



MEDIA RELEASE

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KNYSNA MUNICIPALITY AND WESGRO FORMALISE TOURISM SLA

The service level agreement (SLA) between the Knysna Municipality & Wesgro was signed earlier today by Acting Knysna Municipal Manager Mr Johnny Douglas and Tim Harris, CEO of Wesgro.

Western Cape Minister of Economic Opportunities, Alan Winde, attended the event and said that tourism is an integral part of the Knysna economy, responsible for the creation of thousands of jobs in the area. “We believe the signing of this agreement today is an important step in ensuring that the sector continues to grow and thrive. Wesgro has been our partner in promoting the Western Cape Government for a number of years and has the knowledge and expertise required to benefit the destination. We are especially pleased that Wesgro has committed to partnering with the local tourism industry in order to best represent and market the region.”

Wesgro will be responsible for the delivery of tourism promotion services only on behalf of Knysna Municipality, and will work closely with the Local Economic Development (LED) department of Knysna Municipality to ensure better collaboration between tourism development and promotion.

Wesgro CEO, Tim Harris, said several months ago, on the request of Knysna Municipality and the Western Cape Government’s Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Wesgro was asked to investigate whether they could initiate a pilot project to provide local tourism promotion services for Knysna. “We are excited today to finally sign the Service Level Agreement with Knysna Municipality and commence destination marketing activities in partnership with the tourism industry in Knysna. We believe the combination of support from the municipality, the strength of the local tourism industry, and the destination marketing experience of Wesgro will make this new arrangement a success for Knysna and the greater Knysna area.”

Acting Municipal Manager Johnny Douglas said the agreement states that Wesgro must hold quarterly stakeholder engagement sessions with local tourism stakeholders. “A steering committee will be formed that will consist of representatives of key organisations from the tourism industry within the Greater Knysna area. The committee’s role will be to provide advice and guidance into the development of the brand and marketing strategy. Wesgro have to submit key documents for approval within the next three months including a brand and marketing strategy for domestic and international tourists, a social media and digital marketing strategy, a creative platform, marketing implementation plan, brand manual, event marketing and tourism trade strategy.”

He also said that they will look towards Wesgro to provide joint working relationships and marketing opportunities with Cape Town Air Access, South African Tourism, the private sector and association bodies such as SATSA and FEDHASA. “We have already seen benefits from this type of collaboration when SATSA and Wesgro recently jointly hosted a familiarisation trip for 45 buyers from across Africa for the first Garden Route Mega Fam. It was a great opportunity for

local tourism products to meet with local buyers of tourism product and experiences, and we believe similar initiatives will follow.”

He said in the 2017/2018 year Wesgro’s Destination Marketing Organization supported a total of 32 tourism initiatives, with an estimated economic value of R454 million. “Their Cape Town Air Access team has added 13 new routes and facilitated 14 route expansions to date, making it easier for more people to visit the Western Cape by air. Cape Town is one of the most popular gateways to the Garden Route and I have no doubt that our agreement with Wesgro will result in meaningful contribution to the local tourism industry, and our economy.”

Knysna Executive Mayor Mark Willemse said that Knysna is showing definite signs of rejuvenation after the devastating fires. “The signing of this SLA with an entity with the reputation of Wesgro will only further enhance the rebuild initiatives that our beautiful town deserves. Change is a constant, we all have to adapt to this flux and it is none more relevant than the current situation in Knysna. I welcome this partnership and I am sure it will not be long before we start reaping the benefits of this association.”

Caption:

Wesgro CEO Time Harris and Acting Municipal Manager Johnny Douglas signing the agreement while Western Cape Minister for Economic Opportunities Alan Winde and Knysna Mayor Mark Willemse keeps a watchful eye.

ENDS

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