

Municipality asks residents' help in keeping Knysna clean.

The Greater Knysna municipal area is world renowned for its breath-taking natural beauty. Knysna Municipality has reconfirmed its commitment to preserving this beauty with the adoption of its widespread Clean-up Campaign.

“Yes, we all enjoy living in this paradise,” said Municipal Manager Dr Sitembele Vatala. “But we have to realise that, more than a pretty backdrop to our daily lives, this beauty is a very important natural asset. Our surroundings – and the various activities this facilitates - draw visitors to Knysna, supporting the backbone of our local economy: tourism. And, when it comes to promoting business within Knysna and Sedgefield, we have to make sure that our towns fit in with the enveloping beauty. We have to keep it clean.”

In terms of Schedule 5B of the Constitution of South Africa (1996), waste management is a local government competency that must be executed to protect human and environmental health. “One of the most powerful visual benchmarks by which a municipality can be judged in this regard is the cleanliness of its town and surrounding areas,” said Vatala. “Unfortunately, the vision of a clean town is not achievable without the support of its residents. This administration needs your help and will be looking to forge strategic partnerships with local businesses and civil society organisations to work with us in this regard.”

Dedicated street cleaning is currently undertaken in the central business district, with participants of the Community Work Programme tasked with cleaning the various wards. The clean-up campaign is designed to engage residents and to make them aware of their roles and responsibilities in creating and maintaining a clean environment.

“One of the biggest and fastest growing issues is illegal dumping,” Vatala continued. “This should not take place in the first place but, if you should come across an illegal dumping site, please report it to us. Another way in which the public can help us in keeping our area clean, is to simply not litter. It is such a seemingly small, insignificant thing, but day-to-day littering has a huge impact on the cleanliness of our town, our estuary, our rivers – our entire surroundings.”

Activities undertaken as part of the campaign include the continuous removal of litter from public areas, the clearing of illegal dumping sites, promoting recycling and the planting of trees. “Waste management educational- and awareness programmes aim to motivate communities to voluntarily participate in cleaning,” Vatala explained. “Still, one cannot get away from the fact that the problem will subside significantly if we all just stop littering.”

“I am asking all residents of Greater Knysna to take our hands and to work with us to clean our beautiful area, and to keep it that way,” Vatala concluded. “We are all extremely privileged to live in such stunning surroundings. And we all have a responsibility to maintain its wellbeing.”

ENDS
