

# KINGSWOOD BUZZARD

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



ISSUE#4 FEB/MAR 2021



Photographic prints of Africa



Superb archival fine art paper



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Thank You to Roger and Pat de la Harpe for sharing their beautiful images of Kingswood Estate that we have used in this edition



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# From the CEO

As I write my first 2021 CEO report to you, nearly two months of the year have flown by. In the previous newsletter I expressed the hope that, by 2021, we would have returned to a more normal way of life. However, I suppose we will have to be content, for now, with a new normal. I think we are all frequently reminded these days of the fragility and preciousness of life, and I wish for each of you a very successful and prosperous 2021.

The year started without our having had an AGM and the usual estate formalities during 2020. The trustees will now consider dealing with the annual estate formalities differently in an attempt to address these without causing undue risk to you, our members. Once a decision has been made in this regard, we will inform you.





Work on the estate could not take a break and, starting in January, a new budget year with all the planned projects and activities came into full swing. Work on the redecoration of the gatehouse is progressing well, and should be finished by end of March. The refurbishment of the gatehouse interior will now also be addressed, and we are hoping that by May this year the refurbishment will be completed.

The HOA's acquisition of the golf course and related assets demanded that we rejuvenate the ailing asset by way of enhanced horticultural activities and some much-needed acquisition of turf maintenance equipment to replace the extremely aged and ineffective existing equipment. There is more detail about these acquisitions further on in the newsletter. The course is starting to show signs of returning to its former glory and we hope that, within a reasonable amount of time, we can all be extremely proud of this asset.

The Kingswood Ridge development is progressing well and, by the end of 2020, the roads and other related infrastructure had been completed. We are looking forward to

the possible start of some building activity at the Ridge during the course of the year. Discussions between the developer and the George Municipality to build a road linking the Ridge to the R102 (the airport road) are at an advanced stage. This road would be very convenient to residents on the southern side of the estate.

We were also recently informed that the council has approved the sale of Erf 464, George, which is approximately 23 hectares in extent and situated next to the R102 opposite Groeneweide Park and the George Showgrounds. It is envisaged that a new campus for the George Southern Cape College will be erected on this site. The TVET College advised that a budget of R280 million over a 24-month period has been allocated, and will be implemented in their coming budget cycle, which commences in April 2021. This campus will thus be built next to the southernmost boundary of Kingswood next to the Ridge development. This is good news for Kingswood!

I hope you enjoy this issue of the *Kingswood BUZZard*. Stay safe and stay healthy.

Kingswood greetings,

Willem Jacobs



# TRUSTEE



And just like that we are almost in the second quarter of 2021. Does anyone know what level of lockdown we are in? I feel as if I don't even care any more. One year ago, when all of this started, we talked about this being our new normal. I read the gazetted regulations front to back every time a new level was announced. I made plans on how to keep the kids busy during lockdown, how to exercise, how to stay sane ... we talked and thought about our new normal constantly. It was the topic of every conversation.

And now ...? While we TALKED about this being our normal last year, now we LIVE it. Every day. Without thinking about it, much less talking about it any more. We still avoid large groups and unnecessary meetings, but it is instinctive now. It is not a lengthy debate or discussion any more. That is the magic of time, isn't it? It only took one year for everyone in the whole world to change their behaviour. It only took one year for workforces, globally, to change how they fundamentally operate. One year. So what does this mean for us in Kingswood Golf Estate and the southern Cape in general?





People realised, more than ever before, that they could work from anywhere. It doesn't matter where their clients are. We have Zoom, email, telephones and flights. To be fair, this is not a new notion for the southern Cape. This trend has been going on for quite some time here; however, it has definitely accelerated to a whole new level during the past year. Because not only did people realise that they could work from anywhere, they also realised that they could have a view while doing it. And while this is amazing for Kingswood and the property market, there is no denying that our economy as a whole has suffered immensely this past year.

I am here to welcome you to the latest edition of *The BUZZard*, dear reader, and not to bore (or anger) you with the state of our economy. But I do want to take the opportunity to remind you, because we just LIVE our new normal these days, we don't talk about it any more. So please remember to look out for small business owners. Support local. Support handmade. Support your (Kingswood) neighbour/community. Support our farmers. I have heard people referring to George as a city with a platteland mentality. This is not a negative thing, because in the platteland we look after our own and we have the resources to do it.

To all the newcomers, we welcome you to our community. We hope that you will prosper and then invest in our community. You are part of the platteland mentality now.

Stay safe and healthy out there

Regards/Groete

Amanda Smit

# Meet the trustees

## Gerrit



Currently in his second term as a Kingswood HOA trustee member, Gerrit Botha cherishes the estate and its serene, picturesque surroundings dearly. 'We won't move again,' he firmly declared on a bright sunny morning over a cup of coffee.

Originally from Gauteng (first Johannesburg and then Pretoria), he and his family came to George in 2008 for a lifestyle change. All three of their children matriculated at Outeniqua High School. He describes them as a very close family, and there's huge excitement with the first grandchild on the way. 'It still feels a bit unreal becoming grandparents, but we cannot wait. Fortunately, we won't have to travel far to go and visit the little one when the time comes as my daughter lives in Oudtshoorn,' he laughed. He hopes that one day all their kids with their families will live in the southern Cape as the other two are currently elsewhere.

The Bothas love outdoor living and are ardent campers, especially during the December holidays. They harbour a deep love for Africa and regularly venture further up north into the continent, with game reserves in Zambia, Botswana and Namibia among their favourite destinations. 'We love nature and therefore living on the Garden Route, with its abundance of natural beauty, fits us like a glove,' he said. He's also a keen gardener and has a special interest in indigenous plants.

Gerrit has an extensive background in financial services, and has, over the last 32 years, held several leadership positions in well-known companies such as Sanlam, Absa and – currently – Momentum. He's therefore confident in his judgement when describing Kingswood as having great investment value.

## Botha







Sonja and Gerrit Botha

'It's perfectly located, with its wide-open spaces and fantastic views over the mountains from virtually everywhere on the estate; it's safe and central, close to the airport, hospitals and shops. Really, what more could one want?' he enthused. Also, as the de facto capital of the Garden Route, George is becoming a very popular destination for semigrants from other parts of the country.

Gerrit is blessed with an energetic and optimistic personality. In 2014 he was promoted to Head of Sales at Momentum, overseeing operations in the Free State, Eastern Cape and Western Cape. It also meant that his work responsibilities moved to Cape Town. Not willing to give up what they have here, he and his wife Sonja, a financial planner who also has an accounting practice in Cape Town, now regularly commute between George and the Mother City.

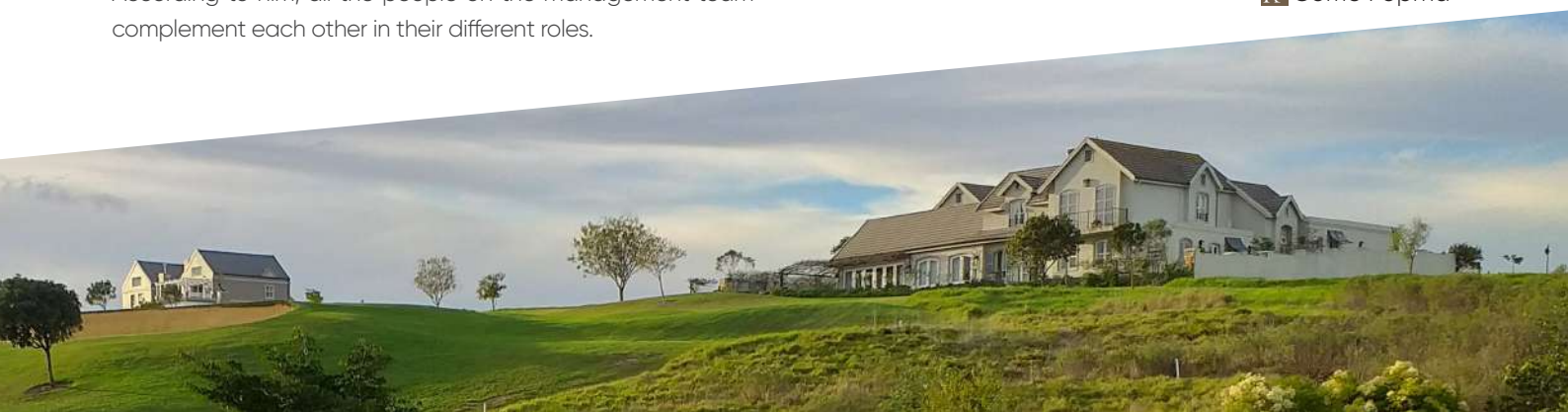
As if all this hustle and bustle is not enough, he wholeheartedly throws himself into the demands and requirements of being a trustee. He has the highest regard for his fellow trustees, knowing full well the many hours that go into their efforts in supporting and realising the long-term vision for Kingswood. According to him, all the people on the management team complement each other in their different roles.

'I think Kingswood is privileged to have the current management under the competent leadership of Willem Jacobs,' he said. 'Willem does amazing work. There is this unconditional commitment to ensuring that the estate's affairs go as smoothly as possible. I have no doubt that Kingswood will soon reach heights that few other estates will equal.'

Describing himself as someone who always sees the glass as half-full rather than half-empty, his philosophy is that nothing is constant, and there will always be changes to embrace. However, one should always approach these changes with positivity to ensure that the end state meets all expectations.

This is also his vision for Kingswood – that home owners will support the HOA in their journey to make Kingswood an even better place to stay, and to approach whatever challenges there may be positively and optimistically. 'We want to encourage home owners to come forward if they have suggestions and inputs that could lead to the advancement of the estate. The HOA, together with management, is very accessible and open, and values such contributions.'

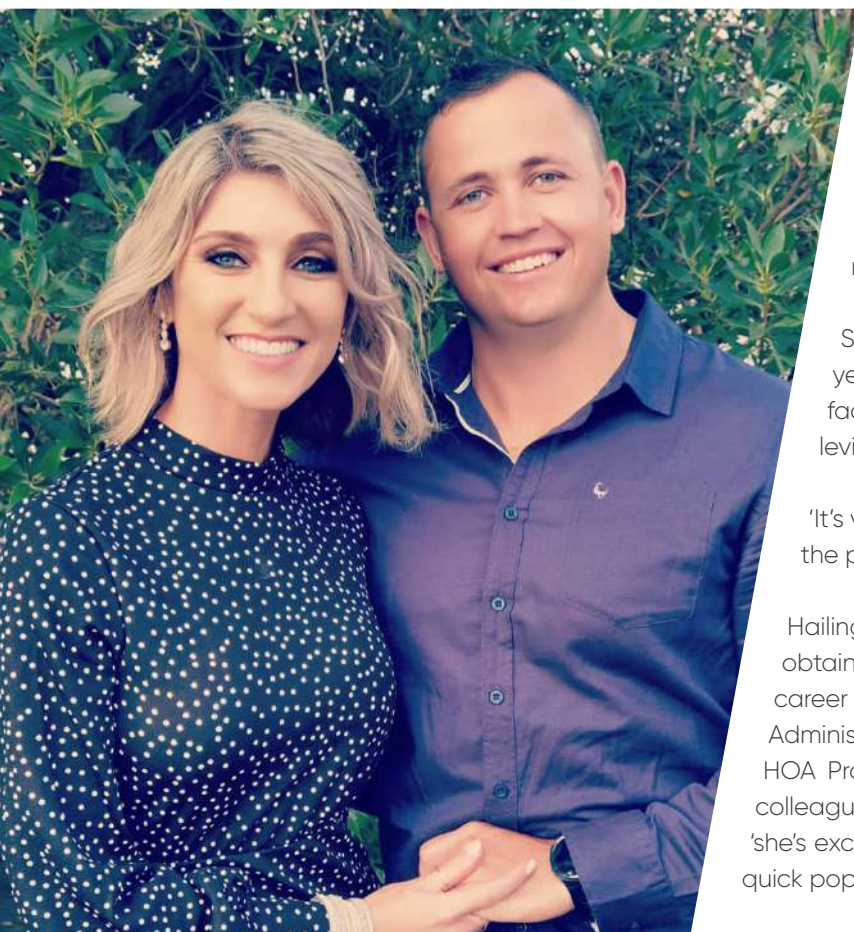
**K** Corrie Fopma





# HOA in ACTION

Lize Baard, the well-loved and extremely experienced bookkeeper of Kingswood, has been part of the team for the past 17 years – almost since Day One. And she regards it as a major privilege to live and work in this sublimely heavenly abode.



## From the wild North West to the Garden Route

'When I arrived here all those years ago, there were, literally, only a container serving as the office, and bushes,' she recalls. 'I was freshly graduated from university and was appointed to deal with the home owner administration – in those years totalling a meagre 30 plots.'

She witnessed the growth and progress through the years up to today, with the estate boasting lovely facilities, landscaping and over 600 home owners paying levies – a number that continues to increase.

'It's very special to be in a position where I could grow with the project,' she says.

Hailing from Klerksdorp in the North West Province, Lize obtained her BCom degree at Tuks, and kicked off her career at Kingswood. Today she heads the Finance and Administration department of Kingswood HOA, and Kingswood HOA Properties. She is held in high regard by trustees and colleagues, as is evident by spontaneous comments such as 'she's excellent!' by Roy Edge, one of the trustees, who made a quick pop-in during the interview.

## The Garden Route is great

Always ready to help with a smile, there is an even brighter twinkling in her eyes nowadays as she's soon about to walk down the aisle with the love of her life, Barend van Heerden. 'He's in the agricultural industry and grew up in Riversdale, but has been living in George for the past few years,' she says, smiling.

The couple plans a small and intimate wedding, with only close friends and family present. Between the demands of their jobs and organising their big day, they enjoy being active through jogging, gymming and hiking in the area. They also love discovering new restaurants and exploring the culinary delights of the Garden Route.

She is particularly fond of the Outeniqua Mountains, which hold a special place in her heart – she refers to them as 'our mountains'.

'It makes me happy to look at the mountain. Its beauty changes every day, and I'm always excited when waking up to see which outfit it's wearing today.'

Herolds Bay and Brenton-on-Sea are two other Garden Route gems that energise her, and – slightly further afield – she loves to visit Struisbaai and Cape Agulhas to take time out and just breathe.

## Wonderful workspace

Lize loves working at Kingswood. She regards the springbok on the estate as a big plus. 'They are such a lovely addition to an already beautiful and scenic setting. It's enchanting looking through my office window and seeing the bakkies nearby. They have a calming presence,' she says.

## Fabulous future foretold

Kingswood HOA experienced a lot of growth over the last two years, with the acquisition of the golf course, the increasing number of new home owners relocating to George, and many new houses being built. The construction of the new phase is in full steam, and should be finished within a year, adding 155 new home owners to the community.

'I think Kingswood is really privileged to have a vibrant market, despite Covid and challenging economic circumstances. The prospective buyers are people who want to come and stay here permanently, and they choose Kingswood as their home.'

Her ambition for the estate is for it to continue growing into the safe, beautiful lifestyle haven that it already is, and to exceed the prevailing high service standards; also, for the community within its boundaries to become a tightknit family caring for one another and reaching out to each other and the wider George community.

'I'm looking forward to the future and all the plans that are in the pipeline to make Kingswood the go-to choice for living, playing and working. When meeting new residents, I always tell them I know they are going to have a wonderful life here. And although I'm not currently living on the estate myself, it would definitely be a dream come true to be able to call it my home one day in the future.'





# KINGSWOOD HOA

It's our course, and we're giving it lots of love

The Kingswood HOA has been in control of the golf course maintenance for about three months now, since finalising the acquisition at the end of October 2020.

## Investment in course maintenance

In the last issue of the *Kingswood BUZZard*, mention was made of the new machinery to be purchased and various projects and challenges facing us on the course and its surrounds. When we took the course over, there was virtually no machinery in a suitable condition to assist in restoring the golf course to its previous standard, at which it was considered an iconic destination for golfers from South Africa and further afield.

We are excited to announce that we have spent approximately R2.8 million on new machinery and equipment over the past three months. For those interested in some details, these are some of the major items acquired:

- Workman HDX-D (spray rig and various attachments to top-dress greens, etc.)
- Toro Greensmaster TriFlex greens mower





- Kubota L5040 four-wheel-drive hydrostatic tractor
- Turfco edge trimmer
- Four John Deere turf gators
- Hyundai bakkie
- Toro 3500 sidewinder

**The advantages of good management**

With the exception of the Toro 3500, all the assets acquired were brand new, so replacements should not be required for a number of years, and maintenance on them should be minimal.

It is indeed pleasing to note we were able to pay cash for all of the above assets out of our reserves prudently provided over the years for major capital and other eventualities. This enabled us to negotiate favourable prices, and also avoid the punitive finance charges usually associated with third-party finance.

Under the guidance of CEO Willem Jacobs, Danie Obermeyer and Ivan van Heerden,

we are actively managing the operations around the course and estate in general. Their expertise, together with the new equipment and its capabilities, have already resulted in a major improvement in the course and manicuring thereof.

**Progress and ongoing maintenance**

Unfortunately, George is experiencing very little rainfall at the moment and, together with exceptionally high temperatures, the course is reflective at present of these weather conditions. This, hopefully, will change for the better soon. Danie believes that, with favourable weather conditions in the next two or three months, we will see the benefits of the ongoing input into the course.

Looking forward, Willem is pursuing a proactive preventative maintenance plan on the course to ensure timeous identification of potential problems. Work has already been done on all the dams to remove much of the excess growth around them, and when water levels are restored, they will once again be a beautiful feature at Kingswood.

It should be remembered that the course condition, including dams and surrounds, is for the benefit of not only golfers but all residents of our beautiful estate. The value of property will naturally also be enhanced as the various projects reach conclusion.

We remain committed to ensure that home owners see the benefits of the additional course levy imposed, and the value added to their lifestyle here at Kingswood.



Thank you to Roy Edge and SAA Captain Wally Waldeck for the fantastic photos

# SECURITY UPDATE

Home owners might have noticed a new Fidelity-branded golf cart and quad bike doing the rounds on the Kingswood premises. These recently acquired additions to the estate's comprehensive security measures are just one way in which the company contributes to residents' peace of mind. According to Wayne Groves, branch manager of the Fidelity Services Group in charge of the estate's security, the golf cart is used for night patrols, and the quad bike during the day. 'Previously, we used quad bikes after hours as well, but the resulting noise level disturbed the peace and quiet. The golf cart works 100% in achieving discreet, high-level security at night,' he said.

In addition to the golf cart, a Fidelity ADT vehicle patrols the estate at night. This armed response is part of the suite of benefits of the new security contract – at no extra cost to home owners. 'The electrical fences with cameras are one of the positive aspects of Kingswood,' Wayne said. 'The cameras are monitored in the security office, so, should there be an incident, the armed response and supervisor can be dispatched to it immediately.'

In January, the whole Fidelity team attended an intensive, three-day on-site training course presented by an estate security expert. This fine-tuning of their skills and knowledge will contribute to more effective responses to security-related incidents.

Wayne chairs a monthly security meeting during which technical issues, such as access control, are discussed. Usual attendees include Kingswood CEO, Willem





New golf cart and quad bike



PTT radios



Warren Frances

Jacobs, Kingswood Community Manager, Dan de Wet, Fidelity's site manager at Kingswood, Warren Frances, and Fidelity's regional executive, Fred Louw.

Lately, the focus has been on a planned project at Entrance Four, the entrance for the new phase that is currently under construction.

'Our technical advisors are in the process of compiling a proposal to present to Willem, who will in turn submit it to the trustees. It is, mostly, about the access control system for the new entrance,' said Wayne.

In terms of Fidelity's new contract with Kingswood, they will also be responsible for law enforcement – mostly regarding traffic offences. 'We especially focus on stop streets and enforcing speed limits,' Wayne said. Residents caught not stopping at a stop street will need to pay a penalty of R500, and speeding will likewise lead to punitive action. This operation is implemented at least twice a month.

As part of the new contractual provisions, the guards are equipped with push-to-talk (PTT) radios that also work as tracking devices. If the guard notices an irregularity on the estate, and pushes the button, their colleagues in the control room can immediately pinpoint where the incident is, and react accordingly.

Furthermore, Fidelity's technical advisors do quarterly security audits. This is a measure to ensure that everything works the way it should and that safety is maintained.

Strangely, the George branch of Fidelity used to be part of the Eastern Cape division, but it will become part of the Western Cape division as of 1 March, and all reporting will be to the regional director of this division.

'Things are going well in terms of Kingswood's security,' Wayne said. 'There have been no serious security breaches in the recent past regarding outside access to the estate.'

He's excited about Kingswood and the way forward.

'There is so much new technology surfacing these days to make people safe. We want to stay up to date with all of it, ensuring excellent security solutions.'

 Corrie Fopma

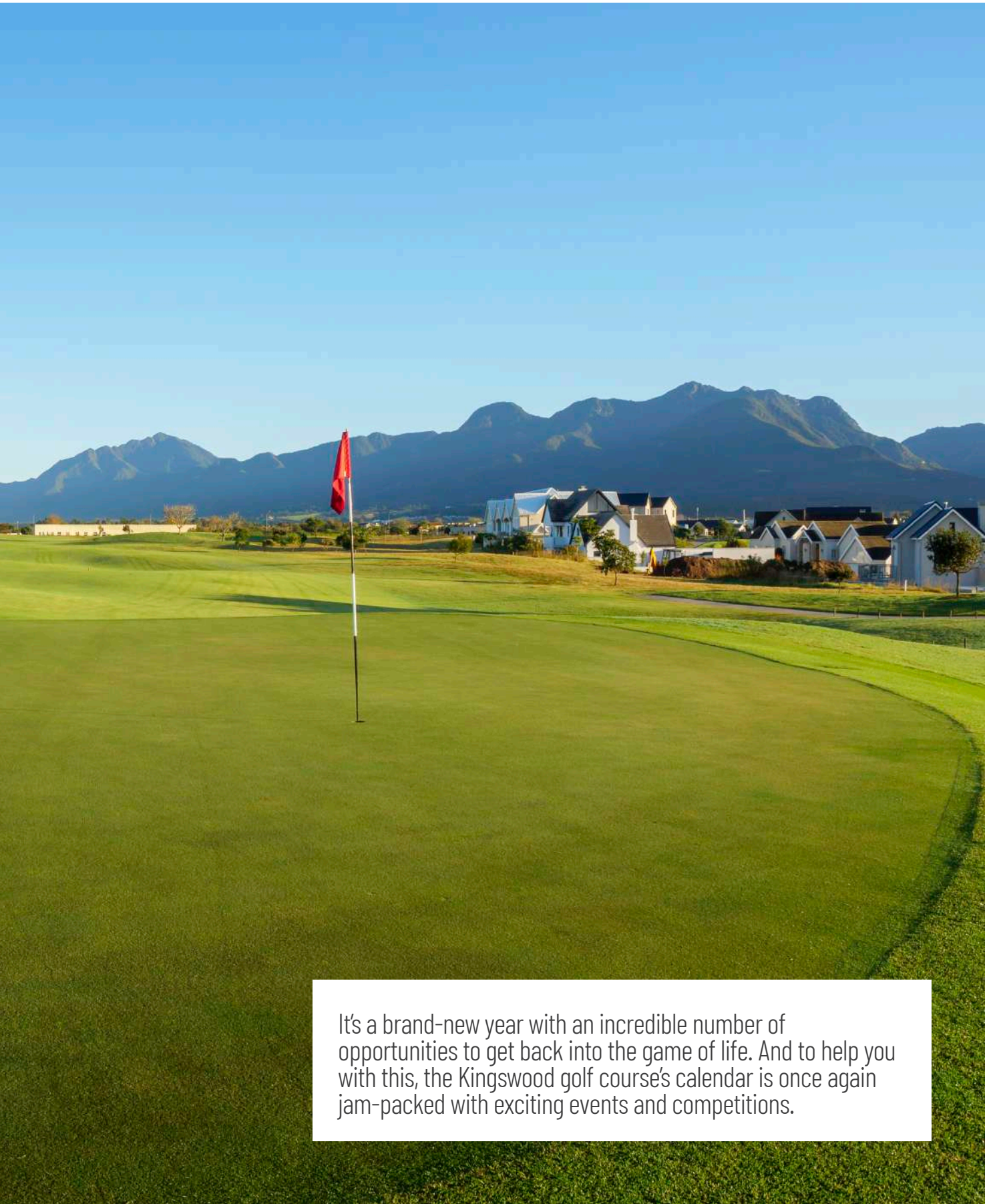




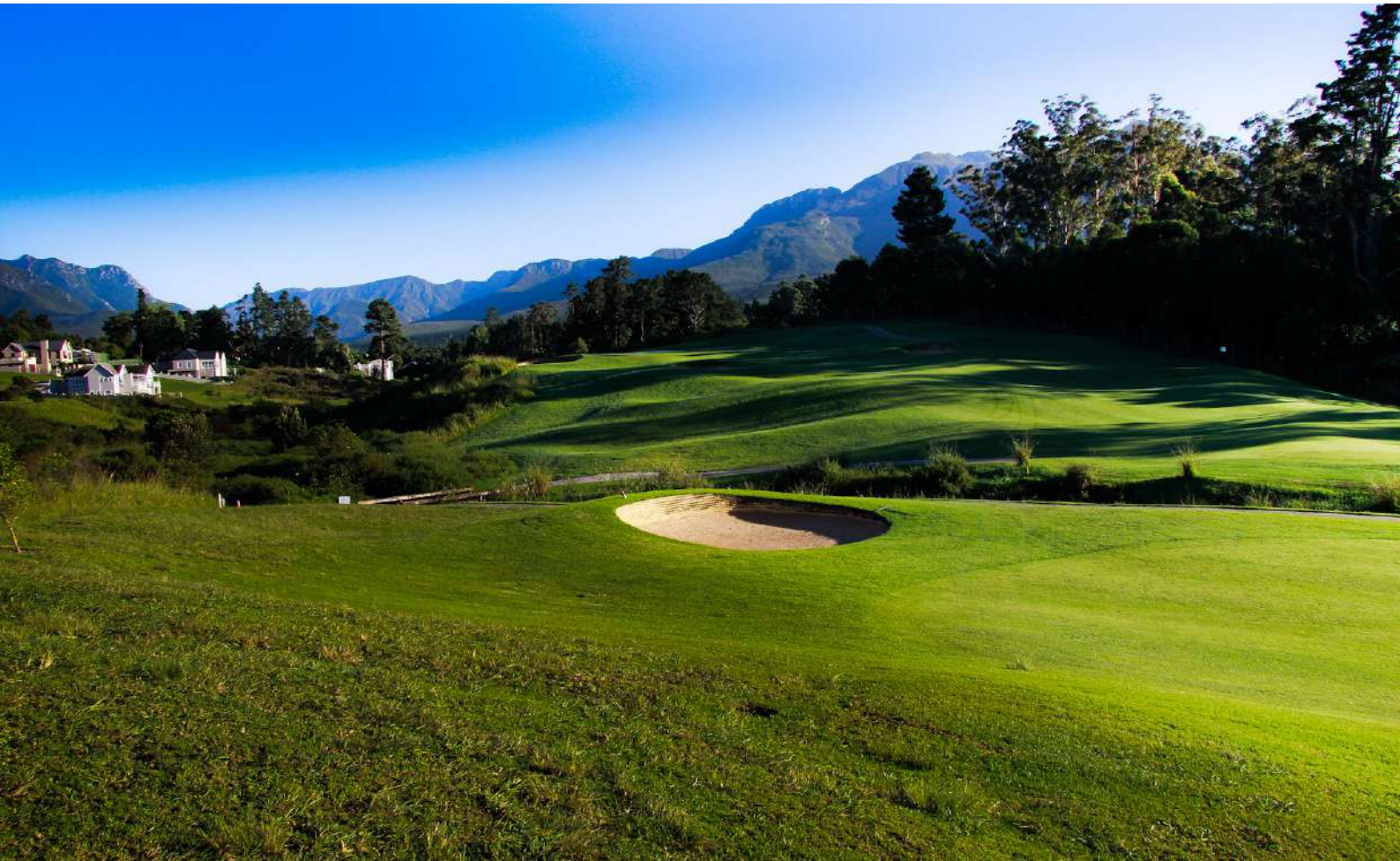
# GOLF@ KINGSWOOD

What's happening on the golf course





It's a brand-new year with an incredible number of opportunities to get back into the game of life. And to help you with this, the Kingswood golf course's calendar is once again jam-packed with exciting events and competitions.



Miemie Cronje

### Girl power!

The estate's 2021 golf year kicked off on a high note with the very popular Betterball Knockout competition, in which some lady members caused a stir by playing their way into the final. The all-woman team of home owners Elizma Joubert and Emce Els beat some of the club's top, low-handicapped members before facing the formidable husband/wife team of fellow home owners Miemie and Coenraad Cronje in the decider on 8 February. The Cronje couple eventually emerged as the victors, with Elizma and Emce in second place.

This competition is for all members, regardless of their proficiency levels. The Betterball format is played by teams of two, both of whom play every hole, with the lowest score (the better ball) of each hole being entered as the team's score. So it's a great leveller, and it's a wonderfully social event.

### Growing the world's next big champions

On 27 and 28 February, Kingswood hosted two one-day tournaments of the US Kids Golf Foundation's Garden Route local tour. This American organisation came into being with the mission of providing children, ages five to 18, with the opportunity to develop and enhance their golf skills in age- and gender-appropriate competition, while having fun and building quality family interaction at the same time. US Kids Golf organises more than 1,800 tournaments around the world, with local tours in over 100 markets. The various tournaments (regional, local and international) are a magnet for the crème de la crème of the golfing world, and culminate in the Kids Golf World Championship – the most significant event for junior golfers on the planet.

### Youngsters hitting the fairways

A local initiative that started last year and proved to be very popular is the Saturday club competition for juniors, taking place every second week. Tee-off takes place after the adult members have called it a day, and then the kids have the run of the course. Parents are banned from these

occasions, so the kids really get into the swing of all things golf-related. According to Liesel Niehaus, general manager of Golf Operations, it's a great opportunity for youngsters to get the know-how of golf and to practise their skills. 'It's a unique initiative, and the kids enjoy it immensely. It's so cute to see them after a game inviting one another for a milkshake or coldrink in the clubhouse, with the losing opponents paying on behalf of the winner,' she laughed.

### Targeting newbies

Kingswood Golf Course has been involved with Target36 Juniors for the past few years and will soon launch Target36 Ladies. This programme is a vehicle to grow golf in South Africa. It is an excellent way for beginners – especially ladies and kids – to get into the game without feeling intimidated, and it can be a great family outing.

It consists of different levels, and participants begin by learning how to pitch, chip and putt from 25m (level 1) from the green. As they improve their abilities, they gradually move on to longer distances from the green, set at 50m, 75m, 100m, 125m and 150m. The goal is to score 36 or less over nine holes from each of these distances. Upon successful completion of all the levels, players will be able to confidently play full rounds of golf as they will have gained experience, skills, and mental and physical strength.

### New membership fees

As of 1 March, the new membership and green fees will be launched. All home owners will receive a 10% discount on their membership rates. In addition, we've launched a great new membership for scholars that offers all-inclusive, unlimited golfing at an annual membership fee of R2,000 for high school juniors, and R1,000 for primary school juniors.

**ALL home owners will receive a 10% discount on their membership rates.**

Visit the clubhouse or website at [kingswood.co.za](http://kingswood.co.za) for more details on rates, bookings, and other info.



Elizma Joubert and Emce Els



Coenraad and Miemie Cronje

# HOT STUFF

## Fire management in George – a mixed bag

Massive wildfires along the Garden Route in recent years have highlighted the varied needs of this area, which has some of the most diverse biomes in the country.



### Varied challenges

There are few municipalities that can deal with the combination of fire and rescue challenges faced in the George municipal area.

From hot and dry conditions in Uniondale and Haarlem north of the Outeniqua Mountains to windy seaside environments in the south, the George Fire and Rescue Services address fire management for semi-desert, mountainous terrain on both sides and over the mountain, as well as large tracts of agricultural land, pine plantations, alien vegetation, coastal fynbos, indigenous forest and winding, inaccessible roads connecting towns and villages over long distances.

In addition, two major national roads and several provincial roads go through the area, which requires fire department response at vehicle accidents and transport-related hazardous material incidents. The city's industrial node has also grown





### Denneoord Fire Base

The establishment of the Garden Route's first dedicated emergency firefighting airstrip on municipal property above Denneoord in December 2017 proved a game-changer during the month-long wildfires around George less than a year later.

This project, which is a collaboration between George Municipality, the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association, Working on Fire, and the Garden Route District Municipality, means that firefighting planes can respond much faster than they would have been able to if they had been stationed at a commercial airport, where they would have had to wait in line for a runway along with other aircraft. This is especially applicable during the summer fire season, which coincides with the very busy holiday season when the commercial airports are particularly busy.

Five aeroplanes and a chopper are stationed there during the fire season, and usually at least one plane and a chopper out of season. Municipalities in the Garden Route district use the facility on a call-out basis as services are required. The airbase consists of a runway, helipad, firebase, hangars, taxiways and a water refilling point.

### First-of-its-kind fire tanker and portable dam

The municipality's capacity to deal with fires in remote and dry areas received a significant boost with the delivery of a large-capacity water tanker and portable dam in September 2019. The tanker is the first of its kind to be used for firefighting in South Africa.

The 35,000-litre stainless steel water tanker is a movable water source that can be driven to a suitable site from where all kinds of fire vehicles can refill. The tanker is fitted with a pump that can extract water from sources such as farm dams and can deliver 2,200 litres per minute at 10 bar. On the road, the 18-metre (13-metre tanker pulled by a five-metre truck), 22-wheeler vehicle is an impressive sight, and requires an advanced EC driver's licence for articulated vehicles, which most of the city's firefighters have.

The 14,000-litre portable dam is one of only three in the country, and the first for a local municipality (the others

significantly over the past decade, which increases factory and hazardous materials fires.

Chief Fire Officer Neels Barnard said the devastating wildfires in the neighbouring town of Knysna in June 2017, which occurred outside the Western Cape's traditional summer fire season, was a huge wake-up call for municipalities everywhere. 'George Municipality council approved a multifaceted approach by the department to acquire key equipment and additional vehicles over a few financial years to systematically address different aspects of fire and rescue management.

'We wanted to be smart, and use resources wisely, so we did the research, consulted with colleagues and role players and came up with practical, sustainable solutions for a variety of fire-fighting situations,' said Mr Barnard.



are at West Coast District Municipality and City of Cape Town). The dam is intended as an artificial water source from which a helicopter bucket can scoop water, or from which fire vehicles can be filled. The dam, in turn, can be filled by the new water tanker or by other fire trucks, depending on where it is set up. Manufactured from high-grade poly-yarn industrial material that can be folded up and transported on an ordinary trailer, the portable dam's equipment includes a portable pump, hard suction pipes, and valves for filling or emptying the dam water. The water pushes the walls up and the dam readjusts as water empties out (it is not an inflatable). Any water that is not used can be pumped from the dam back into the tanker and reused elsewhere.

'The tanker and dam have become part of a streamlined system in which water can be brought much closer to a fire, thereby significantly reducing the turnaround time. Instead of having to drive several kilometres to refill one truck, or wasting valuable fuel and water refilling choppers, the tanker and portable dam are a sustainable combination solution that will make a significant difference in the first hour of a fire. In firefighting, the first hour is crucial in bringing a runaway fire under control, which ultimately increases the chance to save lives and property,' said Mr Barnard.

### Eyes in the sky

Drone technology is being used for multiple applications, most notably for reconnaissance during fires and rescues in areas that are difficult to access because of dense vegetation, mountains, sand dunes and/or seaside cliffs.

The municipality's high-tech drone also enables extensive fire risk assessment across the municipal area, including footage of naturally inaccessible areas, many of which are on private agricultural and residential land. The department can then take steps to address issues highlighted by assessments such as the issuing of notices to landowners, reminding them of their legal





responsibility regarding alien vegetation and fire management.

### **Bush-clearing tractor**

A big part of ongoing fire management is the maintenance of permanent firebreaks, which proved very effective in safeguarding residences at the foot of the mountain in the 2018 George fires. George now has a specialised multi-use 4x4 tractor, designed to access rugged terrain, for the clearing of firebreaks. It is fitted with a specialised blade in front to scrape roads, and a brush cutter at the back for cutting grass and fine brush.

### **Dealing with hazardous materials**

A mobile decontamination unit and two super high-tech hazmat suits were introduced in mid-2020 to support the department's handling of hazardous materials at vehicle accidents and factory fires.

George Fire Department is often the first responder to vehicle accidents in which trucks have spilt dangerous contents. 'The hazmat suits are fire-retardant and have their own air supply to protect the wearers from dangerous fumes and chemicals, which is also very necessary at chemical fires at factories and businesses.

'The decontamination unit is mobile and can be set up at the scene to decontaminate personnel attending to a situation, which increases the safety of everyone at the site and reduces the chances of transference.'

### **Mobile command centre**

The municipality is expecting the imminent delivery of a mobile command unit that will be used to manage administration and support at the scene of a crisis, disaster or rescue situation.

The custom-built minibus will be set up with two computerised workstations, radio frequency transceivers and internet access, an electricity generator and solar panels, and a fixed camera with live footage capability to allow remote monitoring.

### **Wilderness Fire Station**

Construction will commence soon on a satellite fire station in Wilderness, 14 kilometres outside George. 'A satellite station here will ensure quick response to areas characterised by dense vegetation and agricultural land with high fire risk, and is closer to higher risk structures such as hotels and fuel stations. It is located next to the N2 highway to reduce response time to motor vehicle accidents, and is near the Wilderness beach for quick response to beach and water incidents.'

Mr Barnard said the fire department was very grateful to its council for recognising the diverse challenges of firefighting in the George municipal area, and for supporting an ongoing plan to address as many aspects as possible in a practical and cost-effective manner. 'We continue to see the significant difference it makes in the field every day, which ultimately means the more effective protection of people and property.'

# LOCAL 'n lekker



For Jack Probart, a Kingswood home owner and entrepreneur par excellence, there are no half measures. You either do a thing wholeheartedly and properly, or leave it. It is obvious that this motto works for him, judging by the success of his now global wealth management business, Affluence Capital.

A born entrepreneur with a lively interest in investments since childhood, Jack has always had the dream of running his own business. He had, however, the good sense to first gain the necessary experience in banking and stockbroking. After obtaining his BCom degree from Unisa, he started his career in the banking industry. He then became a CFP (Certified Financial Planner) by completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Planning at the University of the Free State.

He went overseas to learn everything he could about private banking and, after returning to South Africa, he started Affluence Capital in Sandton in 2004. The company has grown organically into a truly independent, privately owned advisory business with clients across the world – from Australia and the USA to Europe and Barbados. There are three branches, located in Sandton, George and Cape Town, and 17 capable and experienced staff members make up his workforce.

He's a hard worker who is not afraid of putting in the hours to get results. Technology, globally outsourced research and an agile business model



Jack Probart



enable the team to make quick decisions, and achieve superior returns for their clients. This is in direct contrast with large companies that cannot implement decisions quickly. 'We have in place advanced global trading systems that are efficient, transparent and effective. This enables us to deliver cost-effective services as we don't need huge teams of people providing the same support to our clients,' he said.

Despite these challenging times, with COVID-19 dominating the world scene, Affluence Capital performed very well last year, and had one of their best years for clients. 'We are very thankful and humbled that we were able to generate some of the best returns last year. This was mainly due to investing in quality shares overseas. During lockdown, we worked really hard to seek out opportunities and to deliver the best advice to our clients.'



Toinette and Jack Probart

Jack and his family moved to George in 2008 after having bought a vacant property in Kingswood Golf Estate in 2007. The move was inspired mainly by the lifestyle offered by the scenic Garden Route. They enjoy living on the estate, and appreciate the beautiful setting, security and centrality of its location. 'We chose Kingswood due to all these factors, and because there's a wonderful down-to-earth atmosphere.'

Jack's wife, Toinette, who is also a director of the business, is a counsellor who has made a deep impression in the lives of many people. Helping others, especially women, is her life's calling. 'She is the author of *The Art of Womanhood*, offers an online course in family transformation, and does online counselling and teaching at the Family Transformation Centre here in George,' he said. 'She's the one who looks after the emotional wellbeing of our team, which is such an important aspect.'

Their weekends are spent on their guest farm, Shanzeley, 60 kilometres north of George between the Outeniqua and Kammanassie mountains. The Probart's bought this farm in 2013 with the goal of setting up an agricultural development franchise in an effort to address food security and unemployment, but it didn't work out. 'So,' said Jack, 'we ended that venture in 2018, and converted the land into a sheep farm and guest farm, which turned out to be a popular breakaway.'

Go-getter that he is, he recently realised another childhood dream by obtaining his helicopter pilot's licence in December last year.

Jack attributes their success to hard work, expertise and building long-term client relationships. 'Our philosophy is honouring our word. My advice to anyone for success in any aspect of life is to pray about it. Don't rush in; have peace about the things you want to achieve. And then go for it wholeheartedly.'

 Corrie Fopma



Shanzeley Farm

# THE DAMS ARE MOSTLY FULL

Are our water worries over?

With the nationwide rainfall that we have enjoyed, some courtesy of Tropical Storm Eloise, most of our large dams are now full. The media is reporting that our water worries are over, at least for the time being. But is this the case, or is this just a blip in a general downward trend? As with many things, to predict the future, we need to look at the past.



**How we got to where we are**

South Africa has a water-constrained economy. The fact that we even became an industrialised nation, given our hydrological constraints, attests to our capacity for ingenuity. We turned a hydrologically challenged environment into a vibrant manufacturing economy in a relatively short period of time. This journey really began with the Commission of Inquiry into Water Matters that was constituted in the first decade of our independence from Britain in 1961. Before that we were essentially an agricultural economy with some mining, most notably in the Witwatersrand Goldfields, but with only a rudimentary manufacturing capacity.

The grand vision of the Commission of Inquiry into Water Matters was to transform this agricultural and extractive economy into an industrialised beneficiation economy, in which the value-add of converting primary raw materials into finished products could create many jobs in a diversified commercial ecosystem. To achieve this, we needed technical capacity on an unprecedented scale, working in a highly coordinated way, to literally perform hydraulic miracles by making water flow uphill to power and money. The single objective of the National Hydraulic Mission in the 1960s was the creation of water security in a country that is, in essence, hydrologically insecure.

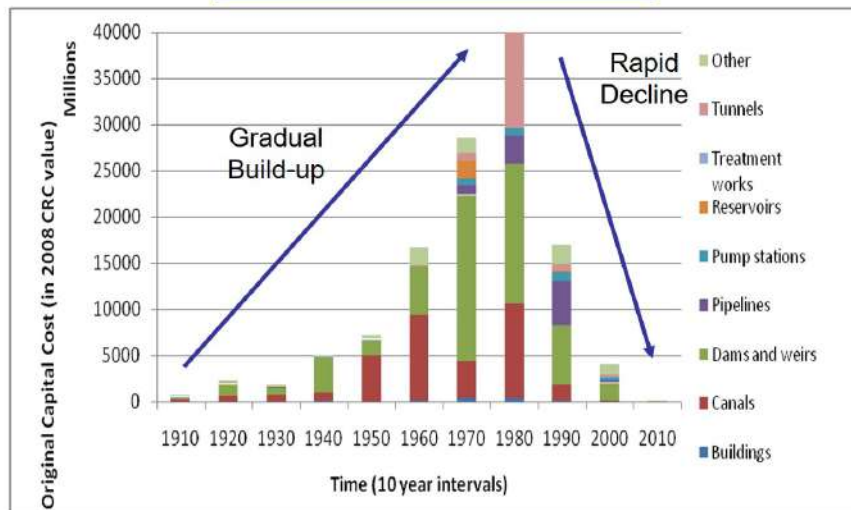
This National Hydraulic Mission developed a concept that was first mooted by Thomas Bain a century earlier. In essence, localised water security at municipal level was created by linking one river to another in a cascade of transfers. South Africa rapidly became one of the world leaders in what is known as inter-basin transfers (IBT), to the extent that the economic boom of the 1970s and 1980s increasingly became dependent on this practice.

If we look at the capital investment into hydraulic infrastructure, we can see this play out over time. In a study conducted by the then Department of Water Affairs in 2008, a stark reality was revealed. The investment into hard infrastructure peaked in the 1980s, and then rapidly tapered off as the transition to democracy saw the emergence of new priorities, most notably transformation. This is reflected in the age of water infrastructure shown here.



## Age of Water Infrastructure

Note peak investment in 1980's

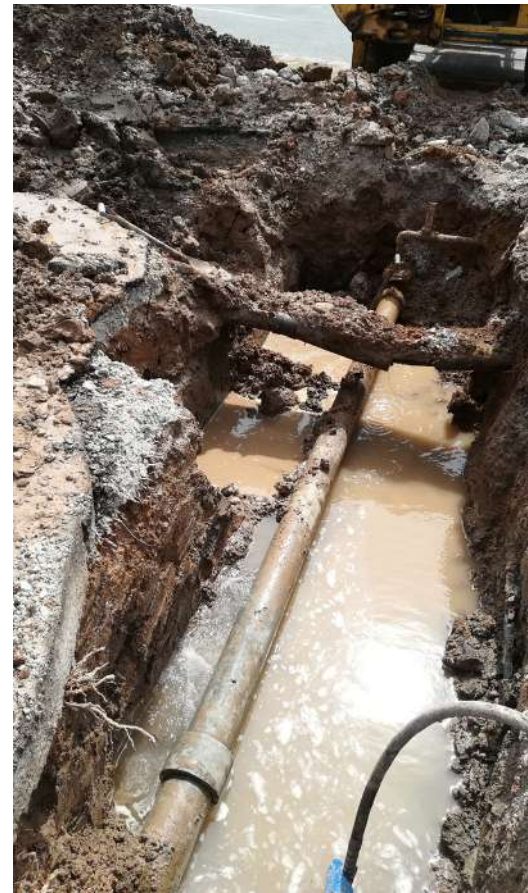
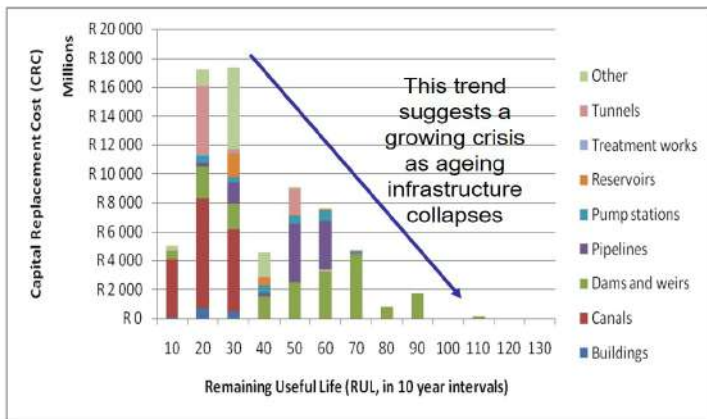


Source: DWAF (2008)

### The remaining useful life of our water infrastructure

The implication of rapid decline of expenditure in infrastructure since the 1980s is best understood by looking at a different set of data related to the remaining useful life (RUL) of water infrastructure. It must be remembered that this study was conducted in 2008, so assets listed with a 20-year RUL back then now have less than half that value.

## Remaining Useful Life of Water Infrastructure

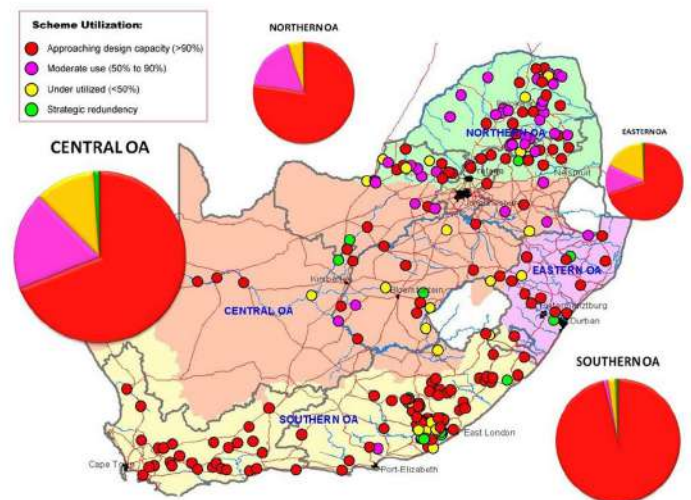


Source: DWAF (2008)

In effect then, this means that most of our water infrastructure has a remaining useful life of 20 years at best, but much of the major infrastructure is approaching, or has already reached, the end of its design life.

This is particularly evident in the data from the 2008 study in the map to the right, which shows that the utilisation of that infrastructure is mostly at the point of reaching design capacity. It must be noted that the time lag from conceptualisation of a project, through design and ultimately implementation, is typically 20 years. This means that, even if we suddenly decide to invest in many new projects – assuming we have the capital available – that benefit will accrue two decades into the future at best, by which time the RUL for the majority of infrastructure will have expired.

## Utilization of Water Infrastructure



Source: DWAF (2008)



**The future does not look rosy**

These three sets of data give us a pessimistic picture of the water sector, with three specific points of concern.

- The biggest issue is the lack of investment into infrastructure for the last 30 years, but there is nothing we can do about that now. Except, perhaps, cry.
- The second biggest issue is the rapidly declining RUL value of our water infrastructure. This is a serious problem that has been exacerbated by the purging of strategic skills from the water sector, driven as it was by the political priority of transformation and cadre deployment. The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is no longer capable of performing even the most basic of tasks – the Blue and Green Drop reporting systems and the regular National Water Resource Strategy reconciliations mandated by the National Water Act – let alone plan and design complex infrastructure. We are therefore left vulnerable and unable to maintain the level of water security needed to sustain a modern industrial economy. This is a barrier to the inflow of capital and is unable to translate into job creation and taxes from a host of transactions in a diversified economy.
- The third major issue is the collapse of revenues to the fiscus, driven by the overall loss of investor

confidence as described above, but exacerbated by the global COVID-19 pandemic. This means that government is no longer able to make the investments necessary to restore water security in an industrial economy competing in a global market.

So the answer to the question posed in the introduction is that, while we have many dams now overflowing, we are increasingly water insecure simply by virtue of the cumulative impact of underinvestment into infrastructure, combined with the loss of skills, but exacerbated by the diversion of revenues needed to sustain a system of patronage. So, enjoy it while it lasts, but expect more water restrictions in the future, and – more importantly – plan for some sense of personal, estate or development water security, even it's just a JoJo tank.

 Dr Anthony Turton





# Common pool resource management

## Strategy to avoid tragedy

Managing a residential estate is a little like juggling with eggs. It can be tricky to balance each resident's rights to fully enjoy all the communal facilities and services with the need to protect, preserve and maintain all the elements that go to making the estate the special place it is. Fortunately, Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Prize winner for Economics, has developed a framework for managing common property that can be used by societies, communities, countries and – of course – residential estates.

### **The commons – tragedy, comedy or drama**

The tragedy of the commons is a long-standing, pessimistic theory that states that humans are such selfish, useless idiots that, if left to our own devices, we would destroy the resources on which we depend. While the evidence of climate change – and the lacklustre response to it – may support this view, it is also undeniable that humans have repeatedly formed societies that successfully manage common property to the benefit of all their members. And it is from these societies that Elinor Ostrom took inspiration for her seminal work *Governing the Commons*.

### **Governing the commons**

Ostrom examines the most commonly accepted models for describing and predicting collective

behaviour – the tragedy of the commons, the prisoner's dilemma, and the logic of collective action – but with some important new insights.

The main thrust of all these models is that everyone acts to maximise their own advantage, so they will act for the good of the group only if it works in their own favour. And, more importantly, they will 'take a free ride' and not contribute if they believe they can get away with it and still reap the collective benefits.

'What makes these models so dangerous when they are used metaphorically as the foundation for policy,' she stated, 'is that the constraints that are assumed to be fixed for the purpose of analysis are taken on faith as being fixed in empirical settings, unless external authorities change them.'



And this is where Ostrom took a fresh look at the issue, and it's what earned her her Nobel Prize. Rather than impose on the real world the assumptions inherent in the models, she looked at successful communities worldwide – from small to large – and compared them to the models. What she found was that – unlike in the models, in which the 'subjects' had no power to change the parameters of the simulation – real-world people have agency.

So, she argued, real people and real communities have throughout history developed strategies and systems for managing natural and other communal resources – generally with success, although there are obviously some failures.

So, rather than trying to impose theory on reality, Ostrom tried to find a theory that explained how the real world works – when it works well.

This is what Lee Anne Fennel – in an essay that 'traces some of the ways that Ostrom's focus on situated examples has advanced the interdisciplinary dialogue about property, both as a legal institution, and as a human invention for solving practical problems' – termed Ostrom's Law.

Ostrom's law states: 'A resource arrangement that works in practice can work in theory.' In other words, while remaining cognisant of the problems associated with managing common property, look at – and emulate – existing successes, and build your theory and strategies on these.



### **Managing common pool resources – Ostrom's principles**

The real value of Ostrom's work was not academic or theoretical – it was practical, culminating in what she called 'design principles for managing common pool resources'. Many of them will be familiar to successful estate managers because they are – largely – common sense. But, to quote an old adage, 'the problem with common sense is that it's not very common.'

Ostrom's eight principles (somewhat paraphrased) are:

- Define clear group boundaries – this is usually not a problem in residential estates, but you may, for example, want to distinguish between absentee owners, tenants and owner-residents.
- Match rules governing use of common goods to local needs and conditions.



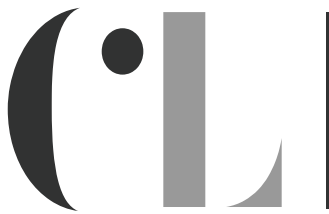
- Ensure that those affected by the rules can participate in modifying the rules.
- Make sure that outside authorities recognise the rule-making rights of community members. This is a particularly pertinent one for estates.
- Develop a system for monitoring members' behaviour – and then enable the members themselves to participate in the monitoring. This is a tricky one, as no-one wants to be a 'snitch', but it is the members themselves who are affected by compliance or non-compliance.
- Use appropriate sanctions for rule violators – both for the gravity of the offence, and for the frequency of non-compliance. Again, this is common sense. You would not treat a first-time parking offender the same way as you would someone who repeatedly speeds through the estate endangering children, pets and wildlife.
- Provide accessible, low-cost means for dispute resolution. This is critical as, if residents know they can easily, quickly and effectively resolve issues, they are more likely to report non-compliance. The flip side of this is to make the process as fair and unstressful as possible for offenders, so that they accept sanctions, and dispute resolution does not turn into a long-standing tit-for-tat.
- Build responsibility for governing the common resource in nested tiers, from the lowest level up to the entire interconnected system. This may or may not work in estates, depending on how you define the 'nests'.

### A question of balance

Ostrom's take-home message is that one needs to balance rights and responsibilities. If you impose inflexible rules without the involvement of the community, it is quite likely that some, and possibly most, members will either ignore them, or manipulate them to their own advantage. So the bottom line is – and you probably know this already – communicate with your community, and take cognisance of their needs.

It's not rocket science, people. But that is why Ostrom's Nobel Prize was not for physics.





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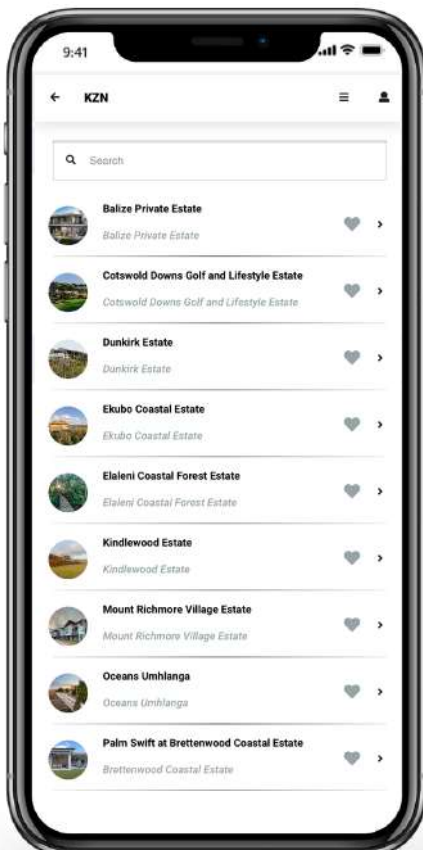
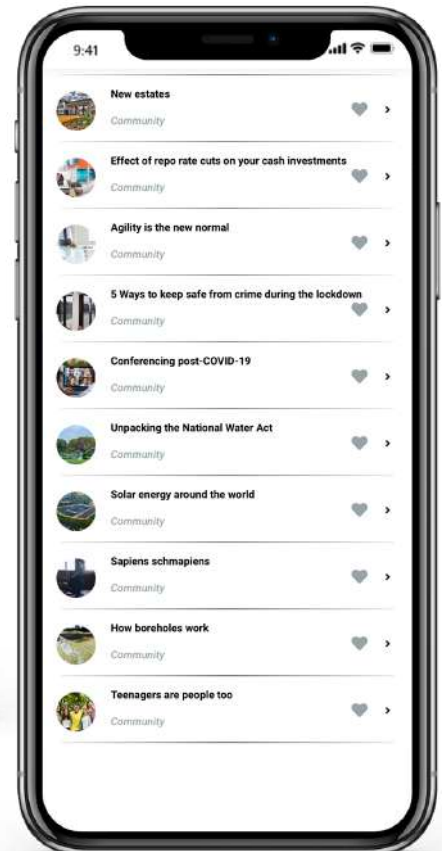
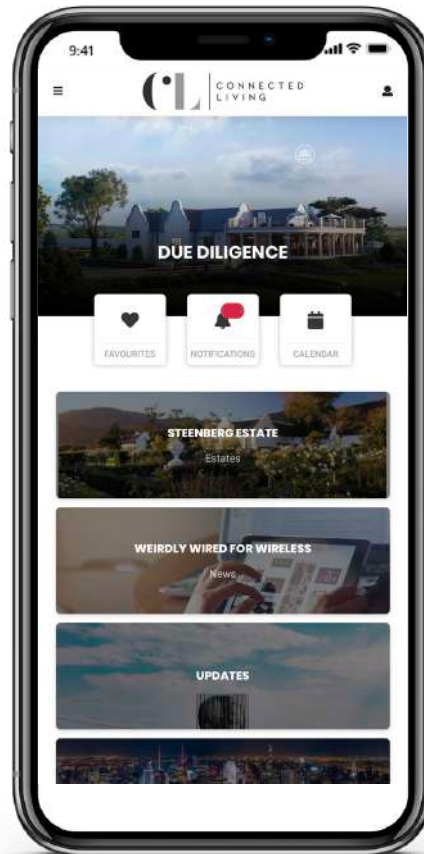
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# Eden *to* Addo

More than a walk in the park



Walking is much more than a way to get from A to B. It's a meditation and a pilgrimage.

## **Brain aerobics**

The late Boudewijn Wegerif, a Swede who walked from Stockholm to Cape Town in 1999 to protest world debt, called walking 'brain aerobics'. He maintained that the regular movement of your left leg and right arm followed by right leg and left arm – continued for a couple of hours – increased the connections between the left and right hemispheres of the brain. He would have known. Stockholm to Cape Town is a long trek.

Of course, in this day and age, walking is probably the least efficient way to get from one place to another – unless they're really close. So there has to be another reason for anyone



deciding to walk the 300-odd kilometres between Kranshoek in the Knysna forest to Addo near Port Elizabeth. And there is. The Eden to Addo Mega-Hike is a pilgrimage – a pilgrimage to biodiversity.

The hike is offered once a year, usually in September, as a slackpacking trail. What this means is that trailists carry only the essentials in a day pack, and all their gear is taken from camp to camp by a back-up vehicle. Added luxuries are the fact that your tents are erected for you, and meals provided. So like any good pilgrim, you can concentrate on the mission at hand.

### **Natural migration**

The mission is to understand the need for, and importance of, conservation corridors in general, and this one in particular. In the past, conservation areas were established for a variety of reasons, mostly good. But often they were too small to allow for natural migration, so the pressure on the reserve's resources would become excessive, and necessitate some rather creative management strategies.

This has been recognised by conservation authorities in the last couple of decades, so reserves in the southern Africa region – and indeed all over the world – are being consolidated.



The hike traverses a unique corridor stretching from the tangled, green coastal afro-montane forest biome of Knysna to the game-rich Albany thicket of Addo, passing through a range of farms and reserves belonging to about 60 different landowners.

While all the stakeholders are in favour of the idea of a conservation corridor, it's not that easy to implement. Which is why the mega-hike was established. As well as being a great way to spend about three weeks, it is also a fund-raising project, and offers participants the opportunity to interact with a variety of conservation specialists who share their knowledge on the trail. It really is about the conservation, not the walking. All profits go directly to the Eden to Addo Corridor Initiative, a non-profit Section 21 company.

If you think this is a wonderful idea but you don't feel quite up to walking more than 300 kilometres in 20 days, you may want to consider buying land in or near the corridor, as an investment in biodiversity.

### Putting one foot in front of the other

The hike straddles five distinct biomes and links three major conservation areas. The existing parks and reserves are the Knysna Protected Area, the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve and the Greater Addo Elephant National Park.

These together protect patches of afro-montane forest, mountain fynbos, succulent Karoo, savanna grassland and Albany thicket. All these biomes are transition zones that overlap – and even shift from year to year with varying rainfall.

The trail takes participants from one biome to another, linking seven mountain ranges and peaks over the 21 days. Daily walking distances average about 23 kilometres, with the shortest day being 12 kilometres and the longest about 35 kilometres, so this is not an easy hike. The terrain is mountainous and there is little flat walking, and where there is, the distances are significant.

The views are stupendous, the air is invigorating and the constant change in scenery and vegetation offers an intellectual challenge equal to the physical one.

Some not-so-pretty aspects of the hike include climbing over fences, fighting through thick stands of invasive alien trees, and coming across gin traps and other indications that the proclamation of this corridor really is a priority. Fireside debates are long, interesting and – while not acrimonious – can get quite robust.

### Mysterious elephants of Knysna

It is surmised – with some good evidence – that the trail loosely follows old elephant migration paths. This raises an interesting issue, and some remarkable new research.



The elephants of the dense Knysna forest – the only really wild elephants left in South Africa as there are no fences keeping them in a designated park, and certainly the most mysterious, elusive and endangered – were thought to be on the brink of extinction.

Conservationists tried translocating a couple of elephants from the Kruger National Park to Knysna a few years ago, but those poor Lowveld animals took one look at the tangled forests and rushed to hide out in the much safer-looking surrounding farmlands. The plan was abandoned.

So many believed that there was no hope for the elusive elephants, with some conservationists claiming there was only a single elephant left in Knysna. But that was until well-known conservationist and author Gareth Patterson published *The Secret Elephants* in 2009, the result of an eight-year hunt through the forest.

Based on observations such as spoor, branches recently snapped by trunks, dung and temporary tunnels created by the animals' passage through the thick vegetation, Patterson's book – and an hour-long documentary aired on Animal Planet – concludes that there are at least nine elephants still living in Knysna. DNA analysis of the dung has identified five females, all related to each other.

Patterson says the elephants have adapted to human intrusion and hauled themselves back from the edge of extinction all by themselves, with no help from us. It's an optimistic and romantic idea, but that's what a pilgrimage is all about – faith. And hope. It's about putting one foot in front of the other, day after day, for a cause, for a dream, and for a better future.

**Make it happen**

The hike was cancelled last year (no prizes for guessing why), but – hopefully – this year's pilgrimage will happen in September. If you're keen, book now.

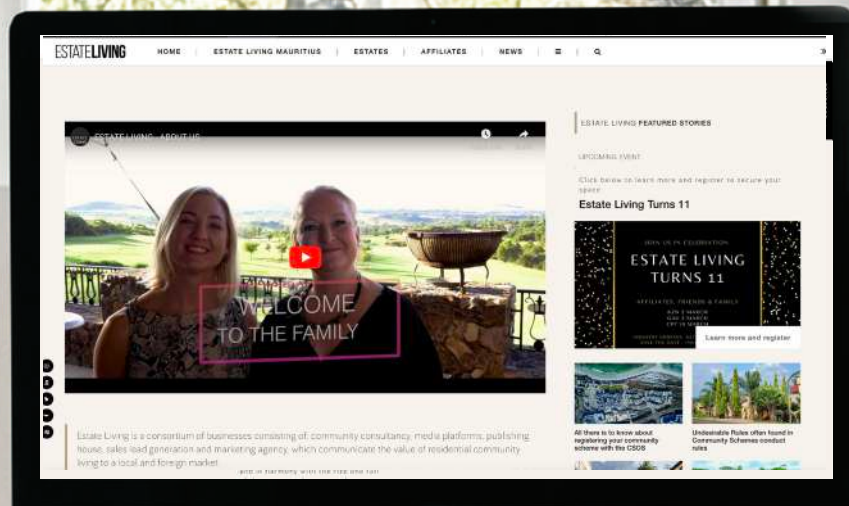
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An earlier version of this story first appeared on Brand South Africa

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