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Municipal museums may benefit from provincial affiliation

Knysna's Acting Municipal Manager Dr Louis Scheepers will present a proposal to the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS) for the affiliation of municipal museums with the department. Provincialisation may allow municipal museums access to skilled professionals and funding.

"The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that museum function is an exclusive legislative competence and functional area of the provincial sphere of government," Dr Scheepers explained. "In its current state, this service is part of the municipal establishment. This means that no assumption regarding provincial government's responsibility to the service may be made. Should our application be successful, our museums will be able to benefit from their affiliation with DCAS."

There is no professional curator in the current approved municipal staff complement. The Provincial Museum Service employs a number of professional staff members, with diverse skills, who are deployed to assist affiliated museums with various aspects related to the successful running of a museum. Once affiliated, Knysna's municipal museums will also qualify to apply for grant funding from the Provincial Museum Service.

"As the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 says, every generation has a moral responsibility to preserve its heritage resources for the benefit of future generations," he concluded. "Affiliating our museums with DCAS and the associated support from the Provincial Museum Service will allow us to protect and preserve our history, to teach our children where they come from, and to share our unique heritage with our visitors."

ENDS

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