



**Western Cape  
Government**

Local Government



**Eagle's View**

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**BETTER TOGETHER.**

# BEAUFORT WEST SNOW INCIDENT

Winter weather in Central Karoo has shown how Disaster Management is 'everybody's business' with various stakeholders pulling together during the recent snow incident in Beaufort West.

An emergency planning meeting took place on Monday 16 July at the Western Cape Disaster Management Centre along with officials from the South Africa National Defence Force (SANDF); SAPS; Department of Agriculture; Agri-Western Cape and City of Cape Town Disaster Risk Management. It was established that approximately 7 farms were cut off and an estimated number of 120 people were affected. The weekend of 13-14 July saw reports that parts of the N1 between Beaufort West and Three Sisters were closed due to snowfall.



Beaufort West recovery team in action

An Oryx helicopter was requested and approved to be dispatched for use for 2 days (16 and 17 July) to assist with evacuations and delivery of food, blankets, baby-packs and fire wood. The Department of Social Development and SASSA (South African Social Services Agency) were activated to obtain the social relief goods from contracted service providers.

The remainder of the goods were transported in three vehicles from Ysterplaat to Beaufort West on the same day. Provisions catering for 500 people were sent by helicopter and CoCT vehicles and a further 2000 provisional packs were dispatched directly by service providers.

A Joint Operations Centre (JOC) took place at the Central Karoo Disaster Management Centre to assess the situation

and plan the rescue and relief operations for early the following day. It was reported that four of the seven farms established road access, but three farms were still totally cut off. On Tuesday, 17 July the helicopter undertook four rescue and relief flights to the affected three farms that were still cut off. A total of 31 people and 2 dogs were airlifted from the affected three farms. Another 11 people were transported by 4x4s. The medic ensured that all affected people were medically checked.

All the social relief provisions were stored at the Municipal Disaster Management Centre from where further support will be provided by officials from Department of Social Development and SASSA's local office. The emergency exercise was a huge success.

## Editor's Note

Dear Readers

We find ourselves in the middle of winter in the Western Cape, and we are regularly blessed with the usual rain and snow falls and extreme cold spells and chilly winds. A team comprising of PDMC & CoCT officials also went out to Beaufort West to assist where we could as indicated by a short article in that regard.

The PDMC Editorial Team (Richard Haridien; Gavin Stoffberg; Lisa Geswindt) in collaboration with the Corporate Communication Unit

wants to express our appreciation to everyone who has provided inputs for this edition. However we want to encourage everyone to continue providing us with valuable articles and photographs, as well as any suggestions to improve this newsletter in future. We have been joined by Lesley Jacobs on 1st August 2012, who is taking over responsibility of the Institutional Capacity Unit, as well as being the project leader of this newsletter. We wish him success in working within this environment.

## SOCIAL CONFLICT WORKSHOP

The Social Conflict Task Team, a sub-committee of the Provincial Disaster Management Advisory Forum, arranged a workshop on social conflict at Kromme Rhee in Stellenbosch on 28 June 2012. The workshop was well attended by crucial and relevant stakeholders such as Social Development, Economic Development, Agriculture, International Affairs, Home Affairs, South Africa National Defence Force, SAPS, Community Safety, City of Cape Town, SASSA, HANSA (Humanitarian Aid Network South Africa), ARESTA (Agency for Refugees Education, Skills Training and Advocacy), OIM (Organisation for International Migration) and UNHCR (United Nations Human Rights Commissioner for Refugees).



Right: Richard Haridien delivering a very informative presentation

Three major outcomes were realised:

- Understanding of the most recent legislation & regulations pertaining to foreigners in SA;
- Review of the Provincial Social Conflict Emergency Plan; and
- Development of a guidance booklet on socio-economic activity for foreigners in WC.

Further discussions and follow-up work will be monitored through the Social Conflict Task Team meetings which take place on a quarterly basis at PDMC.

## VISIT TO LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Fire Officers of Fire and Rescue Services in the Western Cape and identified Disaster Managers were recently invited by Minister Anton Breddell to undertake a study tour to Los Angeles County Fire Department from 2- 9 June 2012.

The tour was sponsored by USAID (United States Agency for Development) and organised through the Western Cape Government with assistance from Rescue South Africa.

The focus of the tour was to gain insight and information from the Los Angeles County Fire Department into their NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) programmes, concentrating on wildland fire-fighting, Urban Search and Rescue task force, Incident Management System (ICS) and Blue Water Rescue Programme.

### The ten delegates included:

**Chief Fire Officer Previn Govender – Breede Valley**  
**Chief Fire Officer Ian Schnetler – City of Cape Town**  
**Chief Fire Officer Bertus Senekal – West Coast District**  
**Chief Fire Officer Reinard Geldenhuys – Overberg District**  
**Hein Rust- Disaster Manager: Central Karoo**  
**Gerhard Otto – Disaster Manager: Eden District**  
**Colin Deiner: Chief Director: Western Cape Government – Disaster Management & Fire Brigade Services**  
**Etienne du Toit- Deputy Director: Western Cape Government –Fire Brigade Services**  
**Ian Scher- CEO: Rescue South Africa**  
**Ms Samantha Botsis – GM: Rescue South Africa**



Previn Govender, Chief Fire Officer of Breede Valley, said **“The five-day experience into the actual workings of a world-renowned fire department not only proved to be a lesson that will have future benefit for ourselves as a municipality, but more importantly it served as confirmation that what we (Breede Valley Fire Department) have implemented and plan to implement is definitely on the right course which will eventually bring the same proportionate level of emergency services delivery to our communities”.**

Some of the observations taken from the study tour included the value and worth placed on the fire department in the community and in government; the passion of the fire-fighters; the access to grant funding mechanisms through state and federal resource programmes; the importance placed on specialist training programmes and the mutual aid relationships that exist between fire departments across city, county and state lines.

Further interesting aspects of the tour included: The impact of urban sprawl and migration on the central Los Angeles areas and how LA-CoFD gears itself to keep pace by continuous risk assessments of station areas; the value placed on Fire-fighter Wellness Programmes and the Inmate Programme.

Similar projects and standards that already exist in the Western Cape are our Fire Protection Plan (even though unfunded) is also risk based and geared for urban sprawl; we have embarked on a similar training centre capacity building programme for special operations training and we are one of two Central Government USAR Cache bases in South Africa. The Western Cape is trying to inculcate a similar return to the values and passion for professional fire fighting: We have established a mutual aid relationship with Rescue South Africa to complement and supplement our USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) capacity building programme and a Fire-fighter Wellness Programme was implemented in 2006.

# USING TECHNOLOGY FOR A SAFER PROVINCE



Above: Video Wall

The Western Cape Disaster Management Centre showcased their technological improvements on Friday 27 July 2012 with Minister Anton Bredell launching the newly installed video wall. The Provincial Disaster Management preparedness, response and relief plan was presented by Lavenia Nicholson with Nabeel Rylands showing the newest developments around the GIS program running in the centre. Etienne Du Toit gave an overview of the Advanced Fire Information System as provided by Working on Fire colleagues. The new functionality is able to visually indicate where aerial fire fighting aircrafts are available and the amount of funds that are saved through aerial fire fighting. It is important for all leaders and management to realise that proactive measures can save the Western Cape.

Coburn van der Schyff, an intern contracted for a year as part of the PAY project of the Premier, showed his newly established skills by operating the video wall for Minister Bredell and media present.

"It was a very proud moment and I must congratulate everyone involved in making the centre operational because without the expertise from my colleagues, the centre will remain just a building with equipment," said Nicholson.

Right: Minister Bredell & Dr Hildegard Fast during a press conference



Left: Colin Deiner making the Minister and HOD proud by boasting with his hi-tec software



## Spotlight on... SCHALK CARSTENS



As the Director of Risk Reduction at the Western Cape Disaster Management Centre, Mr Schalk Carstens holds various roles and has all-round experience as a specialist in the Disaster Management fraternity.

After completing his military service in the Prison Department in 1979; Schalk joined the Mining Industry where he worked as a safety and security officer.

He then obtained qualifications through UNISA in Civil Protection (the previous name for Disaster Management) and decided that Disaster Management is what he wanted to pursue with as a career.

From 1988 Schalk took up employment as a Civil Protection Coordinator in the Transvaal Provincial Administration where he was allocated the Witwatersrand region, which later became the Gauteng Province. In 2000, Schalk was transferred to the Western Cape to head the sub-directorate Disaster Management and Fire Brigade Services. Over time the sub-directorate grew into the current Chief Directorate with a staff compliment of 27.

Schalk is currently the president of the Disaster Management Institute of Southern Africa (DMISA). He has been a member of the institute since 1990, serving on the council and as a member of the EXCO since 2002. DMISA is an official body that represents disaster practitioners and is in the process of becoming

a professional council.

On an academic front, Schalk served as tutor for Tech SA/UNISA from 1994-2000. After completion of his master's degree in Disaster Management in 2005, Schalk continued to lecture part time at DIMTEC, University of Free State, concentrating on two modules - Disaster Risk Assessments and Disaster Strategy. Schalk was instrumental in overseeing the establishment of the first fully fledged Provincial Disaster Management Centre in the country. Since September 2010 Schalk has been the Director responsible for Risk Reduction. This directorate focuses on all aspects of how to prevent or mitigate risks associated with hazards that lead to disasters.

Family is important to Schalk, having been married for 23 years with two daughters and two grandchildren. He also enjoys camping as a hobby.

# DISASTER MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS VISIT TO AIRPORTS COMPANY SOUTH AFRICA (ACSA)



From Left: Francisco Daams, Richard Haridien, Nomhle Arosi, Lisa Geswindt, Lavenia Nicholson, Coburn van der Schyff, Sonja Chinnian  
 Front: Nicole Petersen, Chandre Absolon, Tamsyn Bailey

Officials from the Western Cape Disaster Management Centre attended a presentation on the ACSA Aerodrome Emergency Management Systems emergency plan presented on Friday 13 July 2012 by Aerodrome Emergency Management Systems Co-ordinator, Mr Hakeem Meyer.

Staff were given an excursion to the Fire Fighting unit, airport strategic area for emergency planning and had the opportunity to ride in the brand new fire trucks. Coburn Van Der Schyff, intern at the Chief Directorate- Disaster Management & Fire Brigade Services, said: "It was a once in a lifetime experience that I'll remember always. It opened my eyes to how the airport copes with emergencies. I feel reassured knowing that ACSA has capable people and advanced technology to ensure my safety."



Right and Left: ACSA Fire Fighting Vehicle



## STATUS ON AVIAN INFLUENZA

Various interventions are taking place in order to control the outbreak of the Avian Influenza (H5N2) in the Southern Cape (mainly Oudtshoorn). Regular surveillance and laboratory testing are in place to monitor the situation but recent tests showed that a strain of the disease has spread to individual farms in Albertinia & Heidelberg.

Farmers are currently losing an amount of R1300 per ostrich due to the ban on exporting and the decrease in ostrich meat prices.

Chicks are taken to farms in the Eastern Cape to be raised and slaughtered for human consumption. So far about 42 000 ostriches have been slaughtered in an effort to control the disease, this results in a tremendous socio-economic impact in the Southern Cape.

Regular meetings are still taking place with various stakeholders regarding Avian Influenza, chaired by the Western Cape Disaster Management Centre. A submission was served before Cabinet on 31 August 2011 by the Provincial Department of Agriculture. The Western Cape Disaster Management Centre sent a letter via the Office of the Premier to the National Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries requesting the reclassification of ostriches in order for farmers to qualify for assistance during declared disasters. Ostriches are currently classified as game; therefore ostrich farmers do not qualify for assistance at this stage.

# MAKING CITIES RESILIENT LEAD TEACHERS TRAINING COURSE



Left: Teachers with Disaster Management officials



Greg Pillay, head of CoCT Disaster Risk Management with teacher Peter John Van Wyk from Yellowwood Primary School

Foundation phase teachers from 10 schools within the Cape Town Metro and Overstrand Municipality received training on the Education Toolkit organised by the City of Cape Town Disaster Risk Management Centre and Environmental Resource Management. The theme of the course was 'building resilient citizens for a sustainable future'. This training forms part of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction legacy projects launched along with the toolkit in October 2011.

Training was scheduled over three Saturdays- 26 May, 2 & 9 of June 2012. The course was presented by Stellenbosch University Environmental Education Programme. Teachers had the opportunity to do 'Risk Mapping' which helped them to understand the hazards and risks in their community and surrounds of their schools. This assists in prevention and reducing the effects of possible disasters. Teachers presented on the risk reduction policy and plans they drafted during the course.

An excursion to the City of Cape Town's Disaster Response Centre took place on the final workshop day and teachers were exposed to the procedures and processes involved when a disaster occurs. Certificates were handed out at the end. Schools involved: Observatory Junior School, Kalkfontein Primary, Northpine Primary, Khairos Primary, Morgenson Primary, Helderkruijn Primary, Rosendal Primary, Hawston Primary, Forest Heights Primary and Yellowwood Primary.

## Notice Board:



During September and October the 2012 Hazard Awareness Campaign (Fire and Flood roadshow) will see 25 industrial theatre plays being rolled out at primary schools across the five districts (Central Karoo, Eden, Overberg, West Coast and Cape Winelands). Gerry the Giraffe, the mascot of the campaign, will also be going along. One community street theatre piece will take place in each district to reach adults. Watch to see where Gerry will be!



**Social Conflict Task Team meeting:**  
Date: Tuesday 28 August  
Time: 10h00-12h00  
Venue: Boardroom, PDMC Tygerberg Hospital



Provincial Disaster Management Advisory Forum meeting at PDMC will take place on 28 August 2012



Please forward any items that you would like placed on the Notice Board to Lisa Geswindt (Lisa.Geswindt@westerncape.gov.za)