



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Knysna Municipality to take strong action against those hampering service delivery**

Oupad, Nekkies East, Dam se Bos South, and Concordia West are of the oldest informal settlements in Knysna. Some of its residents have been waiting for over twenty years for a decent home to call their own. This dream has now been brought to a halt due to the actions of a small group of emerging contractors who are aggrieved that they were not successful in their bid to undertake the current development phase in Oupad for the installation of foundations.

The group has informed the on-site contractor, Benver Construction, and the Municipality that they will not allow any development to continue until their grievances are resolved. The Executive Mayor, Cllr Georlene Wolmarans stated: 'This amounts to intimidation and harassment. But more importantly it is playing with people's lives. There are elderly, women and children who are the innocent victims of this illegal action and Council will not stand by and do nothing.'

The Acting Municipal Manager, Mr Grant Easton, confirmed that all work had been stopped. "The Municipality is not unsympathetic to the challenges facing the protesting contractors. In order to try and meet their concerns, as well as promote the economic development of our town, we have engaged regularly with them regarding the drafting of a program of interventions to develop emerging contractors."

"This program includes a multi-year program to build and develop the small contractors; access to the political leadership; regular meetings with all of the Senior Management of the Municipality; training and capacity building initiatives; engagements with procurement and construction experts; and the pre-identification of small and large projects that will be prioritised for the emerging contractors. Of great importance are the discussions between the Municipality and the Construction Industry Development Board. Currently the protesting contractors are not allowed to undertake the work for which they bid. Legally only those contractors with a CIDB level 6 grading may do the work required in Oupad. The disaffected contractors are only CIDB level 1. It would be illegal and ill-considered to award a tender such as the one in Oupad, to non-compliant contractors as ultimately it will be the Oupad community which will suffer."

The Executive Mayor confirmed that legal action is being undertaken. "We are not afraid to take the strongest action possible and our legal advisors are busy working on the matter. We will be seeking an interdict to stop this unlawful and unnecessary action. We will also be pressing charges against the individuals concerned. The DA will not allow the development of our town and the improvement of the lives of our people to be hamstrung by a few persons who clearly do not have the goodwill of the community at heart."

**ENDS**

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