



MEDIA RELEASE

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EMBARGO: Immediate

'Knysna leads from the front' with *KnysnaON* high-speed broadband

KNYSNA – KNYSNA'S fibre-optic project, aimed at kick-starting a new economic boom for the town, was launched this past week during a gala event at the Conrad Pezula Hotel and Resort.

The project, *KnysnaON*, will bring high-speed fibre-optic broadband to Knysna over the next five years and along with it, the potential to attract information and communications technology (ICT) businesses to the area.

During her speech at the launch, Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans said: "Tonight, we're launching Knysna's fibre-optic project, which is designed to enable the development of our people and our economy by creating the technological highway we need to put us in the forefront of the digital revolution.

"This project will do something more for the people of Knysna than just provide faster-than-ever access to the web: it will allow us to achieve our wildest dreams."

These sentiments were echoed by both the keynote speakers – Zeth Malale, vice-charmain of Sec-Itech and non-executive director at Paracon Holdings and Arthur Goldstuck, managing director of World Wide Worx and editor of *Gadget*.

Mr Malele, a firm believer in the power of ICT as an agent of growth, said: "This is about building potential for this small town to unleash itself. ICT is an enabler.

"Congratulations to Knysna for leading from the front. It will bring the rest of the world to you in terms of economic development.

"[*KnysnaON*] is an innovative, visionary project."

Mr Goldstuck focused his comments along similar lines and on breaking down the barriers of expensive data. He made the point that the current cost model of mobile data, which has the biggest impact on the poorest of the poor, needs to change and said: "This can only be done through initiatives like [*KnysnaON*]."

KnysnaON will be rolled out in five phases. In the first year the fibre link to Cape Town will be built with connections to Knysna CBD, the Knysna Industrial Area and Thesen Island.

In the second and third years the bulk of Knysna's neighbourhoods will come on line. During the fourth year the high-speed microwave link to Sedgefield will be installed with more microwave links taking the outlying areas online during the final year.

"*KnysnaON* will ensure training and advancement opportunities for locals, and will make Knysna extremely attractive as a place where talented individuals can make a good living," said Mayor Wolmarans.

"At the same time, *KnysnaON* will open a wide range of opportunities for education and for bringing affordable, even free internet, to disadvantaged areas."

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