

APRIL 2019

**24-hour Emergency Fire Brigade** 028 313 8000/8111  
028 312 2400

# Bulletin

Official newsletter of the Overstrand Municipality

## OMAF - WHAT TO EXPECT FROM OVERSTRAND'S 2019/20 DRAFT BUDGET

A preview of the proposed 2019/20 Draft Budget was presented by the Executive Mayor Dudley Coetzee at the Overstrand Advisory Forum (OMAF) meeting on Thursday, 28 February 2019.

The mayor referred to the challenging task of balancing the cost of providing basic services to the residents of the Overstrand, as well as tourists to our area, with the income the Municipality is able to generate from these services.

"This year is no different in that respect. However this year, the restoration of the damage to infrastructure following the devastating fires that ravage the Overstrand, the civil unrest of 2018 and the present state of our country's economy make our challenge even greater," he said.

Mayor Coetzee said it is projected that inflation this year will reach 5,3% and increase to 5,6% during the next financial year. "The directive to the administration has been to limit increases in those services that we can control to 5,7% in the 2017/2018 Draft Budget. It is against this background that we prepared the 2019/2020 Draft Budget."

"A further challenge that we are again faced with is the above-inflation salary increase negotiated at the South African Local Government Bargaining Council between the employer organisation (South African Government Association and the trade unions for Municipal Employees. When the notch increases, which average 2% and other allowances are added to the 6,2% salary adjustment, the increase is closer to 8,2% p.a. for three years," he added.

The rebate on property rates offered to persons over the age of 60 remains unchanged. The parking tariffs in the Hermanus CBD remain unchanged for the 2019/2020 financial year.

Calculating the sewerage charge for water-borne sewerage on 70% of potable water consumed with a cap of 35 kl also remains unchanged.

### Electricity

"In preparing this draft budget we have continued to move towards ensuring that our basic charges cover the cost of providing the service and that the tariff covers the usage."

Water, sewerage and refuse tariffs are also to meet this criterion.

He continued to explain that the cost of providing electricity is still subsidised by the consumption tariff. NERSA has requested a 15% increase in the electricity tariff charged by ESKOM to municipalities.

"For the purpose of compiling this Draft Budget we have assumed an increase of 15% in the tariff for electricity charged by ESKOM to municipalities," the mayor said.

"In line with our strategy that the basic charge for a service should cover the cost of providing the service, the basic charge for electricity increases by 17,5% and the unit charge has been increased by 14% for the first 350kwh, 14,5% for 351-600kwh and 15% above 600kwh." This results in a cost increase of about 15% for all domestic electricity users based on a 15% increase requested by ESKOM.

### Other proposed tariffs

It is proposed to increase Property Rates across the board by 5,7%.

The tariff for sewerage and water also increase by 5,7%.

Mayor Coetzee said the exception here is the tariff for 0 - 6kl of water which increases by 11,5% or an increase of R3,46 per month. This is in line with a National Treasury directive that the level and structure of water tariffs are to be fully cost-reflective. At present, the cost of providing water is around R23,40 per kl excluding VAT.

The tariff for refuse removal, unfortunately, increases by 12,86% to cover the cost of a new refuse cell at Karwyderskraal, as well as moving the Hermanus Refuse Transfer site that was damaged during the 2018 civil unrest.

Sundry tariffs increased by 5,7%. The cost of A4 photocopies remains unchanged to make it affordable for learners to make copies of documents. The building plan fee for alterations of less than 80m<sup>2</sup> in Government a subsidised housing scheme has been reduced from R463 to R250.

**The 2019/2020 Draft Budget will be open for public comment after until 30 April 2019 after it is tabled in Council on 27 March 2019.**

## Overstrand Municipality capacitated through Blue Flag beach workshop



Wessa's Blue Flag manager Rob Slater (left) and co-ordinator Lance Anders (3rd left) seen with Overstrand colleagues (l-r) Samkelo Tyelinzima, Dencil Arendse, Willie Karelse (bending) Jan Mokgele Mojaki, Lauren Rainbird, Denovan van Rhoadie, DeWet Nel and Jean de Villiers at the Blue Flag workshop.

A capacity building workshop was held in Gordon's Bay on 22 February 2019 to improve municipal understanding and benefits of the Blue Flag beach programme. The workshop was well attended with much interest shown by municipal representatives from Overstrand, Mossel Bay, Cape Town, Malmesbury (Yzerfontein) and Agulhas.

The workshop included an overview of Blue Flag Structure and Policy, Blue Flag Criteria and Application, Annual inspections: compliances and non-compliances, Blue Flag pilot programmes and Tourism Blue Flag projects.

In South Africa, the Blue Flag programme is managed by WESSA (the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa) since 2001 and the programme offers many benefits: Improved tourism facilities, enhanced management of coastal ecosystems, educational awareness programmes and excellent water-quality standards and facilities.

The Overstrand boasts three internationally-recognised Blue Flag Beaches: Kleinmond, Hawston and Grotto Beach. Castle Beach in Pearly Beach has also been granted a pilot status for the Blue Flag for the second year which, if it succeeds, may see Overstrand having four fully fledged Blue Flag beaches later this year.

Early bird tickets for the widest and most stimulating range of

FynArts concerts, talks, workshops, demonstrations,

food and wine, films and childrens' events to date, are now available.

Don't miss Pieter-Dirk Uys, Richard Cock, Karen Zoid, Charl du Plessis,

TV personalities and chefs, including Zola Nene, David Higgs, David

Grier and a long line-up of stimulating speakers and presenters. Once again, focusing

on the visual arts, FynArts showcases a wide range of arts in a host of exhibitions at

galleries and other venues throughout the town and along the Hermanus Wine Route.

The Rules and Registration forms can be downloaded at [www.hermanusfynarts.co.za](http://www.hermanusfynarts.co.za)

Celebrate South African arts with a programme of events that once again raises the bar and is available from the following outlets: Hermanus Tourism office Online at [www.webtickets.co.za](http://www.webtickets.co.za)

or [www.hermanusfynarts.co.za](http://www.hermanusfynarts.co.za). At all Pick 'n Pay branches throughout the country. Telephonic on 028 312 26 29 during office hours.



## Smouldering Fires Affecting Wetlands

Underground fires have been smouldering for more than a month in sections of the Onrus River Peat Wetland area, which is situated on the Camphill School and Farm Community property.

A Section 30A emergency directive was approved by the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning on Thursday, 14 February 2019.

This emergency application enables the Camphill Farm Community to proceed with implementation of emergency works to isolate the subsurface fire in order to prevent its spread and ensure its termination to preserve the remaining peat wetland and eliminate the source of risk to human health and safety and property.

The Fire Department has confirmed the fire is extremely dangerous. Because of the intensity and depth of the fire, it is practically impossible to douse it with water or in a manner that is not harmful to the environment. This situation is beyond conventional fire service tactics.

In the event that no interventions are undertaken, the possibility exists that some may only become visible over time, even many months and it will remain a continuous fire hazard.

If urgent interventions are implemented, it will be possible to preserve the peat wetland. In an effort to assist the Landowner, the Overstrand Municipality's Environmental Section has consulted with wetland specialists at National and Provincial level, as well as Cape Nature, Working on Wetlands and SANBI to ascertain the best course of action to contain the fire.

### The proposed emergency work will entail the following:

1. The excavation of a trench, approximately 200m in length, across the peat wetland and another downstream of the fire, if peat occurs downstream.
2. Determination of the depth and condition of the peat. This will enable identification of the type of equipment to be used for the excavations, and whether a back actor (digger loader) or labour is to be utilised.
3. Should this be required, the Overstrand Municipality will provide a digger loader to assist with implementation of the intervention, if the machine is not suitable, other means will have to be used.

The landowner, together with the DEA and SANBI will ensure the monitoring of the activity, thereby overseeing the emergency works to ensure that these activities are undertaken in an environmentally sound manner and the Environmental Section has agreed to monitor from the Municipality's side.

It is important to note that DEA will make funding available for the rehabilitation of the wetland after the appropriate measures have been taken to implement the emergency procedure.

DEADP has also requested that the site be photographed by using an aerial infrared camera using thermal imaging periodically over the next three months to determine if the sub-surface fire continues to spread or has been contained.

### Wetland - benefits

The Onrus River is an important feeder of the Onrus Estuary, which in turn is an important estuary for recreational activities for the surrounding community. The remaining wetland is currently the only natural filtering system that still keeps the estuary in balance.

Unfortunately this estuary's balance is easily tipped because it is such a small catchment that is heavily infested by invasive alien plant species, the existence of the De Bos Dam upstream which is the drinking water for the town of Hermanus and the multitude of agricultural activities upstream from the De Bos Dam.

The sub-surface fire currently smouldering at the foot-end of the wetland could result in an ecological disaster if the site is not protected and mitigating factors implemented to stop the fire from spreading into the palmiet vegetation.

**The red circle indicates the affected wetland section and in blue outline is the existing Onrus Wetland System.**



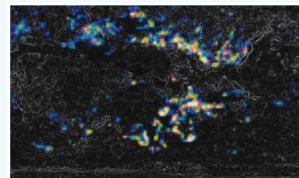
**VIOLIN DIALOGUE** is the title of the concert hosted by Overstrand Arts/Kunste (OAK) on Sunday afternoon, 28 April, with artists Zanta Hofmeyr with Miro Chakaryan and Olive Sandilands on the piano. The concert will commence at 15h30 in the Civic Auditorium.

Tickets are R150 (R60 for students) and available from the Tourism Office (028 312 2629) in Mitchell Street, Hermanus. Enquiries to René du Plooy on 082 940 4238.

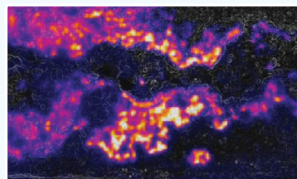
## Solution for Smouldering Wetlands Fire



Onrus River  
19 February 2019: 07h45



Onrus River  
08 February 2019



Onrus River  
19 February 2019

On Thursday, 14 February, Overstrand Municipality's Environmental Section, representatives of the Camphill School and Farm Community, CapeNature, Working on Wetlands and Enviro Wildlife, as well as other role players at National and Provincial level, met with renowned wetland expert, Dr Piet-Louis Grundling, to discuss how to put an end to the underground fire in the Onrus River Peat Wetlands area. This subsurface fire has been smouldering for more than a month in sections of the Onrus River Peat Wetlands area, which is situated on the Camphill School and Farm Community property.

### Problem

The fire is creating a substantial amount of smoke that is significantly affecting air quality in the area and has a detrimental effect on the health of individuals within the community and the school, necessitating the temporary relocation of the learners to alternative accommodation. In addition, this wetland is characterised as the only remaining piece of Palmiet vegetation wetland, which plays a critical role in the functioning of the Onrus River and the Onrus Estuary and is of considerable ecological importance.

### A solution

An emergency Section 30 application was approved by the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning to proceed with implementation of emergency work to isolate the subsurface fire in order to prevent its spread and ensure its termination to preserve the remaining peat wetland and eliminate the source of risk to human health, safety and property. After thorough inspection and several tests (peat core drilling), they found two existing channels that were built, most probably in the early 1950/60s (before the De Bos dam was built in 1976). These channels can be used in the same way that the proposed channel would have worked and is therefore not necessary to dig additional trenches.

In fact, the existing channels are the reason why the fire has not spread much further into the remaining palmiet wetland.

### Going forward

**• Short term:** The smouldering fire hotspots are heavily infested by invasive alien plant species and these must be removed. Unfortunately, the area is still very hot underground, and it will make it difficult and dangerous. Role players will meet on 25 February, to finalise a plan of action.

*Sadly nothing can be done about the smoke until the smouldering fire is stopped.*

**• Medium term:** After the alien plant species are removed, the property owner can apply for funds to rehabilitate the Onrus River peat wetland area.

**• Long term:** If National funds can be obtained for the rehabilitation of this river, this unique wetland will function optimally once more.

This will not only improve the quality and quantity of the water of the Onrus River, but will have a significant improvement on the ecosystem service and therefore the overall health of the system. It will take years to complete the rehabilitation and restoration of this system and without the assistance of government organizations, landowners and other role players like Enviro Wildlife, we will not succeed in the long term.

*Photo credit: Rob Erasmus, Enviro Wildlife*



*Pictured here are Neil Bright (MOTHS Fish Hoek), Captain Hayter (King's Royal Rifle Corps UK), Mayor Dudley Coetzee and his wife Shirley, Rev James Grey and programme director Frank Halferty at the commemoration service of the sinking of the HMS Birkenhead.*