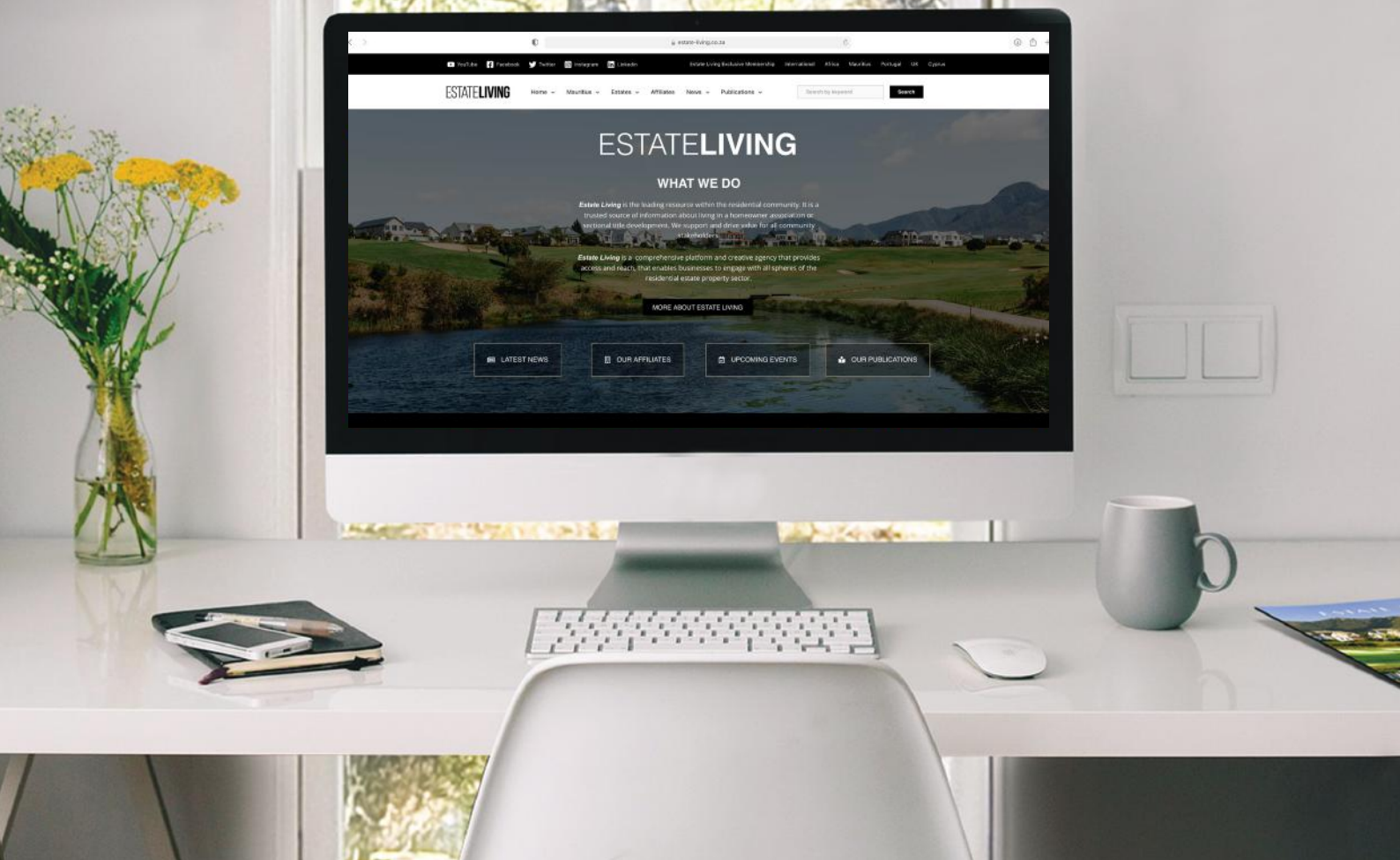


KINGSWOOD BUZZARD

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

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From the CEO

The first half of 2023 is done and dusted! Only five months left to accomplish those New Year's resolutions ...

Is it just me, or does it feel as if the winter is taking forever this year? The above average rainfall we experienced since May provided plenty of challenges on the estate, not least of which due to the soil being completely saturated with water, causing muddy conditions everywhere. There seems to be no end to the punishing cold fronts this year, but, as they say, 'Life is like a rainbow – you need both the sun and the rain to make its colours appear.'

We held our annual general meeting on 26 June this year with all the normal formalities being conducted. We elected new trustees to carry the torch for the next 12 months; congratulations to Jonathan Witts-Hewinson, Tony Jacobsen, Fielies Nieuwoudt (these three trustees will all be serving their second term) and Edmund Franklin (you will meet him later on in this

edition of *The BUZZard*), who will serve his first term as a Kingswood Golf Estate trustee. We also appointed a new auditing firm, Moore, to take care of the annual financial statements and audits for the foreseeable future.

The two major projects currently under way on the estate, as you are no doubt aware, are the security upgrades and the Community Centre / Clubhouse project. Both projects are progressing well, despite the copious amounts of precipitation, which hampered work on the perimeter upgrades during May and June. Some of the work that will be performed at the access gates may cause slight disruption, but we will inform you ahead of time when this is expected. You can read more about these projects further on in this edition.



The estate maintenance team has had its hands full dealing with damage caused by water on the roads, headwalls, catch pits and open spaces. Our hard-working team, consisting of Mario and Kallie, has done sterling work under difficult circumstances. We again urge all residents to report any infrastructure defects observed, i.e. defective lights, irregular deformities in the road, etc., to the HOA as soon as possible; this helps us as much as it helps the estate.

The golf course did not escape the consequences of the high rainfall, and the course had to be closed for 15 days during the last two and a half months due to rain. Some of our winter projects, due to the waterlogged turf, could not yet be attended to, but we are confident that the sun will shine again and we will complete our planned projects before the winter is over. The golf course maintenance teams have had to work under very challenging circumstances due to the wet conditions, having to walk, carrying equipment, instead of driving to various areas on the course. We thank these men and woman for their hard work and dedication. We also spare a thought for the golf

operators, Kingswood Golf Operations, who have had to endure the poor weather conditions during the past three months and the impact this may have had on their business.

We are excited about the second half of 2023 and look forward to the completion of various projects and interventions in and around our beautiful estate.

I hope you enjoy the articles prepared for you in this edition of *The BUZZard*.

Kingswood greetings,

Willem Jacobs



Meet new trustee

Edmund Franklin

Edmund Franklin



As part of Kingswood AGM proceedings on 26 June, a new trustee was elected to serve alongside current office bearers Anthony Jacobsen, Jonathan Witts-Hewinson and Gerrit 'Fielies' Nieuwoudt. Edmund Franklin chatted to *The BUZZard* over coffee on a freezing Thursday morning.

Excuse any assumptions, 'Ed'

It's quite a peculiar moniker, but the HOA's newest trustee says there's no connection with American president Franklin DR or founding father Benjamin Franklin. Nope, his clan hails from that other island, whence Edmund's ancestors left the English town of Woking five generations ago, setting sail for southern shores.

The families Searle and Franklin relocated to South Africa around 1846, thanks to some diversion while en route to India.

Edmund's great-grandfather settled in Bloemfontein and married Winifred Searle, which is how the Franklin family's ties with Great Brak River were forged.

'My dad was born and raised in Great Brak but then worked as a diplomat, so my brothers and I grew up abroad in cities like London and Washington, before our family's return to South Africa,' says Edmund, who matriculated as a boarder at Pretoria Boys High.

First books, then to battle

Edmund enrolled at the University of Cape Town straight after matriculating and says that, when signing up at UCT, it was his first time ever to set foot in the Cape. His love of the Mother City deepened during five years of studies and, two degrees later (viz. Applied Maths and Physics, then Electronic Engineering), the bond with the

city was such that Edmund would spend much of the next three decades living in the shadow of Table Mountain.

He was then awarded a Rotary Scholarship to pursue his Masters in Electronic and Digital Engineering at the University of Manchester. After completing his Masters, Edmund did his compulsory national service at Langebaanweg in 1987 and '88. Not long after, another seminal engagement was to enter his life's narrative.



Marilyn

An adventure down the mighty Orange River ('nope, this was not a guided tour') with a flying buddy had a lasting impact on his life; at some stage during the proceedings, the excursion entailed popping in at the friend's sister's house to collect extra clothes.

Here's when Edmund first laid eyes on his future wife, Marilyn – the sister in question. Marilyn and Edmund tied the knot in 1992. Catherine and James were born in 1993 and 1995 respectively – and that 'just do it' gene did not skip a generation.

Catherine, now 29, works in South Korea; after three years of teaching in Seoul, she is now the academic director of five schools located on the island of Jeju and in Seoul. In the line of duty she'd met and fallen in love with a fellow educator.

But this year her Korean beau prioritised his passion for food and is now successfully running an eatery on the island. The couple are getting married later this year, and Edmund will proudly be walking his daughter down the aisle.

James, who works on the advisory side at Price Waterhouse Coopers in London, made the English capital his home last year.

Never stop learning

If you compare dates, it's revealing to learn that Edmund attained his next academic accomplishment, an MBA from UCT, during 1994–95 – viz. with two new babies in the house.

He had loved his engineering work – especially a seven-year stint at the National Accelerator Centre, now iThemba LABS, near Somerset West. He worked in the field of cancer therapy and physics research, rated as world-leading at the time (1988–1995).

But Edmund says there was a glass ceiling to the engineering world of yore. 'I couldn't foresee a future path into management, and wasn't ready to carry on doing the same job for the rest of my days,' he says.

With an MBA in the bag, Edmund joined Accenture, where he honed his consulting skills while enjoying opportunities



to travel the world. But so many years of spending working weeks in Joburg while his family lived in Cape Town started losing its appeal.

'I made the decision to retire in my early 50s, weighing up the stress of work commutes against quality of life. I was fortunate to be approached by PPS some five years ago, when they invited me to join their board of directors. It keeps me out of mischief!'

Edmund waxes lyrical about the wonderful people he gets to interact with during this time in his life – from doctors and pharmacists to lawyers, accountants, investment specialists and engineers. What's most gratifying is that the PPS board is taken seriously, tasked with big decisions brought by management of the companies involved.

'The trend among many boards is to come for lunch but try staying awake during the meeting,' he chuckles. At PPS, he is also part of the technology committee and is extremely excited about existing and new ventures currently planned for South Africa and abroad, including Australia and New Zealand.

To travel is to live

And on the subject of Down Under: Before the onset of Covid, the Franklins soberly considered the state of South

Africa and the African continent, and travelled extensively – the UK, Europe, Australasia – to try and gauge where best to retire.

Having visited New Zealand frequently over the years, this was one of the top countries to research in terms of permanent living conditions. 'My brother is still in Joburg but will soon emigrate to the States. That will make me the last member of my family to remain in SA, the rest long having relocated to the usual suspects: the USA, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand,' he explains.





Then the pandemic kicked in and by April 2020 all travel plans had been nipped in the bud. 'We had already taken our leave of Cape Town and suddenly had nowhere to go, so ended up moving to our family cottage on The Island at Great Brak.

'Living there was reminiscent of our past in the Cape, brimming with beauty and a great sense of security,' he says, adding that this perfect storm of circumstances ultimately resulted in their move to Kingswood last year. But the fact that they love it here doesn't mean their feet stopped itching.

When *The BUZZard* caught up with Edmund last week, he and Marilyn had just returned from a trip to Botswana, where they quelled their appetite for wildlife and communing with friendly locals. 'It's so extraordinarily unique and beautiful, from Makgadikgadi Pan to the splendour of game on the Chobe's banks.'

A passage to India

The name reference at the start of this story would not make sense if we didn't pause to share a nutshell account of Edmund's year in India, which came about shortly after he had ostensibly retired just over a decade ago.

'I have always enjoyed teaching, and I love maths, so when a friend who was principal of an international school in India said they needed a maths teacher, I made myself available for the task. It entailed teaching students aged between 16 and 19 at a campus set on 180ha of nature reserve in the hills about 150km from Mumbai.'

Apart from building a memorable rapport with his young charges, Edmund also used the opportunity to explore that part of the planet on his off weekends. 'At the end of the year, I rented a Royal Enfield bike and, along with one of my students, travelled through Kashmir.

'The trip took us up one of the world's highest passes (Khardung La) at 18,000 feet, the capital Leh, and past lakes that shone like blue glass, like Pangong Tso – even at 14,000 feet it still had a backdrop of towering mountains.' Like namesake Edmund Hillary, he was mesmerised by the world's highest mountain range.

Kingswood: the life

It being their first go at estate living, Edmund says both he and Marilyn are loving the joys of life at Kingswood, which is even nicer than they had hoped. The freedom and security and beauty of their new abode mean that they quickly felt at home – as did their beloved Rottweiler, Kitana.

'I do play golf but not nearly as often as Marilyn, who is now vice-captain of the ladies' section!' He says they love their new hometown of George and enjoy a good braai and a glass of wine on their patio with friends.

When it comes to his role as trustee, Edmund says a lifetime of working in the consulting sphere will hopefully stand him in good stead. He shares interests with fellow trustees and a good working relationship already exists within the context of this well-run estate.

Finally, there's another thing you should know about Edmund Franklin. He flies – in several senses of the word. His electric blue RV-7 light aircraft lives at Mossel Bay Airfield and, when he's not out of town, he gets around to flying it a few times per week.

'I got my pilot's licence in 1990 – it was a dream to try the air, after having explored our planet's surface and below the seas while windsurfing, hiking, and scuba diving.'

Long story short, Kingswood's newest trustee is in a very good place: balancing work and play with good sense and great cheer.



KINGSWOOD HOA

Progress report on major projects on the go.

Among the many issues that take up the working day of Kingswood CEO Willem Jacobs and his team are three important projects in various stages of development and implementation. These revolve around security upgrades at the estate, the Community Centre/ Clubhouse Project, and ongoing activities at the burgeoning Phase 4.

Security a priority

Willem is happy to report that the rollout of new security measures at Kingswood Golf Estate is going according to plan, with an army of expert service providers and the project manager contributing towards the timeous implementation of all items on an extensive to-do list.

Among these is JP Fencing, tasked with the fortification of the perimeter fence to COC level – both spots that will in due course be equipped with extra cameras and technology.

As mentioned in the March edition by KGE trustee Gerrit 'Fielies' Nieuwoudt, chairman of the subcommittee for security, it's a mammoth task to secure the nearly 14km of perimeter fencing, access gates and other points of entry, but with these improvements made, Kingswood's first line of defence will be much more secure.

JP Fencing has already upgraded 3.4km of perimeter fence and is expected to complete the fence upgrade by September this year. The technology incorporated



into the upgrade will make the perimeter even less susceptible to intrusion through the fence.

Also involved is the Cape Town-based company ZA Projects, which boasts a collective knowledge of 20+ years' experience in managing electronic safety and security projects throughout South Africa, and Scholtz Consulting Project Management, introduced in the previous edition of *The BUZZard*. ZA Projects is responsible for the implementation of the access control upgrade measures at all the entrance gates to the estate.

To recap, or for those who have missed it: a consultation session with the Scholtz Consulting Project

Management team took place on 16 March to further discuss how best to use the allocated security budget over the next five years; during a HOA trustees' meeting on 22 March, Phase 1 of the five-phased security project was unanimously approved.

The main objectives of the initial stage included the above-mentioned perimeter fence upgrade, off-site monitoring of security cameras and perimeter alarms, and sharpening up of access control at all gates, with different access technology employed for homeowners, contractors, delivery companies and visiting golfers.

Among the exciting security additions to look forward to, thanks to the input of ZA Projects, count tightened



access control, turnstiles for contractors, gardeners and domestic employees, as well as smartphone proximity readers for homeowners at all access gates.

Willem says that information regarding these advanced technological add-ons has already been distributed among homeowners, and that healthy correspondence ensued in some cases. 'We are always happy to receive feedback from homeowners, and really take these queries and suggestions to heart.'

He says that 'one homeowner was doubtful about the proximity reader technology, as it didn't work seamlessly at the Gauteng estate where she had previously resided'. Willem, however, reassures Kingswood residents that every precaution will be taken to avoid glitches in terms of access while new security apparatus and procedures are being implemented.

'There will undoubtedly be growing pains, as is the case with the implementation of any new technology, but our project manager assured us that a dedicated team would be on hand at all access points when the new

access-control measures are first implemented to ensure that any problem is dealt with immediately,' says Willem.

What's cooking at the Community Centre/ Clubhouse?

The CEO happily reports that the site development plan (SDP) was submitted and subsequently approved by the George Municipality. We're on the eve of handing in the detailed layout plans for the community centre / clubhouse project to the planning department of the Municipality.

At the time of his chat with *The BUZZard*, Willem said that in the immediate pipeline was a site meeting with many of the contractors involved (this happened on 7 July) to make final arrangements for collaboration between everyone involved in the facility's construction.

Interested parties were due to receive tender documents by mid-July, and Willem said at the time

he was cautiously optimistic that a ground-breaking ceremony could happen as early as mid-/end August

'Tenders are due at the end of July, and we're having our last talks with the banks for all finance issues to be in place. It took an immense amount of planning and hard work behind the scenes to get where we are today,' he said, adding that the granular costing model used allowed one to calculate every cent spent, down to the last screw used.

Project managers in this instance are Pro QS, who work closely with all engineers – electrical, mechanical and civil – involved, as well as the architects and top George interior and architecture design house, Inovision.

Phase 4 is SOLD OUT!

It's official: there are no more plots or properties available in Phase 4 of Kingswood Golf Estate, with all sales having been concluded and the area being a veritable hive of construction activities. Conditions, due to the above average rainfall since May this year, have been extremely challenging for the building contractors and massive rain delays have been experienced. Interesting stats about the progress include:

Completed houses – 19

Houses under construction – 32



 Esther de Villiers





The rain in George stays mainly on the course

This here headline was inspired by the well-known ditty from *My Fair Lady*: 'The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain'. In this case, however, the lesson to be learned is less about elocution and all about dealing with whatever blows the weather in George deals those responsible for keeping the Kingswood course in shape.

When *The BUZZard* chatted to Willem Jacobs in the first week of July, the golf course – along with much of the rest of George – was properly drenched. 'There has been more rain during May and June than in the past decade,' said Willem, adding that the average rainfall for May is 38.4ml, but this year it hit an eight-year record at 180ml.

'With a saturated course after such an extent of precipitation, the water table has risen to levels very close to the surface. Apart from making the course unplayable, this also means that the grass doesn't grow in those spots, with small dams of water remaining for days on lower-lying parts of the course. There is nowhere left for this water to drain.'

Protocols on course closure

Willem says it's important that homeowners are kept abreast of the state of the course and of the many factors that inform their decisions on closing or partially closing the course. By his side to make these important calls is the greenkeeper, Ivan van Heerden, and his crew.

A comprehensive document directs the protocols around course closure, set out according to four categories:

1. Play with no limits
2. Golf carts walking speed
3. Only open for walking golfers
4. Closed, i.e. no golf

'Risk analysis is at the foundation of adhering to these protocols,' explains Willem, and says that after continuous course inspection by Ivan and a representative from the current golf operator, the final decision remains the responsibility of those in charge of maintaining the course.

'It's a fine balance to keep, and clear commercial realities exist. We have an absolute obligation to protect the course, as that is our mainstay here at Kingswood Golf Estate. After all factors have been considered, there must be no damage to the course or, if any damage is incurred, it must be kept to an absolute minimum.'

He reiterates that it's not just a matter of one person's discretion, but that a specialised and structured process is followed at all times. 'No decision to close the course is made indiscriminately. Such decisions are only confirmed after twice-daily observations and consultations,' says Willem.



'Whatever is decided on our format of play for the day is decided with the best interests of all stakeholders involved, but also ultimately with the best state of the golf course in mind. It's a difficult balance and, if made without commercial realities in mind, the subsequent domino effect can be disastrous for all parties.

'We request that homeowners avoid driving their golf carts on the course when the course is wet, or when closed for carts, in order to avoid further damage caused to the turf,' he concludes.

Homeowners in need of additional information on course closure conditions, or those who would like to find out about closures on the day, can call Kingswood Golf Operations on 0861 72 71 70 or 044 870 7998.

 Esther de Villiers



GOLF @KINGSWOOD

Golf Operations Update

What has happened on the Kingswood course since we last spoke to Kingswood Golf Operations (KGO) chief Liesel Niehaus, partner Mike Quinn and their team? 'The mild weather between March and June allowed for much action on and off the course,' says Liesel – and the report below bears witness to this claim.

March – for wealth and rhinos and Rico

The first PSG Wealth Outeniqua 2023 Cup event of the year took place on Wednesday 29 March. The brainchild of Pierre Durant (Kingswood homeowner, golf member and Men's Golf Committee member), this tournament is generously sponsored by PSG Wealth Outeniqua.

The event was the first of nine that take place between March and November on the last Wednesday of each month. The competition format is Individual Stableford (IPS) with a 95% handicap conversion.

Players must play six of the nine events to qualify for the order of merit, and the best six scores will count to calculate an average. Let's cross fingers for our participating Kingswood golfers.



The K9 for Rhino Conservation Golf Day was held on Friday 24 March (Better Ball Stableford, 85% handicap allowance). The worthy cause being furthered by this event is the work of Amazulu K9 Unit – a non-profit that consists of two handlers and two dogs in the Northern KZN region.

Its main purpose is to use dogs that can track poachers by scent in rugged, thick terrain. They are specifically at risk and more vulnerable in this region due to the Black Rhino Expansion Project, where many of their rhinos are not dehorned.

The Amazulu K9 Unit runs purely on sponsors and donations that cover salaries, living costs and maintenance of the dogs, staff training, reaction work and more. They do a lot for their region, and it was good to see the support from the Southern Cape.

Says Liesel: 'The day had a good turnout and a considerable amount of money was raised for the rhino conservation cause, which will allow the Amazulu K9 Unit to keep doing this incredible work.'

On Thursday 30 March, the Rico Wolmerans Fundraiser Golf Day (Better Ball Full Scramble, 100% handicap allowance) was supported by many golfers keen on contributing to realise the dreams of a youngster in our midst.

Kingswood Junior Golf member Rico Wolmerans was invited to play in the Callaway World Championship in Palm Springs, California from 16–19 July, as well as the US Kids' World Championship in Pinehurst, North Carolina from 26–29 July.

The purpose of the golf day was to raise funds towards Rico's travel costs to the States. Through participation at these events he will proudly represent the Louis Oosthuizen Academy 57, the Southern Cape Golf Union, Kingswood Golf Estate, and South Africa. Best of luck, Rico!

April – Ryder Cup and rolling in the cash

The local Ryder Cup golf group, comprising Kingswood homeowners, converged in April to take each other on in an epic battle on the course, representing either the Red Team or the Blue Team.

'The Red Team won 15–13 after being 10–6 down going into singles,' explains Liesel, adding that everybody still left a winner thanks to the beautiful weather, mouthwatering lunch, and fun that was had by all involved.



Kingswood homeowner, golf member and Men's Club captain Ymke Schutte had an early Father's Day surprise on Friday 14 April. His 19-year-old daughter Minyonne picked the correct card and won the King of Clubs pot of R93,510 – what a windfall!

This weekly club competition takes place every Friday at the estate's restaurant, Kingswood Kitchen, and is only open to Kingswood residents and golf members.

May means business and Battle Royale

Billed as the ultimate networking event on the Garden Route, the George Business Chamber Golf Day took place on Thursday 11 May (four-ball alliance, two scores count). This year, the Chamber's chosen charity was Garden Route SPCA, and those who bought raffle tickets at R100 a pop not only supported this great cause, but also stood a chance to win fabulous prizes.

George Business Chamber was extremely grateful to Kingswood for hosting such a well-attended event, and thanked all players who persevered and played all 18 holes even after the weather turned from wow to wet.

They thanked all sponsors for the wonderful prizes, and their loyal supporters, saying: 'It is heart-warming to see business come together to support our Charity Golf Day.' Congratulations to the winning team of Supa Quick Mossel Bay, comprising Riaan van der Heyde, Dawie Smuts, Mark Roux and Nico van der Westhuizen.

The Battle Royale, which pits the English Bulldogs against the Afrikaanse Boerboele, is a Kingswood Golf member-only event following the Better Ball Matchplay format, and is the brainchild of Kingswood Men's Club captain, Ymke Schutte.

On Saturday 20 May, the English Bulldogs took on the Afrikaanse Boerboele in an epic battle on the beautiful Kingswood golf course.



Unfortunately, the Bulldogs were no match for the Boerboele, and had to settle for second place.

Says Ymke: 'Well done to the Boerboele on a winning score of 9–5. Thank you to every golfer who participated in the Battle Royale – it truly was a day to remember.'

Take note

The Friday Sundowner has undergone another name and format change and is now known as the 9-Hole Sundowner Par 3 Challenge. Prizes consist of Kingswood Pro Shop vouchers, allowing winners to

make purchases at the shop to the value of the amount on the voucher.

In winter, it's a shotgun start at 3:30pm and the IPS / Full 18-Hole Handicap format applies. There's a R40 competition fee for members (standard green fee and cart seat rates apply), while visitors pay R280 including the above and their competition fee. Anyone can play, but bookings are essential – call 086 172 7170.

Also, the KGO Friday Dinner Specials with live music must be diarised. 'This is a great way to ease into the weekend and not worry about cooking. And the best thing is, it's so accessible and easy for residents to attend,' says Liesel.



Upcoming events

August

Sun 13 – Sunday Mixed Competition

Sun 13 – Target 36 Tour

Mon 14 – SCGU Target 36 A-League

Thurs 17 – Kingswood Ladies' Cup

Thurs 24 – Ladies' Target 36

Mon 28 – SCGU Target 36 A-League

Wed 30 – PSG Wealth Outeniqua Cup

Thurs 31 – QACCS

September

Sat 2 – SCGU Handicaps League Round 7

Sun 3 – Sunday Mixed Competition

Sun 3 – Target 36 Tour

Thurs 7 – SHE Group Golf Day

Fri 8 and Sat 9 – Kingswood Kings (members-only pairs event)

Sun 10 – Nomads Golf Day

Mon 11 – SCGU Target 36 A-League

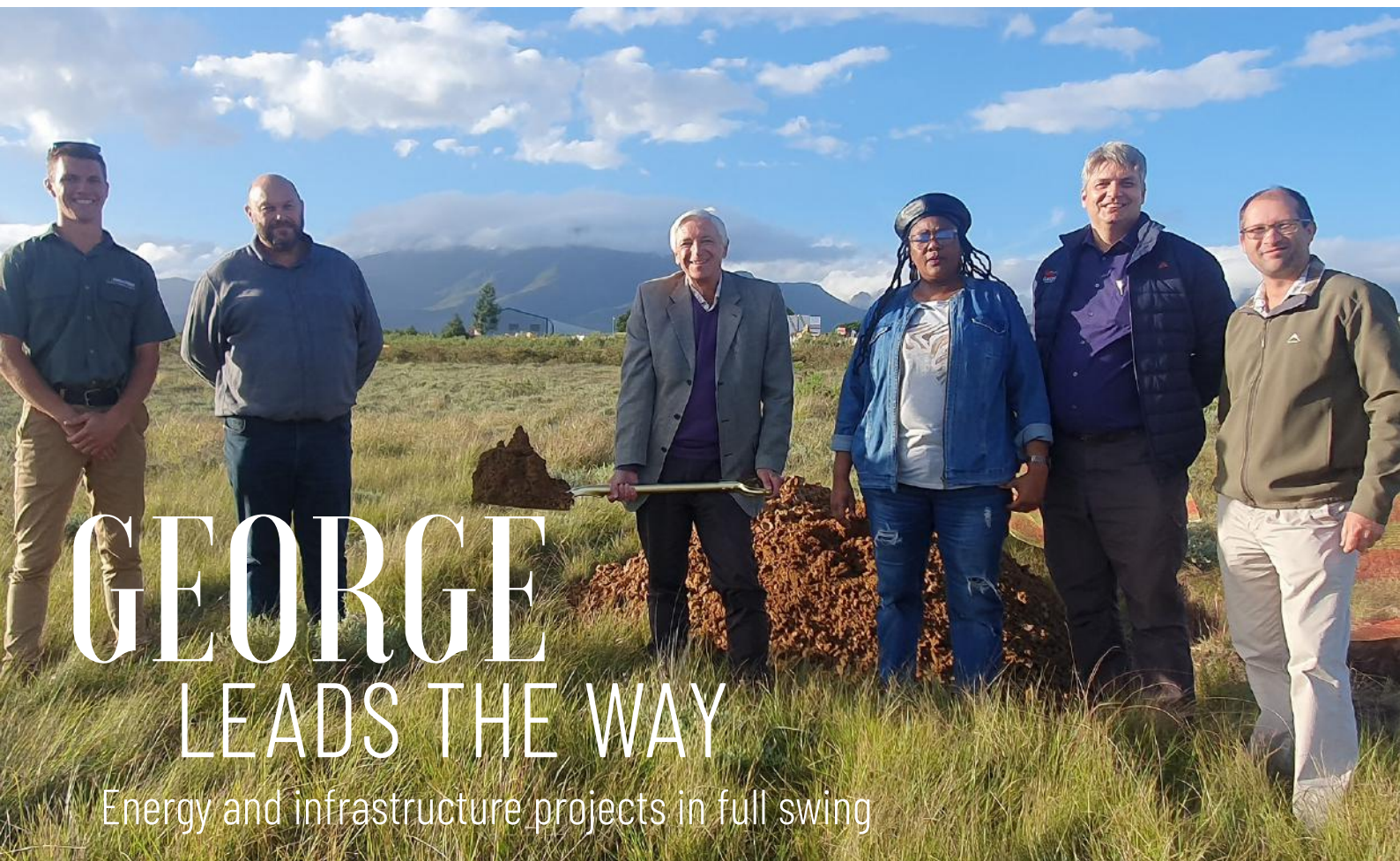
Thurs 14 – Empower Golf Day

Sun 17 – Target 36 Tour

Thurs 21 – Ladies' Target 36

Wed 27 – PSG Wealth Outeniqua Cup

And to end off the first month of Spring in style, diarise Saturday 30 September for the relaunch of the Members' Bring and Braai. Call KGO on 086 172 7170 to book or to get additional information.



GEORGE LEADS THE WAY

Energy and infrastructure projects in full swing

Image above: In April, George mayor Leon van Wyk accompanied portfolio councillor for Electrotechnical Services and Fleet Management, Nosiselo Mbethe, and some of his team members during a sod-turning ceremony at 1ha of open land in George Industria, to mark the beginning of the construction of a 1MWp solar farm.

Countering crisis through good governance

The Southern Cape capital of George is one of the country's top semigration destinations, not least because of its well-run local government.

George Municipality ranked third in the latest Municipal Financial Sustainability Index (MFSI), which rates the 112 largest municipalities and eight metros, out of 257 municipalities in total.

The MFSI assesses municipalities and metros on a scale of one to 100, based on six financial components: operating performance, liquidity management, debt governance, budget practices, affordability, and infrastructure development.

Three-pronged approach

Backed by experts in every department, George mayor Leon van Wyk acknowledges the challenges brought on by the national energy crisis, and reminds that the municipality is not responsible for loadshedding.

'We have no option but to implement the phases as directed. The municipality's ability to generate power is limited but we are actively working on reducing our daily energy requirements from Eskom,' says Van Wyk

At peak times, George uses up to 85MVA per day, but the municipality continuously aims to reduce its own consumption by 10% (between 8MW and 10MW) for Eskom to relieve the town of Stage 1 and 2 loadshedding. This will also assist in achieving its goal of reducing internal



electricity costs and increasing sustainability. During 2023, the municipality is adding 3MW of 'own energy', and before December 2024 another 9MW should be commissioned into the system.

Electrotechnical Services director Bongani Mandla explains that George Municipality is implementing a three-pronged operational approach to significantly reduce reliance on Eskom's energy supply.

'The three focus areas are energy efficiency, own-build programmes, and the procurement of energy from Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

Eskom's unreliable energy supply, coupled with the ever-increasing tariffs and fuel costs, has forced George Municipality to implement some of its plans earlier than initially intended.' Mandla says expediting of the plans is driven by the city's urgent need to relieve its residents from Stage 2 loadshedding in the next 18 to 24 months and subsequently of Stage 4 loadshedding within 36 months.

Projects and their timing

The city has already started its Own Build programme, to deliver around 30MW of energy into the grid over the next 36 months, subject to feasibility studies and environmental approval.

The plan is to deliver at least 10MW within the next 18 months – in short:

- 1MWp (megawatt peak) is currently at execution stage after some challenges, including environmental approvals. The plan is to work towards commissioning by end December 2023 or shortly thereafter.
- 9MWp – the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is still under way for a 9MW PV Solar Plant. Once those approvals are completed, the process of tendering and award will take place.

A 300kWp (kilowatt peak) solar plant at George Civic Centre produces on average 41,500 kilowatt hours (kWh)

of energy monthly to supply the building, while excess flows into the grid and supplies neighbouring residents and businesses.

A battery energy storage system (BESS) will be installed here to continue generating energy even during loadshedding, while the storage system will supply the building when Eskom's network is unavailable.

According to a recent municipal statement, 'various reviews are still under way to ensure that the specifications are of the highest quality and do not place the municipality at risk.' These specifications are due to be advertised within the next month.

Setting an energy-efficient example

All municipal buildings boast energy-efficient lights, while 111 energy-efficient air conditioners have been installed. Several buildings are scheduled for rooftop PV solar in the 2023/24 financial year, and preparatory work is under way to have all municipal buildings self-sufficient by December 2026.

A phased approach of IPP procurement will enable the city to secure 30–40MW from its IPP programme within the next 36 months. Once both IPP procurement and Own Build deliver energy to the grid, the city's reliance on Eskom would be significantly reduced.

Billions invested

A planned Solar PV Plant capable of generating 30MW is undergoing feasibility studies to ascertain practicality and find innovative means of circumventing space requirements. This project, coupled with a Utility Scale BESS, will cost +R1.250 billion.

The renewable project's Own Build programme will cost around R2 billion, and George Municipality continuously engages various funding institutions in South Africa and internationally, sourcing external finance to assist with covering the bulk of these costs.

Roads, sewerage and public transport

R148 million is being spent on major road upgrades in the 2022/23 financial year, with another R350 million invested in



road infrastructure over the next three years. Van Wyk said the municipality is committed to optimising road upgrades across the city, but budget constraints force prioritisation of roads in poor condition.

Underground services such as stormwater and sewerage lines will also be rehabilitated, as well as roads used by buses

and other heavy vehicles. The surface of pavements, kerbs and obstructions on the sidewalks are being addressed to allow for universal accessibility – a cornerstone of the city's pioneering GO George public transport service.

Being smart about water

Rainfall across the province has ensured that George Dam was at 100.3% capacity at the time of writing, but work to provide adequate water-related services, including wastewater plant upgrades, forms part of the municipality's plan to prepare for ever-increasing resident numbers.

Rehabilitation of the Outeniqua Wastewater Treatment Works (OWWTW) will allow for an increased capacity from 15MI/day to 25MI/day; the additional number of benefiting households totals 19,049.

The number of people per household was calculated at an average family size of 4.25 persons, i.e. an estimated total of 80,958 persons. Recent development and future growth requirements necessitated increased capacity of the OWWTW.

After civil works for the 10MI/day extension were completed, the mechanical-electrical component of the work commenced in early 2021. The full commissioning of the new 10MI/day extension concluded in June.

This city is smart

Part of George's goal to be recognised as Smart City entails an initiative to drastically improve customer service delivery and revenue collection while reducing lost revenue associated with water losses.

New smart ultrasonic water meters will be installed throughout George over a period of three to four years, and residents will benefit from this technology as well, receiving daily water meter readings of actual household water consumption directly on their cellphones.

This provides the ability to monitor and control your water consumption, while an early leak alarm warning saves on water waste and the accompanying financial penalties.

 Esther de Villiers



BOOKS AND BIRDS

rock Louis Fourie's world



'Colour your World' is the PNA pay-off line, and when meeting Kingswood resident Louis Fourie, proud owner of six branches of the well-established stationery brand twixt the Garden Route, Klein Karoo and Kimberley, it's clear his world is colourful by design.

When doing some brand stalking on PNA, one learns that there are over 100 independent, owner-managed stores nationwide. The franchise group has grown from its humble beginnings in 1992 to become a reputable and successful franchise entity.

Louis Fourie has lived with wife Erika at Kingswood Golf Estate for the past two years, and his ownership of PNA stores plays no small role in this state of affairs. Having bought his first store in Oudtshoorn before branching out, he says after 15 years of frequently navigating Outeniqua Pass, it was time to move to the mountain's greener side.

The first-ever PNA store opened its doors in Pretoria in 1992, and when the family Fourie – with son Louis and daughter Mariëtte, then in their teens – moved to Oudtshoorn in 1997, it was the perfect place to buy into this business. The PNA branch in the Ostrich Capital had successfully been plying

its trade for a number of months before Louis and Erika acquired it, and is still located in its original spot in the town's central business hub.

'We opened the shop as I was not particularly happy with my working life at the time. We wanted to move from Pretoria to the platteland and had been looking at PNA branches for sale, but couldn't decide where to invest. There were several shops available but when I visited Oudtshoorn on a work trip, and after many prayers for guidance, the decision was made.'

The Fourie children, now 40 and 38 respectively, matriculated from Oudtshoorn High School. Louis Jnr runs a business intelligence consultancy in George, and Mariëtte and husband Jaco live in Bloemfontein, where they manage PNA stores in the Free State capital and Kimberley. Yep, it calls for a weekly 160km drive between the towns, but that's how this family rolls.

On their relocation to George, Louis says: 'Erika and I got tired of the heat and the drought. We had bought our first shop in George in 2005 and by 2021, with another PNA store in Mossel Bay, we were ready to make the move.'

Cape ancestors, well travelled since

When asked about any ties with the famous Louis Fourie after whom streets in Mossel Bay and Little Brak River had been named, 'our' Louis admits he's not familiar with the familial connection.

'Our family's progenitor settled at Wamakersvallei in the Wellington district, and married a lady called Susanna Cordier,' he says. Looking at the prevalence of his surname in South Africa today, the Fourie ancestors had created children by the dozen in each subsequent generation.



Louis was born in Murraysburg in the Western Cape, but says his family proceeded to live in several towns and provinces thereafter. 'My father worked in the banking industry, and we moved around quite a bit while I was growing up.'

Both Louis and Erika spent the final years of their school careers in the Free State town of Frankfort, and although they weren't high school sweethearts, the near peers (there's a one-year age difference) connected well enough to tie the knot 42 years ago.

'I did my national service after school and then got my teaching degree from Tuks. After three years of teaching Maths, I realised it was not my calling and joined Krygkor for 12 years from 1986 to 1997.' But the country's changed political landscape also brought about changes in the workplace, so Louis bid that industry adieu.

As supplementary income source, when the first shop in Oudtshoorn was bought, Louis went back to teaching for some years at the local high school

as well as at Principia and South Cape College.

Once the George shop in York Street was acquired, there was no more time for teaching. 'It was October 2005 when we bought the York Street shop from the previous owner, and in 2015, we opened the shop in Eden Meander,' explains Louis.

In 2021, the Fouries opened a small branch close to Mugg & Bean in Garden Route Mall, and earlier this year they amalgamated the Eden Meander and smaller shop in GRM, and moved into the new premises next to Dis-Chem.

But does this owner of six successful PNA stores regard himself as businessman? Through the grace of God, according to Louis. 'We've been truly blessed – not least with wonderful staff. We started off with three helpers in the Oudtshoorn shop, and today 66 staff members are employed in our six branches.'



What's best about your business?

The Fourie-owned PNA stores – two in George and one each in Oudtshoorn, Mossel Bay, Bloemfontein and Kimberley – all receive support from its franchiser's Joburg head office. The main functions of this HQ include national marketing, staff training, supplier consultations and negotiations with landlords.

After so many years of hands-on managing of staff and stores, Louis today works from the comfort of his Kingswood home, checking emails and orders and, every so often, swinging past his York Street and Garden Route Mall stores.

'Our managers are incredible, so the shops are in good hands,' he says – then reminisces about the days when one could have a good old bash when opening a new store. Alas, Covid changed all of that: when the Fouries opened their PNAs in Kimberley and Mossel Bay in 2021, it was with masks and without fanfare.

A bookish kinda guy, Louis is big on reading matter but reminds that this is not the franchise's primary focus,

stationery and art materials being its priority. He says he tries not to order books close to his heart as these might not be what PNA clients are after.

Diaries, study aids, cookbooks and map books are some of the shops' top sellers. 'Some people still prefer to navigate with a map book, no matter what Google maps can offer,' he says.

The good life at Kingswood

Louis says he plays the odd round of golf but not nearly enough, still being kept busy by overseeing the business. 'We love the calm atmosphere here and especially the security,' he says. But the Fouries often leave the estate in pursuit of another passion: birds.

Forays to the Cape, Stilbaai, Mossel Bay and the Kruger Park have paid off for Erika and Louis of late. During a night drive in Kruger, they were thrilled to set eyes on the rare Pennant-winged Nightjar, breeding in very few locations in South Africa and spectacular to behold in its eerie drone-like glory.

They were also in the every-birder's-envy position of being in the right place at the right time at the Liesbeek River in the Cape last year, when a Snowy Egret came to perch right in front of them for a close-up appraisal that very few local enthusiasts have been privy to.

'Last year, we heard that a Laughing Gull had been spotted in Mossel Bay and so hit the road to see if we could get lucky. It was the first time this bird was detected in South Africa, as far as members of our birding group were aware. We had just arrived when the pretty gull landed in front of us on the harbour wall.'

Seeing that serious birders flock off to faraway locations such as Mozambique and the Caprivi when there's word of a possible rare sighting, the Fouries count themselves very

fortunate for everything they've experienced in locations close to home.

The one thing about their travels, says Louis, is that they often miss out on the monthly birding talks by Peter Ginn and other experts at Kingswood. 'Between the inland shops and meetings at PNA head office and viewing birds, we always seem to be away when these meetings take place.'

But that is just about the only small niggle in Louis Fourie's life. 'We live in the most beautiful environment and I'm excited about the future of George and the Southern Cape ... and for the new road to Gate 4 to be built!' he says with a twinkle in his eye.



Memories of Everest Base Camp

In April 2018, Louis did a 13-day hike to Everest Base Camp in Nepal. 'It was quite cold and exhausting since you climb about 2,500m, but it's up and down all the time through valleys, passes and glaciers. It was an incredible experience with the most beautiful nature – those mountains are a sight I will never forget. The flights between Kathmandu and Lukla (one of the most dangerous airports in the world) were also memorable. I was lucky to be spared altitude sickness – quite a few people have died from it during hikes to Base Camp. There are helicopters in the air all the time, transporting either emergency supplies or sick hikers, and casevacs are common on the hike. A moment that will stay with me forever is when I laid eyes on Mount Everest for the first time.'

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

When Nomvula Mokonyana decided to suspend the Blue and Green Drop reporting system, she unleashed a fog of suspicion over the safety and security of our national water supply

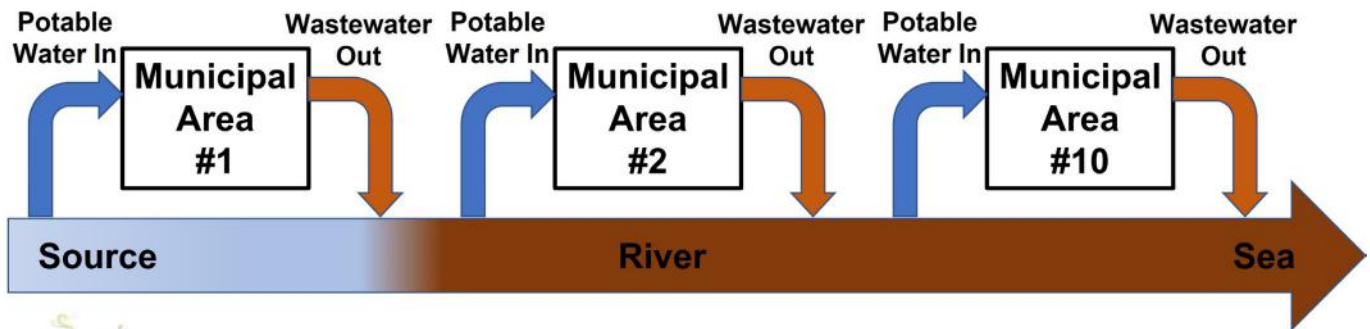
After Senzo Mchunu became Minister of Water, he promised to reinstate the same reporting system, and information now emerging paints a bleak picture of a water sector in deep crisis. That slow-onset disaster has many dimensions to it, so today we are going to focus only on the wastewater aspect, to empower readers to make their own decisions.

When Minister Mchunu reinstated the Green Drop Report, we learned that we have 824 municipal wastewater treatment works, located in 850 municipalities, almost 40% of which are dysfunctional. This is relevant in the context of the alarming fact that a quarter of all municipalities are now ranked as being at 'critical risk' from a financial viability perspective. All are generally facing a leadership crisis, often with unstable coalition government in the larger metros. All provinces are affected, but the most critical are the Northern and Eastern Cape, Free State, Limpopo, Northwest and Mpumalanga. This is a provincial aggregate, which hides the fact that even in the provinces not mentioned, there are dysfunctional municipalities.



There is a high correlation between municipal distress and wastewater treatment, to the point where we can safely say that as a rule of thumb, an indicator of municipal health is the quality of its wastewater treatment. No distressed municipalities have functional wastewater treatment plants, and many functional municipalities still have distressed wastewater treatment plants.

Most Live Downstream of Someone Else's Waste Discharge



A River is a Linear System that Accumulates Waste Along its Length

To understand what this means, we need to think of a river as a linear system that accumulates waste along its length. Given our unique geography, most of our population lives in the hinterland of the country, mostly on a high plateau consisting of grassland. This population dispersal pattern is an artefact of history, mostly driven by mining on the Highveld and in the Free State Goldfields. This means that large cities have grown close to the points of origin of all our major rivers. The Witwatersrand, along which the greatest population density exists, is a massive urban conurbation ranging from Randfontein on the West Rand to Secunda on the East Rand. These are mining areas where huge mountains of waste have been disposed of, all of which leach toxic metals into the very headwaters of our big rivers – the Limpopo and Orange.

All rivers are consequently contaminated at the source, typically by mining waste, which includes uranium, arsenic, cadmium and other metals. However, those same rivers are the source of drinking water for the entire population, while at the same time becoming the receiving bodies for wastewater discharged from sewage works. Hardly a news cycle goes by in which we don't hear of raw sewage flowing into the nearest river. I am on record as saying that our sewage crisis is probably the root of an inevitable health catastrophe, because it's common knowledge that waste carries with it a range of substances that are harmful to humans.

If we accept that all our drinking water is sourced from the nearest river, and once we understand that the municipality responsible for the safe treatment of sewage before disposal into the same river is in distress, we start to gain some perspective of the problem. Stated simply, a distressed

municipality is unable to manage its wastewater properly, and we consequently have a growing flow of sewage contamination in our rivers. Let us give this some numbers to grasp the size of the problem. Our current population is around 60 million people, each of whom consumes about 200 litres of water per day. That equates to 12 billion litres of water daily that must be pumped from rivers, processed, reticulated and made available to each member of society. Of this, about half returns as waste to the sewage works. This gives us around 6 billion litres of waste per day, being treated by the 824 sewage works known to exist in



the 850 municipalities. This consumes about a quarter of all electricity supplied to municipalities, with around 5% going just to the treatment of waste. These numbers are staggering, but they exclude the thousands of package plants located in residential estates, dotted around the country, often along waterfronts or rivers.

Delving deeper, we discover that wastewater contains a wide range of potentially harmful substances. We can divide these into chemical and biological. The chemically harmful elements include metals, some of which are a natural byproduct of corrosion in the municipal and domestic plumbing systems that use lead, copper and zinc. A distinct subset of these chemical hazards is related to the medications we use daily. All medicine is passed through the body and excreted as waste, often in a partially metabolised format.

Sewage return flow therefore contains elevated levels of the types of drugs we use in society, including estrogen, antiretrovirals, antibiotics and mood-changing substances like antidepressants and recreational narcotics. A second subset of hazards relates to biological organisms, many of which are pathogens such as cholera, typhoid, legionella, hepatitis-A and a range of viruses.

In wastewater works these two streams of waste come together. Biological organisms thrive in organic waste, but they are allowed to multiply in the presence of low doses of the very chemicals we use in medicines to destroy them as harmful pathogens. This runs the growing risk of breeding multi-drug-resistant organisms.

If we accept that our 824 municipal wastewater works, and many thousands of smaller package plants found in residential estates, collectively discharge into the same rivers and dams from which our 1,085 bulk water treatment plant produces potable water, we start to understand the nature of the problem we are confronted with. None of those potable water plants was ever designed to produce safe drinking water from sewage-contaminated raw water. This is the core challenge we face as a society today.

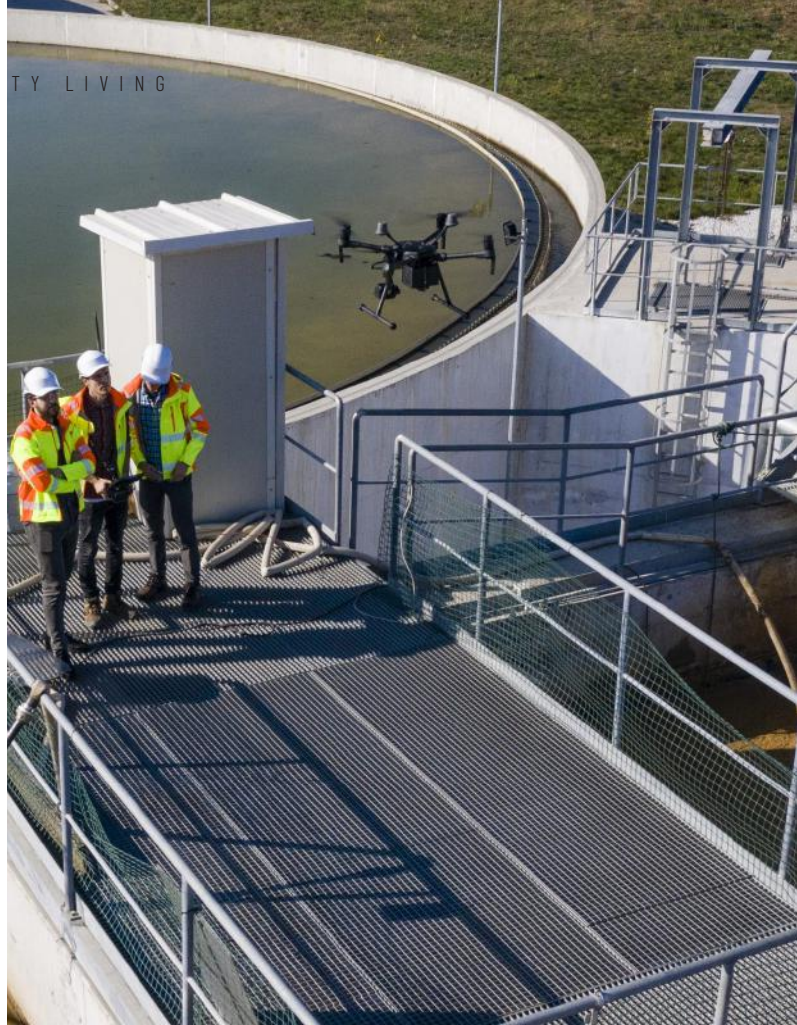
Our wastewater systems are all in crisis. Some of those are under the control of residential estates, so let us dwell for a moment on this specific aspect. Wastewater discharge standards for package plants are more lenient than those for municipal plants, based on the assumption that their volumes are lower, so the dilution factor plays in their favour. This is no longer the case, however, because we lost our dilution capacity when municipal wastewater plants became dysfunctional. Of the 6 billion litres of waste produced daily across the country, about 5 billion litres are



outside the safety parameters for discharge into the environment. This means that our lakes and dams are now sources of nutrients upon which blue-green algae thrive. This needs a special article dedicated just to the implications of cyanobacteria, so all we can say in the space available is that we collectively need to become increasingly aware of the implications of our distressed wastewater management systems.

In closing, it is safe to predict that municipalities are unlikely to self-correct any time in the foreseeable future. This means that every citizen will need to understand the implications of our failing sewage infrastructure, and, where possible, start to internalise the solution. By this I mean that people living in residential estates are collectively capable of mandating their managing agents and bodies corporate for taking on the role of failing municipal service providers. This means that a savvy residential association will increasingly demand answers from their elected leadership.

 Dr Anthony Turton





art

Four things to consider before investing in art for your estate

Buying valuable artworks is one of the oldest ways of investing but the practice has usually been reserved for astute art collectors who are able to distinguish a good investment piece from a bad one.

Recently though, and perhaps thanks to the rise of NFTs (investments in virtual art pieces), businesses have started to look at how they can ensure that the art pieces hanging on their walls are attractive to their bank balance and not just the eye.

Mia Louw is the Gallery and Special Projects Liaison for the 10th anniversary edition of Investec Cape Town Art Fair, which took place in February 2023 at Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC). As Kingswood Golf Estate is busy with its Community Centre/ Clubhouse

project, we leaned on her expertise for four top tips on how to invest in art on your estate.

Know your space

Before embarking on a spending spree, you need to know where you would like to place the artwork as this will guide you in terms of size and medium. Most artwork should be placed in an area without direct sunlight and moisture.

'A clever way of leveraging your investment is to mix textures in a room – for example, hanging a framed photograph behind glass in front of a bold ceramic sculpture – but this won't work well if the area has high foot traffic, such as a clubhouse for example, as the sculpture risks being damaged,' says Louw.



Choose artists your residents will like

Investing in art starts with a good browse, says Louw. Follow galleries and artists on Instagram, visit your local gallery to see what is available, or surf the net for art dealers who can sell and source an international mix of works.

'Art from local South African artists can have just as much investment potential as that from international artists. Consider things like whether the artist has exhibited work before, if they have participated in shows at museums, galleries or pop-up spaces, and if they have developed their practice through formal education or attended artist residencies,' she adds.

Don't listen to your heart

Investing in art for your home is very personal and is all about love at first sight and buying what appeals to your heart in terms of the colour, texture, medium and the title or story behind the artwork.

Choosing art for your business is less personal. After all, it has to appeal to most residents, reflect the lifestyle on offer at the estate, and suit the estate's brand identity.

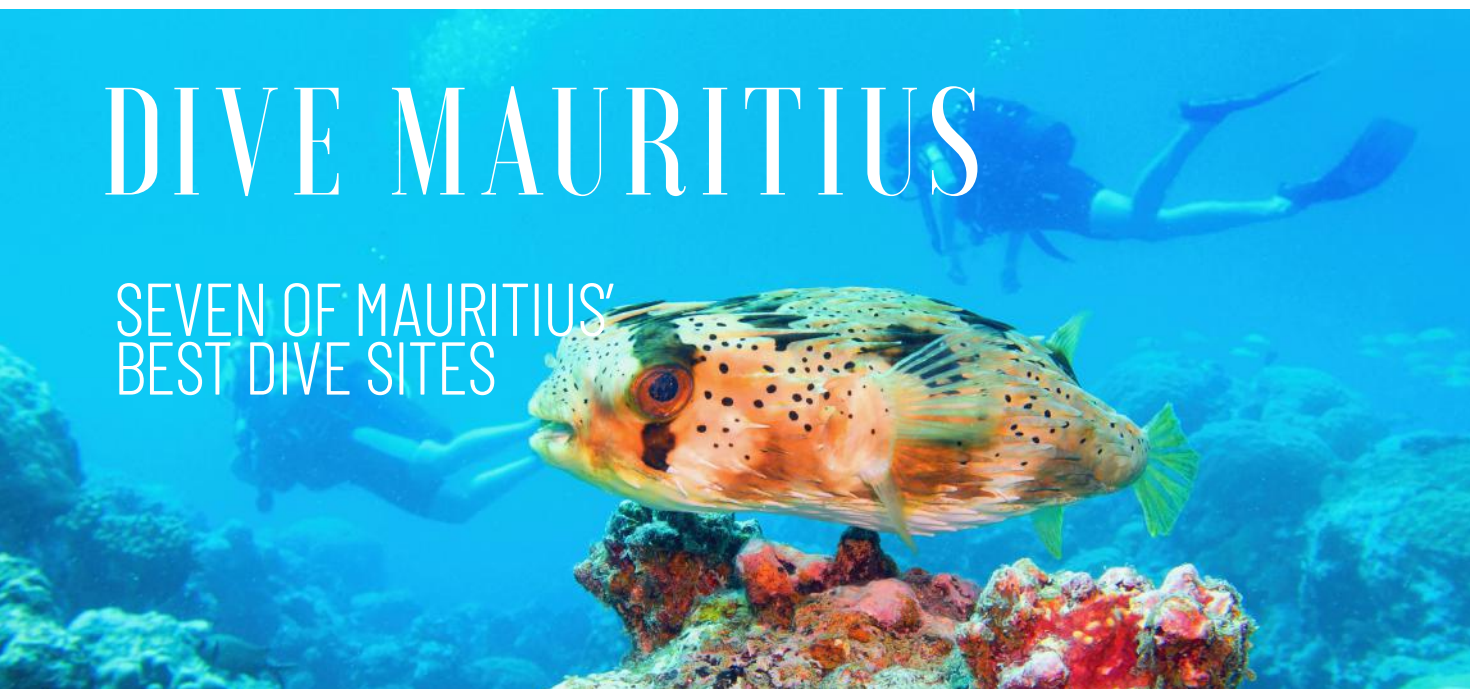
'Whatever you want people to feel like when they're in the estate should ideally be reflected in the art. If your estate offers a laid-back country lifestyle, then modern abstract pieces are probably not the way to go,' says Louw.

Work out the costs

Investing in art is not a cheap exercise. As Louw explains, maintenance and installation costs will largely depend on the artwork. 'If it's frameable or otherwise easy to hang, installation is usually straightforward, but things like tapestries or sculptural works need a professional installer, and paintings on canvas or other delicate works will need a minor touch up over time,' she adds.

DIVE MAURITIUS

SEVEN OF MAURITIUS' BEST DIVE SITES



A picture perfect tropical island with crystal-clear turquoise waters lapping golden beaches, Mauritius ticks all the boxes for a beach and water-sports holiday. The snorkelling is fantastic, but to really appreciate life beneath the shimmering ocean surface, you need to scuba dive

Something for everyone

Whether you're a complete novice or a veteran, Mauritius has dive sites to fit your interests and level of experience. The warm, sheltered lagoons within the fringing reefs boast more than 160 species of corals. Sadly, as in other parts of the world, some of shallower reefs have suffered coral bleaching, particularly following the 1998 El Niño warming, and more recently the heat wave of 2016. The reefs are

home to turtles, rays, moray eels and myriad tropical fish – there are more than 4,000 species of fish including some interesting endemics. The excellent visibility and calm waters make for easy, eye-opening diving for beginners, particularly in the natural aquariums off the extensive Grand Baie and Pereybere reefs in the north, Blue Bay in the southeast and Flic en Flac on the west coast. Add well-equipped dive schools and highly professional dive instructors, and it's no surprise that Mauritius is a popular place to learn to dive.

There are plenty of deep dives, fast drift dives, wrecks and shark encounters to challenge and amuse intrepid and experienced divers too, particularly in the north of the island, and in the passes in the barrier reef. With so many sites, it's hard to recommend the best ones. But these are some of my favourites.

Aquarium (maximum depth 18 metres)

The calm conditions of the west coast, good visibility and proximity to the edge of the reef make Flic en Flac a good base for scuba diving. Many of Mauritius' best dive sites lie in the dramatic canyons here, and the natural fish tank of Aquarium is ideal for beginners and photographers. In addition to the usual array of fire corals and cute reef fish, you'll often see kingfish hunting, moray eels poking out from



their rocky lairs and, at the start of summer, eagle rays. More advanced divers can combine Aquarium with nearby **Big Rock** (maximum depth 30 metres), another top spot for sighting eagle rays.

Cathedral (maximum depth 30 metres)

If dramatic topography is your thing then head to Cathedral, a spectacular underwater cavern on the west coast. After descending a steep wall, you swim through a small opening into a large chamber that is flooded with light. The big walls and wonderful streaming blue light instil a sense of reverence, hence the site's name. The fish life is also amazing. Large lobsters lurk in dark holes, and you'll often be surrounded by big shoals of fish as you emerge from the chimney that takes you back to the top of the drop-off.

Tug II (maximum depth 20 metres)

Sunk in 1981 to help create an artificial reef, *Tug II* is a small, isolated wreck, so fish tend to congregate there, particularly in the summer spawning season. The really high concentration of fish – including boxfish, lionfish and snappers – and the numerous colourful nudibranchs in such a small area make this a great site for photographers.

Snake Reef (maximum depth 25 metres)

Named for the snake-like trail of rocks in the sand, this lovely site has several cleaning stations staffed by busy cleaner shrimps and wrasses. There are plenty of moray eels popping out for a quick valet, and lots of lionfish swimming all around. Grumpy-looking scorpionfish are in abundance, with the big drawcard being that the reef is home to two species of *Rhinopias* (weedy scorpionfish) – *Rhinopias eschmeyeri* and *R. frondosa*. You'll need a good dive guide



to spot them, mind you: they look like pieces of seaweed, but their eyes give away their true identity.

La Passe du Puits Belle Mare (maximum depth 18 metres)

The gem of the east coast is La Passe du Puits Belle Mare – a channel through the reef with magnificent sea fans adorning its walls. Drift dives are the norm, and when the current is pumping, advanced divers can experience an exciting, high-speed traverse. Eagle rays, sharks and dolphins are often spotted, and huge shoals of tuna, barracuda and kingfish can be seen cruising through the break in the reef.

Jabeda Wreck (maximum depth 29 metres)

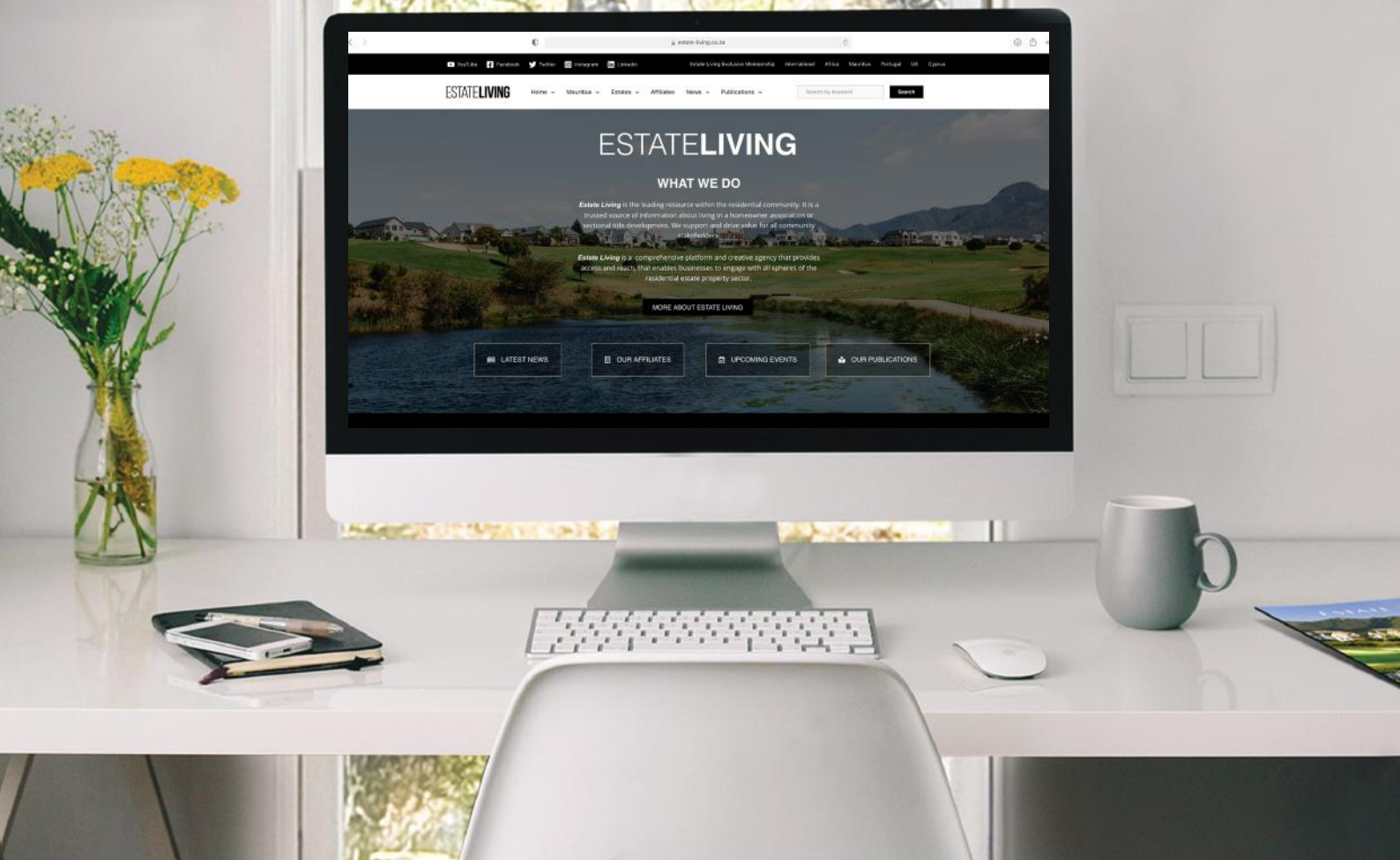
Experienced divers should head for the sites of Coin de Mire, the distinctive, wedge-shaped island to the north, and surrounding islands, where the strong drift often allows the exploration of several sites on one dive. The wreck of the *Jabeda* sits 29 metres below the surface in clear, sheltered waters where rays lie camouflaged in the sand. Whitetip reef sharks lurk in the hold, and huge white snapper patrol the depths under the hull. Nearby, shallow coral gardens teeming with tropical fish are a great option for safety stops – and also offer an easy dive for novices. And, on the other side, there's lots of action on the drop-off: shoals of pelagics, including tuna, barracuda and the occasional dolphin, cruise the depths along the steep, black wall.

Shark Pit (maximum depth 10 metres)

Don't be fooled by the fact that this is a shallow dive. Big surge and strong currents make for really tough diving at this sanctuary between Île Ronde and Île aux Serpents in the very north, but if you're experienced and after shark sightings, this is the place to head. Blacktip, whitetip and grey reef sharks are almost always seen circling in the vast natural pit, and more occasional sightings include silvertip and bull sharks.

Fiona McIntosh is the author of several books on scuba diving in the Indian Ocean.

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