



MEDIA RELEASE

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Property rates holiday for fire victims

The devastating fires that destroyed billions of rands of built environment in Knysna, has had a traumatic input on the people's lives and the economy in Knysna. To assist the, 564 households that were completely destroyed by the recent fires, the Knysna Council approved the waiving of property rates for one year for these fire victims during a Special Council meeting on 24 August.

This contribution by the Knysna Council is valued at R16.5 million. In addition, the municipality to date has spent over approximately R7.5 million to restore electricity and water services, provide waivers to demolition and planning applications and support numerous relief efforts.

Knysna executive mayor, Eleanore Bouw-Spies explained: "The waiving of these rates affords affected residents respite from paying property rates for the 2017/18 financial year.

These properties will be re-categorised in terms of Section 78 of the Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2006.

Municipal manager Kam Chetty was delegated by Council to investigate the legal possibility to provide partial relief to property rates. This section allows the municipality to adjust the valuation roll when necessary, for residents, who can prove that their house was partially damaged by the fires, and no longer habitable, will receive partial exemption of their property rates.

Some Greater Knysna residents raised concerns about the recent property rates increases. Property owners were given an opportunity to comment on the recent property valuation, which was advertised in the local newspaper on 9 and 16 February. The deadline for comments was 7 April. Property rates increase in proportion with the increase in property values, which is why properties in different areas will have different rates increases. The Finance Directorate will be hosting meetings with Greater Knysna's ratepayer's associations to explain the rates increase.

ENDS

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