



MEDIA RELEASE

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EMBARGO: Immediate

Die Gaatjie officially ‘switches on’

The Knysna municipality and the Department of Energy sparked hope and provided dignity to 120 families living in Sedgefield's, Die Gaatjie.

These residents have lived without electricity for many years and joined in the official switch-on with great excitement and enthusiasm.

The Knysna Municipality's Integrated Human Settlements Department applied to the national Department of Energy for electrification of Die Gaatjie. The Department approved the application and agreed to providing electricity to these families at a cost of R900 000.

The Knysna Integrated Human Settlements Department have faced several challenges regarding the formalising of this area that is established on an old dump site. Because of this the area could not be formalised as it failed to meet the requirements of the Environmental Planning Department.

Although the municipality was faced with challenges in Die Gaatjie, this did not stop them from providing basic services such as taps and temporary toilets.

Knysna Executive Mayor Councillor Eleanore Bouw-Spies was thrilled to attend the second switch on since her inauguration and said: "Just two weeks ago I stood in Lapland in Rheenendal and witnessed the joy of residents as they received electricity. Today I am over-the-moon that these 120 dwellings in Die Gaatjie have joined the millions who, at the flip of a switch literally have light.

Use it wisely as the cost of this power is determined by government and does not come cheap. I hope to come back in a few months and see just what positive affect electricity has had on your lives."

Bouw-Spies conclude, "I am pleased with the progress that our Integrated Human Settlement Department has made in providing our people in the Greater Knysna with basic services. I would like to thank the Manager of the Department, Mawethu Penxa and a big thank you to the Department of Energy."

The municipality's Integrated Human Settlements Department is committed to upgrading informal settlements by providing access to basic services such as potable water, sanitation, access to roads electricity and incrementally providing those that qualify with access to top structures. This is done in line with the Provincial Strategic objective 6, an approach that is endorsed by Provincial Minister Bonginkosi Madikizela.

ENDS

Knysna Municipality Communications Department

P O Box 21. Knysna. 6570. Western Cape. South Africa

Tel +27 (0)44 302 6300 (switchboard) or 302 6471 (direct)

Fax +27 (0)86 215 4818 e-mail communications@knysna.gov.za