



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Greater Knysna receives two Blue Flags**

Knysna Executive Mayor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies is thrilled that Greater Knysna's Brenton-on-Sea and Buffels Bay beaches once again can fly their Blue Flags high. Thesen Island Marina was also awarded a Blue Flag Marina for the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

Jubilation ran high when the announcement was made during the WESSA (Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa) national Blue Flag launch event held at Marina Beach on the Kwa-Zulu Natal South Coast on Friday, October 7.

Earlier in the year applications for this prestigious blue Flag eco-label was sent to be reviewed by the rigorous multi-stage approval process involving both national and international assessments. The announcement of the 2016/17 International Blue Flag Jury results revealed that Knysna's two beaches formed part of a total of 45 South African beaches to have been awarded Blue Flag status this year.

The 29 Western Cape beaches that achieved the Blue flag status resulted in this province receiving the most Blue Flags in the country.

The annual Blue Flag Awards celebrates the sustained partnership that WESSA has built with the Knysna Municipality, who has recognized the value of Blue Flag not just to environmental management and education, but also to tourism, economic development and job creation.

"Our commitment to the programme is evident in the fact that this is the third year that these two beaches have received this status. With Knysna's economy being driven mainly by tourism it is of paramount importance to take care of our natural resources that help bring visitors to the area. These two Blue Flag statuses points towards our commitment to protecting our natural resources," said the Executive Mayor.

Since its launch in 1987 in France, the blue Flag programme has continued to grow, not only with regard to the number of member countries and sites involved, but also in its range of expertise within marine and freshwater environments.

In closing Bouw Spies congratulated local business, Ocean Odyssey for receiving their Sustainable Tourism Boating Operator Blue Flag status for three of their vessels, the Oyster Catcher, Sousa and Dolphin II. "We are extremely proud of your achievement and thank you for all you do for the economy in Knysna."

**ENDS**

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