstrup; Ithriam Leukes, Business Development Manager Ontec Systems; Sumeshin Naidoo, CEO Sigfox South Africa; Mark Wearing, Operations Coordinator Ontec Systems; Niel Van Der Westhuizen, Civil Technologist, Zutari and Riaan van Jaarsveld, Business Development Manager Ontec Systems.

monitoring, trend analysis, leak and burst alarm notifications for consumers to better control and manage their water consumption. It will also enable George Municipality with additional operational capabilities for faster reaction to water losses and holistic water usage management.”

The technology enables the municipality to construct a complete overview of water production, distributed and consumed to accurately identify and remedy leakages to limit water losses.

Executive Mayor Leon Van Wyk applauded the use of new technology to simplify municipal processes. “We are banking on this new meter to simplify the process of meter reading and to increase accuracy. Considering water is our most precious and scarce resource, these Smart Water meters can add immense value in terms of water

theft and abuse management through early IT notifications and alerts, and with no moving parts have an expected 15-year constant accuracy lifespan. George continues to lead by example with this project and it is one more step towards achieving the goal of George being a Smart City.”

Challenges experienced by the George Municipality in the past with the original meters include unreliable billing data, infrequent and inconsistent account invoices and delivery, extended collection cycles and debit accumulation, inaccurate reporting of household’s consumption, vandalism, no access, excessive leaking and wastages, and the reporting process for faulty water meters and account queries will become a thing of the past.

As a resident you benefit from this technology as well – you can receive

daily water meter readings of your actual household water consumption directly on your cellphone giving you the ability to monitor and control your households water consumption.

The early leak alarm warning saves on water waste and the accompanying financial penalties as you can set your usage threshold on a daily and monthly basis to prevent any billing surprises. The near real-time consumption allows you to understand exactly where and when you are using water.

As the resident you will receive high usage warnings via SMS and Email enabling you to act immediately. Residents will have access to the My George Home Page <http://george.ontec.co.za> track their own daily water consumption, respond to leakage alerts and manage multiple meters in one space.

Thembalethu Mini library for the blind opened during Library Week

Western Cape Provincial Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Honourable Anroux Marais, officially opened the Mini Library for the blind in Thembalethu during library week with a ribbon cutting.

The Thembalethu library is the third mini library for the blind in George. Two mini libraries for the blind are already operational at George Library and at Pacaltsdorp library.

The primary objective of this project is to provide access to reading materials through assistive devices and the provision of necessary technology. In pursuit of a knowledge society, programmes were rolled out that focused on the eradication of information poverty, whilst cultural diversity and active citizenship was encouraged and emphasized.

Marais said the department is committed to delivering inclusive services to all people across the province. She said in their aim for social cohesion and inclusion, we do not want anyone to be left behind due to circumstances out of their control.

“This mini library for the blind means access to more people that will have access to library resources and I hope this will bring joy and magic books bring. We must also encourage parents to read to children and young people reading to older people who struggle with their sight,” Marais said.

Bongile Matini, from the South African Library for the Blind, said the opening of the Mini library for the blind in Thembalethu is part of more than 250 workstations across the country. Matini said this is a momentous occasion because we celebrate Library Week with this opening. “We hope this new mini library opens doors for the visually impaired community but also other handicapped individuals. More

workstations will be opened in partnership with the Western Cape government and we hope more and more people make use of the free service,” Matini said.

Members from Ilitha Centre for the Blind in George, Olympia Skills School and Association for Mouth and Foot painters in George, as well as a published author, Nkosinathi Menziwa, were part of the celebration. Menziwa compiled a book of the stories of members from Ilitha called Imfama (meaning: the blind).

Menziwa, said the stories are of the mothers and fathers that are blind. He said he was humbled that they gave their time and trust to him and that he could turn their stories into a product that they can be proud of. He said the stories are written in isiXhosa and will be available in English by next month.

Members from Ilitha serenaded the attendees with beautiful singing, while Patrick Botto entertained with his mouth paintings.

Rachel Williams, Manager: George libraries, said visually impaired people have the same information needs as sighted people. “Just as sighted people might read a newspaper, listen to a CD or download electronic information from the Internet; visually impaired people also want access to relevant information in their chosen accessible format.”

She said, “Developing an efficient library service for print-disabled people is extremely important, because there are significantly fewer books available commercially in accessible formats compared to what is published in print for the general public. Libraries have a moral obligation to make information available to all categories of users regardless of their gender, age, race, class or disability,” Williams said.



Minister Anroux Marais and Nkosinathi Menziwa, a local author, with two of his published books share a light moment. Menziwa compiled a book of the stories of members from Ilitha Centre for the Blind, called Imfama (meaning: the blind).



Mzwandile Dibela (middle) from Ilitha Centre for the Blind, demonstrated how he works a Victor reader that works with CDs and other devices where books get downloaded on. From left are Amgelica Zass from SA Library for the Blind, Dibela, Bongile Matini from SA Library for the Blind, Minister Anroux Marais and Rachel Williams, Manager: George Libraries.



Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Hon Anroux Marais, officially cutting the ribbon at the Thembalethu Mini Library for the Blind. In front from left are Nkosinathi Menziwa, local author, Nosipho Sidlayiya, Rachel Williams, Manager: George Libraries, Cllr Thandiswa Qatana, Minister Anroux Marais, Annette Kortman, librarian at Thembalethu Library and Bongile Matini from SA Library for the Blind. At the back are Bonginkosi Ngcetie, Mzwandile Dibela, Malibongwe Luyenge, Senior librarian at George Library and Amgelica Zass from SA Library for the Blind.

Blue Drop Evaluations

The Department of Water and Sanitation’s (DWS) established the Blue Drop programme to encourage continued progress and to acknowledge excellence in drinking water services management in South Africa. George Municipality completed the first and second round of evaluations earlier this year and the final outcome is expected soon.

The Blue Drop and Green Drop Certification Programmes are forms of Incentive-based Regulation (IBR) pioneered by the South African Water Sector since 2008. legislation, Water Services Act; Act 108 of 1997, Section 82 d, e & f. The programme seeks to focus on Improvement in Performance, Compliance and Efficiency.

According to the Deputy Director for Water and Sanitation in the Civil Engineering Services Department in the George Municipality, Deon de

Jager, the Blue Drop Certification is intended to monitor the drinking water quality supplied to consumers countrywide. “Both water quality and administrative aspects are combined in this certification with the emphasis being on the administrative aspects instead of water quality and George has put all the ducks in a row to be evaluated.”

De Jager confirmed that the revised water safety plans and treatment plant process audits have been completed, and the George Municipality was assisted by IX Engineers and Chris Swartz consultants. “All relevant personnel reporting to DWS have been registered on the IRIS reporting system. The George Municipal Water Treatment and Laboratory sections are working around the clock to ensure that we comply with all legislative requirements as set out by the DWS.”



From Left to Right: Deon de Jager (Deputy Director: Water and Sewer Services), Melvin Koopman (Senior Superintendent: Water Treatment), Geoffrey Bredenkamp (Manager: Water Treatment), Dewald van Staden (DWS Lead Inspector), Nkosinathi Masilela (Inspector DWS), Tladi Dineo (Inspector DWS), Randy Wesso (Manager Laboratory Services), Alton Michaels (Consultant SMEC Engineering Group).



Executive Mayor Leon van Wyk meets job seekers at the Workers' Collection Point during his visit.

Mayor calls for full utilisation of the workers' collection point

Alderman Leon van Wyk during his visit to the Workers Collection Point (WCP) last month asked employers and those seeking employment, to fully utilise this facility established for private individuals and businesses. The WCP is a central point for those who wish to employ temporary workers and for job seekers to avail themselves for employment opportunities.

The Municipality wants to emphasize that the Workers Collection Point, which is situated on Industrial Street, in George Industrial, is the only authorised

place for job seekers and pick-up of job seekers. What makes the WCP reliable and safe for both job seekers and employers?

It is run professionally with the registration of job seekers, capturing information such as their names, identification documents and address, as well as details of the employers, to ensure adequate management of the whole process.

Alderman van Wyk appealed to the community of George to make use of this facility.

“We appeal to employers not to look around for workers, but to

come to the Workers Collection Point; it’s fully operational, and professionally run. Companies and businesses who are looking for workers that they might need on a temporary basis can do so at the WCP,” Ald van Wyk added.

The WCP is situated at 12 Industrial Street, George Industrial and operates between 07:45 and 15:00, Monday to Friday.

Contact Kevin Abrahams, kabrahams@george.gov.za or Ongeziwe Mthongwana, omthongwana@george.gov.za or phone the office on 044 801 9173.



Ongeziwe Mthongwana (Local Economic Development official), Alderman Leon van Wyk (Executive Mayor of George), Portfolio Councillor Dirk Wessels (Financial & Strategic Services), Dr Kosie Haarhoff (Deputy Director for Strategic Growth and Development and Kelvin Abrahams (Local Economic Development Official).

Pride of place at meetings Africa 2023

George Municipal Tourism Manager, Joan Shaw, attended Meetings Africa 2023 in early March in Johannesburg. Business meetings were pre-arranged with more than 30 buyers and business event organisers, over three days where George, Wilderness and Uniondale were positioned as the perfect destination to host small, medium, and large business events.

This is part of the strategy that George Tourism has adopted since the Covid pandemic, to attract more business through groups and events, and this has paid off as George’s recovery has been phenomenal to date, with many events taking place every month.

Joan Shaw said “Meetings Africa exists to provide a platform for exhibitors to showcase their offerings to International and local buyers, African associations, and corporate planners.

It is a formidable platform to meet face-to-face with the most influential buyers in the world, and to be part of South Africa and ultimately George’s tourism and economic growth.”

Meetings Africa, owned by South African Tourism, serves as the primary platform to enable the growth of the business events industry on the continent. George attended on the Wesgro platform, making it more cost-effective for the destination to participate.



Joan Shaw (right) pictured with Ken Chege, Marketing Director of Good Hope Travel & Tours in Nairobi, Kenya and Debert Adetimirin, owner of Event Planners Plus, from New York, USA, both hosted buyers at the event.

George moving to award-winning My Smart City App

George Municipality is excited to announce that we are moving over to a new award winning Citizen App - My Smart City - which won the award for best enterprise solution in the 2022 MTN App Of The Year Award.

Available on the Apple App Store, Google Play Store, or via the My Smart City website (mysmart.city), the platform was built by Acumen Software, and has been successfully launched in a number of the metro’s including Johannesburg, Cape Town, Tshwane, and Ekurhuleni. George Municipality has partnered with My Smart City to bring a tailored one-stop solution to your service delivery needs.

Executive Mayor Leon Van Wyk welcomed the transition to the new App. “George as a city is in the process of positioning itself within the global drive towards smart cities. Technology has the potential to advance the management of cities, contribute to their economic success, and improve the quality of life of its residents. George continues to proactively explore smart city interventions as a means of overcoming the rising challenges of urban development and sustainability, becoming more resilient, innovative and creative.” **George Municipality aims to simplify**

service delivery and the My Smart City App allows you as the resident to:

- Log municipal faults;
- Receive local alerts and notifications;
- Chat to an Agent during office hours;
- Access and pay your municipal bill; (NEW)
- Submit self-read meter readings; (NEW)
- Have the opportunity to complete Customer Satisfaction Surveys; (NEW)
- and let you contribute to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) without needing to attend meetings; (NEW)
- and gives you Access to Business listings for George and surrounds.(NEW)

The My Smart City – George App gives residents access to the George social feeds which will allow subscribers to engage and share current affairs within their communities as well as extract information around power outages, load shedding schedules, water outages, road closures, and stay updated with community alerts specific to the area they live in.

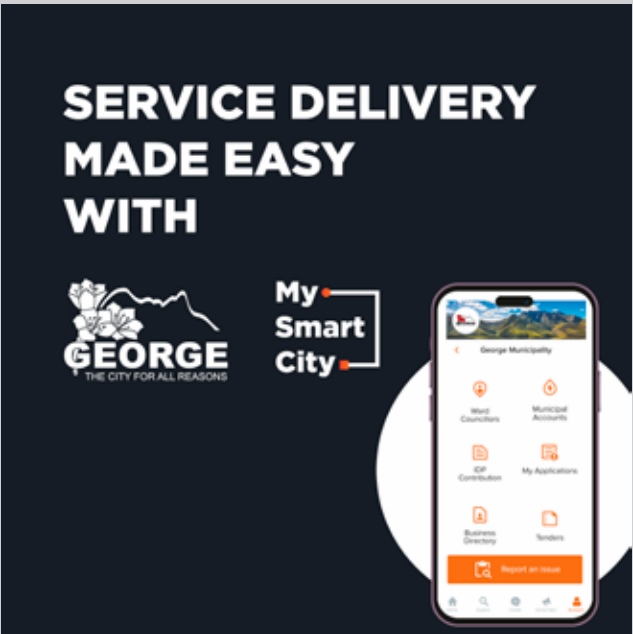
The My Smart City – George app will act as a conduit for the resolution of service delivery issues - your issues are escalated to the George Municipality and captured within our internal fault logging system which provides a reference

number and feedback to you, the resident, via the App, allowing you to track your fault without contacting a call centre.

Municipal Manager, Dr Michele Gratz that the My Smart City - George APP is one of the pillars which George Municipality is using to render a more efficient and effective service.

“The effectiveness of the My Smart City – George App will however be determined by residents subscribing and then using the many existing and new features to make communicating and transacting with the municipality easier. It is hoped that residents will embrace the new technology to make their lives easier and to make the municipality more efficient.”

Existing subscribers of the George Municipal App will be notified on the existing App when the current service will be terminated and we ask that you install



the new My Smart City – George App to allow for a seamless transition. **Details will be provided on how to access the My Smart City-George App and the QR Code will be available on your monthly statements! The GO LIVE DATE will be communicated – keep an eye on our social media channels for updates.**



Mayor Leon van Wyk hoisting the blue flag at Wilderness beach as part of the launching ceremony held early in December 2022. With him are from left, Tyrone April, Superintendent: Parks & Recreation, Nosidima Vumindaba, Manager: Parks and Recreation, Dr Michele Gratz, Municipal Manager and Jean Safers, Portfolio Councillor for Community Services: Parks, Refuse and Environmental.

George awarded two full blue flags!

George Municipality was once again proud to be hoisting two Blue Flags and one Pilot Blue Flag Boards at our beaches for the 2022 festive season. Wilderness Beach retained full Blue Flag status, Herold’s Bay gained full blue Flag status and Victoria Bay maintained Pilot status following application by the George Municipality.

Blue Flag is an international coastal management programme that accredits beaches that meet standards of excellence in water quality, environmental management, environmental education and information as well as safety and services. In South Africa the programme is implemented by the Wildlife Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA).

Dr Gratz said Blue Flag status offered many benefits including improved tourism

facilities, enhanced management of coastal ecosystems, increased awareness of the coast and capacity building of coastal municipalities. “Blue Flag status has significant international merit and the achievement of such accolades is important to stimulate and confirm international and high-end interest in the city and district as a desirable, quality tourism and lifestyle destination. We thank SANParks Garden Route National Park who shares jurisdiction of Wilderness beach with the George Municipality.”

The Blue Flag season ran from 1 December 2022 to 31 January 2023. Compliance included high standards of water quality monitoring, public safety and lifeguard services, and well-maintained coastal amenities. South Africa has participated in the Blue Flag programme since 2001.

Outdoor Gym Trims

In an effort to provide better health and wellness opportunities to people of all ages, abilities, and socio-economic statuses, the George Municipality has established three Outdoor Gym Trims. Alderman Leon van Wyk officially opened the easy-to-use outdoor gym equipment which is accessible to the public for recreation purposes.

“This initiative is part of a pilot project that we launched to provide outdoor gym equipment for communal use. We look forward to seeing how the equipment is going to be utilized by community members so we can continue the rollout of such equipment in other wards. At this stage, this open-air gym is one of three pilot sites; one is in Van Riebeek Park (between Heatherlands and Camfersdrift), and Mission Street (Pacaltsdorp),” said Mayor van Wyk.

Councillor Monique Simmers shared her thoughts about this gym facility, as the ward councillor for Ward 5 wherein Lavallia is located, "I am pleased that this amenity is now available for all the residents, young and old, in my ward. These initiatives provide forms of recreational activities for our residents, and I would like to invite everyone to come and try them out. Thanks to our portfolio Cllr Jean Safers and our officials for making this possible."



Executive Mayor of George, Alderman Leon van Wyk.



From left (Front): Tyrone April (Superintendent: Parks & Recreation), Alderman Leon van Wyk (Executive Mayor of George), Cllr Monique Simmers (Ward 5), Cllr Marlene Barnardt (Chief Whip), Cllr Jean Safers (Portfolio Councillor for Community Services: Parks, Refuse & Environmental and Nosidima Vumindaba (Manager: Parks and Recreation). From left (back): Cllr Jayzee Jantjies (Ward 6) and Cllr Henry Hill (Portfolio Councillor for Planning & Development).



From left is Cllrs Monique Simmers Ward 5 and Jean Safers Portfolio Cllr for Community Services - Parks, Refuse and Environmental.



From left Cllr Monique Simmers Ward 5, Nosidima Vumindaba Manager Parks and Recreation and Executive Mayor of George Leon van Wyk.

GEORGE WILDERNESS UNIONDALE

visitgeorge.co.za

VISITOR SAFETY

TOURISM WEBSITE

MUNICIPAL CONTACTS

Visitor Information Centres

George Tourism 124 York Street, George, 6529
+27 44 801 9295 • info@visitgeorge.co.za

Wilderness Tourism 198 George Road, Wilderness, 6560
+27 44 877 0045 • info@visitwilderness.co.za

Uniondale Tourism Virtual Assistance • +27 44 518 0030
info@visituniondale.co.za

Official tourism bureaus of

GEORGE THE CITY FOR ALL REASONS