



MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo: Immediate

DATE: 5 September 2017

Municipal Fire Report based on evidence

The Knysna Municipal Manager, Kam Chetty says that the municipality stands by its findings of the origin of the Knysna fires of 7 June 2017 as set out in its Fire Report.

“The Knysna municipal investigation is based on a scientific methodology that included a thorough analysis of aerial and ground evidence and eye witness accounts,” explained Chetty.

He added that their investigation examined burn patterns in the context of changing weather that prevailed during the fire. “Based on the examination of all the evidence it remains our finding that the fire of 7 June 2017 was primarily caused by human activity in the clearing area in Elandskraal.”

Chetty said that it is unfortunate that Dr Klatzow’s report is “one sided” and purports to apportion blame on Knysna municipality. “In coming to our conclusion our investigation covered a number of probabilities, including the possibility of lightning strikes. Further it is of great concern that Dr Katzow is blaming the Knysna Municipality for the fire.”

He said that the municipal report is not to refute smoulder or apportion blame, but rather to find the origin based on evidence found on the ground.

During presenting the Afriforum Fire Report, Dr Klatzow said that the Knysna Municipality should not have been involved in its own report. Chetty explains that legislation makes provision for this. “Knysna Municipality By-law Relating to Community Fire Safety Chapter 2 reads as follows: ‘Administrative Provisions, (6) Authority to investigate: Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any other law, a controlling authority has the authority to investigate the cause, origin and circumstances of any fire or other threatening danger’.”

The Municipality is now compiling a manual on how to deal with fires of this magnitude in the future. “In addition we will be sharing our experience with the fire management community within the District,” concluded the Municipal Manager.

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