

## The Swartland, for you and me

The Swartland, a region that falls under the jurisdiction of the Swartland Municipality, is confronted like any other region and organisation with constantly changing dynamics.

Within this changing environment, changes need to be made continuously to ensure sustainability in the long run. This can be accomplished only if a finger is kept on the pulse and planning is done accordingly.

When comparing official census figures it would seem that the Swartland has also experienced a considerable growth in population numbers. This is in line with similar trends in other parts of the province. According to census surveys, the number of inhabitants in the region was 72 116 in 2001 and 113 762 in 2011.

Previous surveys indicate that despite the growth, the poverty index has dropped by 6%. In 2001, the poverty index stood at 32,8%, in 2007 at 27,6% and in 2011 at 26,8%. To view this in perspective, one should also consider the poverty index of neighbouring regions such as the Bergrivier municipal area, where the poverty index dropped by 0,4% from 34,2% in 2001 to 33,8% in 2011.

After the completion of the housing project in terms of which 541 houses are being built in Abbotsdale, 500 houses will be built in Riebeek West, following which another 1 000 houses will be built in Malmesbury, and an additional 500 in Moorreesburg.

Infrastructure is a critical component in local economic development and poverty alleviation. For that reason, bypass roads and streets are always high on the priority list of authorities that advocate economic growth.

The Swartland is no exception and the approximately R1-billion voted for the N7 project that runs between the region and Cape Town, means a huge cash injection for growth in the region.

The bypass road, which in 5 years' time is expected to link the development node at Saldanha to the N1 North, is an ever-increasing possibility. Of the three initial options, the bypass road around Malmesbury (from the Hopefield-N7 intersection up to a point close to where the Riebeek junction merges into the Paarl road) would seem to be the preferred option. This option also includes an additional bypass road around Paarl.

At local level, a total of R54-million will be budgeted over the next three financial years following on the new financial year to construct 30 km of streets in the Swartland, in areas where there is an urgent need.

In line with the vision of the Swartland Municipality, i.e. to deliver services to all its people, Mayor Tijmen van Essen recommended that 2014/15 be considered the year for additional and less expensive speed humps; the construction of play areas for children (25 per cent of the population of Swartland is between 0 and 14 years old), with special reference to low-cost housing areas; the greening of Swartland; community education to combat littering; the introduction of a Swartland development committee; while the street maintenance plan will remain an additional priority.

The development committee will be tasked among other things with attracting more businesses to the Swartland, attending to building aesthetics and control, and investigating development possibilities.

## Foreword to 1<sup>st</sup> Swartland Bulletin

The previous financial year once again offered some unique ups and downs, the latter especially on the financial front, with the municipality (like all other local authorities) suffering the after effects of the global economic crisis.

On the positive side it is appropriate to report that Swartland Municipality achieved three consecutive clean audits. The challenge is now to maintain this achievement.

The years ahead require innovative strategic thinking by the municipality, something to which we have committed ourselves unconditionally. We have already identified and documented our most crucial risks, and are busy implementing actions plans in respect of such risks to ensure our financial stability in the long term.

Despite all, we were fortunate that we could continue rendering quality services to our ratepayers during the past year. We will continue doing so, despite the challenges we face. The service standards set in the Client Services Charter will remain one of the instruments whereby we will measure our performance.

In addition to its operational focus, the Swartland Municipality (like any other organisation) continued its internal organisational focus with staff workshops on maintaining a positive attitude, self-development, leadership development and teamwork with a view to improving service delivery to ratepayers. We subsequently used an external service provider to conduct a needs analysis among the community to determine if the database of needs registered at the Municipality did in fact provide the correct and relevant needs.

We will keep on striving to make our ratepayers proud and are committed to performance excellence. However, to do so, our clients and/or partners also have to realise their responsibility to assist us in this regard: a responsibility to understand there are various priorities requiring attention; a responsibility to be reasonable, and a responsibility to trust that we have your interests at heart!

We endeavour to remain professional and transparent in our dealings with you, at all times!

**Joggie Scholtz**  
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

## Swartland Municipality adjusts tariffs

### ***Budget: Increase of 7% for domestic municipal expenditure***

The proposed adjustments to municipal tariffs for the residents of the Swartland were unanimously accepted at a special council meeting and are currently open to inspection and comments by the public until 2 May 2014.

The draft multi-year capital and operating budget includes an average increase of 7,39% in electricity tariffs for residents, which corresponds to the recommendation of Nersa for the new financial year. Nersa is the National Energy Regulator. The Eskom increase for municipalities is 8,06%

Adjustments relating to services for the next financial year include an average increase of 7% for domestic municipal expenditure. Mayor Tijmen van Essen noted during the special council meeting that they had again attempted to keep increases as low as possible, but that the following factors had made that very difficult:

“One of the factors is salary increases that are negotiated at national level, and local authorities have no say in the matter. These resulted in an increase in employee salaries of 6,7%. “We are concerned that municipal services are becoming too expensive for the average person, although the Municipality does everything in its power to limit increases to single digits.”

Swartland’s draft operating budget comprises a budgeted operating income of R476 466 231 with a budgeted operating expenditure of R508 578 210. At this stage, the budget amounts cannot be accepted as final, because public inputs may still be provided during April. \* The budget is available online at [www.swartland.org.za](http://www.swartland.org.za)

### Free internet for business and assignments

The first six of eight public libraries in the Swartland have already received computers with internet access in order to assist residents with business and research assignments. Residents are able to gain free access to the internet via three to five computers at the libraries of Riebeeck-Kasteel, Darling South, Darling North, Malmesbury, Wesbank and Moorreesburg. Access is limited to 45 minutes at a time and is set up to exclude social media platforms and improper sites. According to planning, the service will be extended during the year to include the remaining libraries at Chatsworth and Riebeeck West.

### What kind of growth potential does my town offer?

In a study as recent as November 2013, the Western Cape Provincial Government commissioned Stellenbosch University to determine the growth potential and socio-economic needs of rural towns outside the Cape Metropole in the Western Cape.

For this purpose, the University had to consider each town’s inherent characteristics that would assist in determining the growth and development potential of the town.

In order to determine growth potential, factors relating to the economic, physical and infrastructure indices of the area were included in the scientific investigation. The development potential was determined by investigating the institutional and human capital of each town and its municipality.

The scientific investigation into growth potential was done in relation to the socio-economic needs of the relevant town and municipality. For this purpose, factors such as household services and needs, educational levels and the economic profile of the town were considered in relation to one another.

The study determined that the ‘one size fits all’ approach does not apply to all the towns covered by the study. For instance, an economic injection that could be a huge jump-start for one town may come to nothing in a neighbouring town, simply because it does not coincide with the growth potential framework and socio-economic needs of the specific town.

The results of the analysis may be summarised by cross-tabulating the classification of towns according to socio-economic needs on the X-axis, while indicating growth potential on the Y-axis (**see table**).

The type of development and investments required for towns that are positioned at the bottom of the table to the right (high or very high growth potential, and high or very high socio-economic needs) need to be those that will have a visible impact on economic growth and development and will support socio-economic priorities. The type of investment for towns positioned at the bottom of the table to the left (high or very high growth potential, but low or very low socio-economic needs) will naturally differ (e.g. tourism infrastructure) from towns at the bottom of the table to the right.

		Socio-economic needs				
		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Growth potential	Very low	Bitterfontein Doringbaai Kliprand Nuwerus Rietpoort Strandfontein				
	Low	Aurora Ebenhaesar Graafwater Koekenaap Redelinguys	Goedverwacht Klawer Lutzville Vanrhynsdorp	Citrusdal Clanwilliam Vredendal		
	Medium	Dwarskersbos Eendekuil Elandsbaai <b>Koringberg</b> Paternoster <b>Yzerfontein</b>	<b>Darling</b> Hopefield St Helena Bay Velddrift	Piketberg Saldanha/Jacobsbaai		
	High		<b>Kalbaskraal</b> Langebaan	<b>Moorreesburg</b> Porterville <b>Riebeeck-Kasteel/</b> <b>Riebeeck-Wes</b>		
	Very high				<b>Malmesbury</b> Vredenburg	

The position of towns indicated in the table therefore determines the type of development and investment required to stimulate the growth potential of the towns to the maximum. This does not mean development and investment will take place only in certain areas and not in others. However, it does suggest a difference in scale and intensity, and support that needs to be adjusted according to managerial circumstances in every area.

The value of the Growth Potential Study lies in the fact that it combines various and at times diverse data in a consistent manner and provides a variety of products that authorities may use to make informed and strategic decisions.

***Other important aspects highlighted by the Growth Potential Study are as follows:***

1. The most important criteria for presenting any development project or programme should firstly be job creation and increased production, in order to benefit the community to the maximum. "Beware of the misconception that the largest economic developments should take place in poverty-stricken areas. Economic development should take place at the point where it will be viable and where it can grow. Often money and investments for economic growth are erroneously appropriated for social development, as there is no clear distinction between the criteria for social development and investment for economic development," the report warns.

2. More and more the realisation is brought home that neighbouring towns in every region should begin to evaluate ways in which they could cooperate as partners in stimulating and encouraging economic growth. Larger towns in particular should 'develop a changing mindset' by entering into partnerships with smaller neighbouring towns. This regional approach will in the long term not only benefit smaller towns, but also the larger town that may have acted as the initiator in terms of unlocking the development potential of the region. The focus should not only be on the infrastructure that may be utilised to the benefit of all, but also on the human capital and facilities in every town that could bring about development and growth in the particular town.

3. The only criterion for each investment is the economic viability of the town and its people. In an economically-viable town, the correct type of investment will result in job creation and increased production, while the people of the region will need to have the ability and insight to embrace the

development and utilise it to develop their environment. The appropriate competencies and management style of a transparent local authority will contribute much to the success or failure of the investment.

4. In the meantime, the Western Cape government encourages environmentally friendly developments, all the time striving to ensure that the Western Cape will become known as the province that maintains the smallest carbon footprint of all the provinces and will become the leading green economic development hub in the country. Ideally, the private and public sectors should be involved in this.

5. Although towns may do very well on the wealth list, the total image is established in terms of other factors such as the available water supply in high summer (important for tourism); infrastructure such as transport and water supply; waste water treatment space and the recycling capacity of water; unemployment; crime levels; the difference in the way of living from the highest to the lowest way of living in each town; overpopulation levels; total percentage of households that has access to basic services such as water, sewerage, refuse removal and electricity; percentage informal households; and the population growth of and immigration to the region.

***Why is it significant to the people of the Swartland to view each town's position on the table?***

This study provides a few advantages, namely:

1. Developers who wish to invest in the Swartland will be able to use this study to make informed decisions about the location and the type of investment that should be viable in the area;
2. The Swartland Municipality will be able to use this information for its short- and long-term planning when utilising its capital and other resources for development projects and programmes, or to identify actions that may unlock dormant potential in its towns and area; and
3. The Western Cape government could use this information to do its short- and long-term planning in terms of addressing the needs of the region.

### **Single account issued only to owners**

The Council of the Swartland Municipality granted approval on 27 March 2014 that, with effect from 1 July 2014, property rates and services accounts be issued only to registered property owners and that the change be phased in over a period of 1 (one) year. The Council found it challenging to remain within the framework of the applicable legislation, i.e. that Swartland Municipality continues to provide services to consumers, but that owners be held responsible for any or all activities taking place on their premises.

In the case where an property rates and services account is issued only to a registered owner and the account is not paid by the final date for payment, credit control will be applied to the premises of the registered owner in that the Municipality will disconnect the electricity supply to the premises and block prepaid electricity. In the case of water, the premises will be provided with a water control device according to which the consumer's water supply will be limited to as little as 325 L a day. If the supply to a business premises or block of apartments is terminated owing to the owner defaulting on the account, the Municipality will inform the tenants of the premises of such a termination in advance.

Although the Swartland Municipality will honour owners' existing lease contracts concluded before 1 July 2014 up to and including 30 June 2015, it will not accept any lease agreements concluded after

that date. The reason for this is that after 30 June 2014 the Municipality will be able to open an account only in the name of a registered owner.

An agent, including any consumer, will be able to apply for a services connection at the Municipality. However, this may only be done with the written consent of the registered owner, accompanied by a certified copy of the owner's identity document.

State and municipal properties that are occupied by tenants are excluded from the single billing system.

Although consumer services deposits will have to be refunded to tenants, the Municipality will be compelled to increase the securities of owners. Owners are accordingly encouraged to negotiate with their tenants in order to transfer services deposits to the owners, thereby reducing the burden on owners. The consumer services deposit is a matter between the owner and the tenant, but the owner will remain liable for the payment of the deposit to the Municipality.

Owners and tenants may ask with good reason, *"What prompted the Swartland Municipality to consider such a drastic change?"*

In order to deliver services to the community on a sustainable basis, the Municipality must as far as possible introduce every possible step to manage its resources as effectively as possible. The challenge is to maintain a balance between rendering affordable services on a continuing basis, despite considerable fluctuations in the economy, unemployment, salary increases, escalating fuel prices, electricity and water tariff increases and statutory levies, and generating limited income from assessment rates and municipal services accounts.

During the past few years, the Municipality had to rely heavily on its cash reserves in order to keep tariff increases within the consumer price index. As this is not sustainable over the long term, the Municipality had to introduce drastic steps to curtail expenses.

Two of these steps are the installation of Aqua-loc water control devices and the issuing of a single assessment and municipal services account to owners.

***Financial benefits of one account to the municipality:***

Credit Control Division:

- Improved administration;
- Credit control is simplified in that the focus is on the owner;
- Credit control reports will be managed more effectively as the number of accounts will decrease significantly. The focus moves to the owner as the defaulter in terms of his or her account, and does not fall jointly on the owner and the tenant;
- A considerable saving in administrative costs to the Credit Control Division owing to fewer postal items with regard to (a) reminders; (b) summonses; (c) judgments; and (d) section 65 notices or attachments;
- Postage in credit control process;
- Legal costs;
- Scaling down of staff, e.g. average salary of R150 000 X 3 = R450 000 per annum X 30 years at simple calculation = R13,5 million;
- Savings on two vehicles, including running costs of vehicles, which in two years' time will not require replacement;
- Savings on office space, including telephone, stationery and protective clothing;

- The disconnection list will apply to defaulting owners only, and tenants will no longer be considered, which means a saving in the cost of the disconnection list, whereas the disconnection list will be administrated in a much shorter period than is currently the case.

Services Division:

- Improved administration;
- Connections and disconnections will only apply to owners when property is sold, and no connections and disconnections will be made in respect of property tenants;
- The process of preparation to month end will be simplified in its entirety;
- Less pressure on enquiries and cashiers, as focus is on owners;
- Substantial savings in printing costs of accounts and postage (e.g. at simple calculation R2,80 X 5 000 = R14 000 X 12 = R168 000 X 30 years = R5 040 000);
- The total number of properties in the Swartland is 24 510. The average number of accounts each month is 29 900;
- Monthly reports will be reduced to outstanding balance of owners only, and no longer of owners and tenants.

## **Swartland Municipality leaps ahead with Abbotsdale housing project**

Since March 2013, the appearance of Abbotsdale south of Malmesbury has changed dramatically as a result of a housing project that is rising rapidly in the area.

After the construction site for the two-bedroom homes was officially handed over to the brothers Siebrits and Albe Laker (managing directors of Asla Devco), the civil engineers firstly commenced preparations for positioning and installing all civil engineering services, a process that lasted up to December 2013. Following that, the houses rose rapidly, which prompted questions from the public about the rapid building method.

***Building method:***

Johannes Steenkamp, Director of Development Services at the Swartland Municipality in Malmesbury, explained that this method was used over the past number of years for the construction of Asla houses and that Asla engineers had developed and patented the concept behind the building method many years ago. "The method is 100% safe and involves a floating foundation, which means the framework and floor of the house are cast in concrete and the house is then constructed from the inside.

"This is a much cheaper and faster building method. This method also makes it easier to employ unskilled labourers, in that building work at every project should ideally benefit the local community. When the building process flows easily, the builder is able to complete five to eight houses a day. The eventual house is as solid and safe as a conventional house," Steenkamp explains.

"Every house comprises 40 square metres, has two bedrooms, a kitchen, bathroom and a living area, and is worth about R100 000. The house has a front and back door and a ceiling. The recipient of a house becomes the owner of the house and is only required to pay the municipal connection fee (about R300), while the purchase contract stipulates that owners may not sell their home within eight years. The erven are large enough to each have a small garden, and restrictions are placed on the colours that owners may use to paint their houses; which means owners can establish a sense of pride and ownership in their home," Mayor Tijmen Van Essen said at the time. "We all want a neat and tidy housing project here next to the N7."

As 15% of the houses will be allocated to farm workers, efforts will be made to place them together as a group in order to make the adjustment to town life easier.

The Municipality plans to establish green principles in the area over time, for instance the use of grey water, a tree for every garden, and to encourage homeowners to establish their own gardens.

***Who qualifies?***

These houses are meant for families whose income does not exceed R3 500 a month. However, the project also provides for families who earn more than this amount and these homes will be constructed on so-called Gap erven, with 56 erven already earmarked for this purpose.

The possibility of constructing an additional 103 apartments on the premises is also being considered. "The concept of apartments is still new to the residents of Abbotsdale and the implementation thereof is being investigated in collaboration with the Department of Human Settlements," Steenkamp adds.

The names of some of the people who received homes had been on the waiting list for nearly 12 years.

***Handing over of keys:***

Provincial minister of housing, Bonginkosi Madikizela, and the mayor of the Swartland Municipality, Tijmen van Essen, presided over the ceremonial handing over of the keys to four families.

Michael and Carol Carolus, Ncediswa Sigwiji, Helena Onverwagt and Jonathan Matthews were the first four owners who received the keys to their homes.

The new owners were delighted to receive their keys. "We realise that we cannot move in yet, as some of the work still needs to be completed," they all agreed.

These homes should be ready by the end of May or June. The entire project will cost the provincial government approximately R56-million.

Eskom planned to commence with the installation of electricity for the project in April and the first homes will be supplied with electricity during May/June. Owners will be able to move in shortly after that.

"The doubling of the N7, together with the construction of these homes, presented one of our major challenges," Steenkamp said. "We also applied for additional funding from the Department of Human Settlements so that we would be able to add finer finishes to the homes, but we are still waiting for a response to this application. We have received another three applications for houses from people with disabilities. However, these individual subsidies will need to be approved first before we will be able to make adjustments to the homes for these disabilities.

"Once people have moved into their homes, we will begin a guidance and educational process for the new residents. We will encourage people to establish gardens and will create space for parks and other community facilities such as bus and taxi terminals."

### **Third clean audit for Swartland Municipality**

Swartland Municipality has (for a third successive year) again received a clean audit from the auditor-general (AG) for the 2012/2013 financial year. The classification of a clean audit is very strict and many aspects are considered in great detail, which means a clean audit could easily turn into an

unqualified audit. Present at the handing-over ceremony were Ms Sharonne Adams (acting head of the Western Cape AG team), Mr Kimi Makwethu (auditor-general), Mr Joggie Scholtz (municipal manager of Swartland Municipality), Mr Tijmen van Essen (mayor of Swartland), Mr Pierre le Roux (internal auditor of Swartland) and Ms Tsakani Ratsela (deputy auditor-general)

## Hints on how to prepare for winter

There is an old song that says, “When the sun is shining the roof is not leaking.”

### ***What preventable disasters can strike you in the winter months ahead?***

- \* Waterproof your roof while the sun is shining, as it is far too late to do so when rain and cold spells strike.
- \* Get onto your roof (or arrange for someone to do this for you) and check whether the gutters are clean, the fascia boards are firmly fixed in place and the screws are fastened tightly.
- \* Do not wait for the rainy weather to set in if you are dependent on strong canvas or sails to stay dry at night. Fix any tears or leaks in good time.
- \* Check the drains on your premises and make sure that they are clean and unblocked. Blocked drains and pipes immediately cause flooding in an area.
- \* Take ownership of your premises by maintaining the drainage system in a responsible way. Very few areas in the Swartland are prone to flooding because of their geographic location.

### ***How does the Swartland Municipality prevent disasters in winter?***

- \* The Municipality embarks on the annual cleaning of its stormwater drains and pipes ahead of winter. You can assist by not throwing refuse or rubble in stormwater drains and pipes.

*Please call the following emergency numbers to report any problems that relate to municipal services:  
022 487 9479 or 022 487 9400.*

## Energy-efficient streetlights

Residents of the Swartland will notice later this year that the Swartland Municipality (SM) is in the process of replacing certain of the existing streetlights with energy-efficient streetlights that use LED (light-emitting diodes) and HPS (high-pressure sodium) technology.

This means the current inefficient mercury-vapour type streetlights will need to be replaced (depending on their application) with lighting that appears more yellow in colour.

According to Roelof du Toit, Director: Electrical Engineering, the level of lighting will not decrease, but energy consumption will be significantly lower and the lights will require less maintenance work.

“The project will contribute to savings in energy consumption and is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from electricity generation by up to 660 tons in the first phase,” du Toit explains.

The first phase focuses primarily on the residential areas of Moorreesburg, Darling, Yzerfontein and Malmesbury (De Molen, Bergzicht and Panorama areas), as well as the PPC township.

“This energy-efficient method of street lighting will contribute to the preservation of the environment,” du Toit adds.

\* The project is made possible through an allocation of R9 million by the Department of Energy to the SM for projects to improve the efficient use of electrical energy by the Municipality. The first phase will be implemented in 2014, while the next phase is expected to be completed by 2015.

### More money for specialist care

After the local government voted a significant amount of money to retirement homes according to the bed occupancy at these facilities, an additional amount of between R750 000 and R780 000 was provided to donate to nursing homes in the Swarland region. The list of beneficiary care homes was extended in the current financial year to include Jo-Dolphin in Malmesbury and Huis van Heerde in Moorreesburg. According to Mayor Tijmen van Essen, such contributions are essential to assist with specialist care. Examples of projects that retirement homes could undertake with these funds include heat pumps, a call button system for every bed and air-conditioning units.

### New system for traffic and law enforcement

The municipal police service as Swartlanders came to know it over the past ten years underwent a complete change in structure on 31 July 2013, when it was restructured to focus on traffic and law enforcement services instead. This step was necessitated by the increasingly high costs incurred by the police service.

Where the municipal police previously focused on crime prevention and combatting crime, the new traffic and law enforcement services focus on enforcing municipal bylaws and traffic safety.

“Our purpose has shifted to creating a safe and carefree environment where visitors, residents and pedestrians feel safe and where the impact of traffic safety and municipal bylaws is clearly visible,” chief of traffic, Roman Steyn, said.

#### ***Law enforcement***

The municipal plan in terms of bylaws is in line with the strategic objectives of the Swartland Municipality, as provided in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

The objectives or functions of the Law Enforcement Division involve the following:

- Illegal land invasions • Illegal structures • Overnight parking of heavy vehicles • Illegal dumping (refuse) • Lost or stray animals • Illegal trade in alcohol and drugs • Xenophobic attacks.

#### ***The strategy of the Law Enforcement Division involves:***

- The prevention of illegal land invasion, by:
  - Regularly conducting patrols in areas where this takes place;
  - Immediately demolishing all structures erected ;
  - Maintaining daily patrols in affected areas.
- Dealing with stray or lost animals covers the following:
  - Proactively enforcing the bylaws regarding stray or lost animals; and
  - Transporting impounded animals to the Atlantis pound.
- Preventing overnight parking involves the following:
  - Conducting regular patrols and follow up;
  - Ensuring that no overnight or parking of heavy vehicles are allowed and policing the area to ensure a safe environment.
- Other functions of their focus area involve: issuing driving licences; vehicle registration and licencing; roadblocks; checking of roadworthiness of vehicles; regulating and preventing

unroadworthy, overloaded or defective vehicles; and law enforcement relating to drunk driving and speeding (including education).

Municipal bylaws cover a wide range of offences, for example public drunkenness, too many dogs on a premises, and assistance with certain operations of the SAPS.

*Roman Steyn is in charge of traffic and law enforcement services and may be contacted at 022 487 9411.*

## Remember: Safety first!

The Swartland Municipality's Director: Protection Services, Philip Humphreys, and its Chief of Traffic, Roman Steyn, would like to share the following golden rules of safe road usage with you:

**Seat belts:** Get into the habit of wearing your seat belt, even if you only drive to your nearest cafe. Most accidents happen within one kilometre of your home.

**Seat belts or child restraints:** Teach your children from a young age to stay seated and buckled up in the back of the vehicle. Children may not stand up in a vehicle. Please consider for a moment your child flying through the air and hitting the windshield like a projectile in a collision. Better safe than sorry!

### **Tyre safety:**

- \* Check your tread depth. The tread grooves must retain a minimum depth of 1 mm around the circumference of the tyre; this is a legal requirement and in the interest of your safety.
- \* Check your tyre pressure. In the interest of your own safety, get into the habit of asking the petrol attendant to check your tyre pressure when you fill up your tank. Remember: Safety first!
- \* Check for tyre damage on all tyres. Be on the lookout for signs of uneven wear or any objects that may be lodged in the tread. Cuts, tears or bulges may lead to problems later.

**Vehicle safety check before a trip:** Get into the habit of checking your vehicle carefully before every major trip. Check that your tyres, direction indicators, hazards, rear lights, brake lights and headlights are working properly.

Do both headlights shine equally bright, or is one too dim; or maybe one headlight does not work?  
Prevent accidents by ensuring that your lights are in perfect working order.

**Pedestrians and cyclists:** Be extremely careful and wear reflective clothing when you are on the road at night. To prevent accidents, ensure that you are sober and visible at all times. The number of cyclists and pedestrians that are injured in accidents in our country is much too high.

**Cell phones:** Cell phones break your concentration and it is illegal to use them while driving. Install a hands-free set in your vehicle if you do have to talk on your phone while driving.

**Driving under the influence of alcohol:** Guard against driving under the influence!

Your blood alcohol level may not exceed 0,05g/100ml if you are driving a regular vehicle. For truck drivers the maximum blood alcohol level is 0,02g/100ml.

- \* Be responsible and choose a designated driver who can drive you home safely.
- \* The Buddy Buddy system introduced in Stellenbosch has led to the appointment of a regular designated driver for return trips. This resulted in the number of drunk driving arrests decreasing significantly.

\* A criminal complaint of drunk driving against you means you have a criminal record, which may count against you when you apply for a job.

## **Actions for greening the Swartland**

An amount of R100 00 was voted in the new budget for 2014/2015, for greening each of the 12 wards of the Swartland Municipality.

Feasible actions aimed at greening all the towns in the region will assist in making the Swartland a more attractive place and will enhance the lives of its inhabitants. The accompanying economic injection will also make the region more appealing to visitors.

Mayor Tijmen van Essen has the following to say:

“In the process, we will consult with every ward in an effort to use some 20 to 30% of the funding to plant waterwise and suitable trees.

“We would like to do this in partnership with residents who are willing to have a tree planted at their property and in the process of establishing the tree, assist only with watering.”

Although the exact number of trees will only be available later, the idea is to plant between 500 and 1 000 trees over the next four years, or as many as possible every year.

These actions aimed at greening the region further, now coincide with plans to green and beautify the region’s parks and other recreational facilities. Rather than considering only expensive and traditional options like swimming-baths, we are exploring alternative options to provide recreational facilities at more affordable prices.

## **Street maintenance programme**

At the most recent council meeting of the Swartland Municipality, Mayor Tijmen van Essen pointed out that the maintenance of streets would be attended to shortly as a matter of urgency. “We realise that streets in the Swartland municipal area need attention urgently. Today I am instructing the engineers to investigate the expediency of the type of upgrading required for most of the streets. Although the cheaper option of upgrading entails a shorter life span, my instruction today is that the engineers present proposals on the most economic option available for upgrading the streets.

“Let’s rather upgrade the existing streets before they fall in such a state of neglect that we would have to dig up and rebuild them later at an even higher cost.”

The municipality is also planning the construction of additional and cheaper speed humps to calm traffic and improve road safety.

Swartland Municipality is responsible for 301 km of sealed municipal streets, the replacement value of which amounts to R576-million.

Streets need to be sealed every 12 years as a precautionary measure to ensure that the road surface remains in good condition. If sealing is not done timeously, the surfacing layer fails and the road needs to be rebuilt at a much higher cost.

At the moment, 49% of the SM’s streets are in a good or excellent condition, 28% need to be resealed, while 23% are in a poor condition and need to be rehabilitated.

The current backlog amounts to R141-million.

### Increase in outstanding debt could derail financial sustainability

Although the Credit Control Division of the Swartland Municipality (SM) is doing everything in its power to ensure that owners or tenants pay their monthly assessment rates and services accounts, the Council's monthly reports indicate that debt is growing steadily.

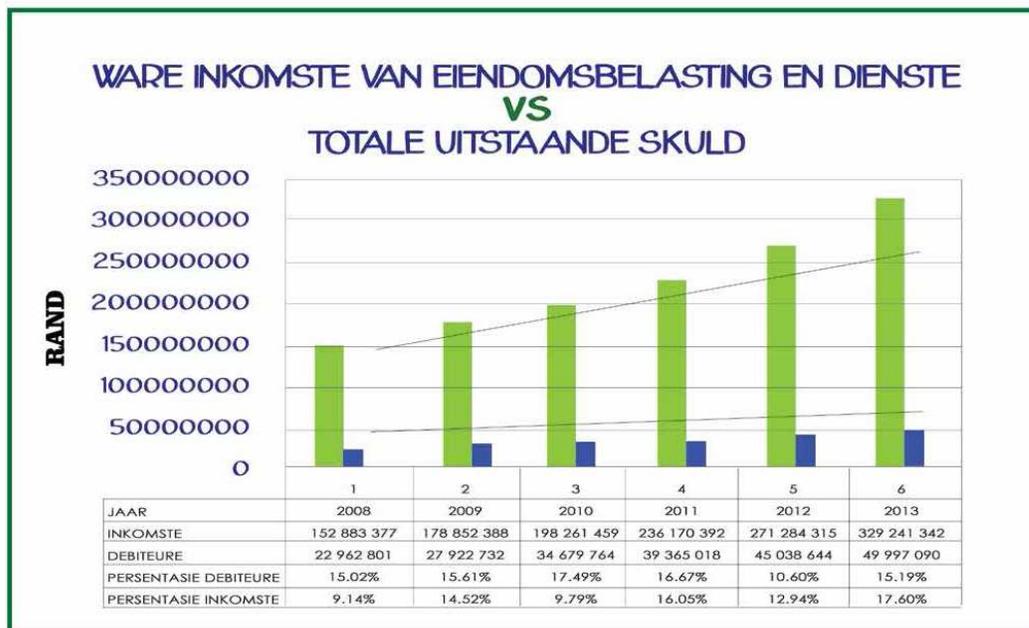
This is a source of concern, as outstanding debt may derail the rendering of a sustainable service to the community.

Being confronted with media and TV reports of communities protesting against poor municipal service delivery, and considering that people (especially children) are put at risk by having to drink untreated water, rivers are being polluted by sewage, refuse collection services are often non-existent, and water treatment plants are ineffective and run-down, one cannot help but wonder where things have gone wrong.

A reasonable assumption is that the crisis may be blamed on poor leadership, a lack of clean and accountable administration, unemployment, and the non-payment of assessment rates and services accounts.

In many instances, municipalities do not take water and electricity meter readings regularly or fail to do that at all. Many households may not even receive services accounts, or very seldom do.

As is evident from the accompanying example of the SM's outstanding debt over the past number of years, it is evident that the SM is also burdened by the non-payment of municipal services accounts.



Although the compassionate or indigent subsidy that municipalities receive from the national fiscus helps to prevent outstanding debt spiralling out of control, the ever-increasing influx of people to the Swartland puts enormous pressure on the infrastructure and cash reserves of Swartland.

That is why the Municipality needs to remind people that sustainable service delivery is in their own hands. Fortunately, the SM can pride itself in having a clean administration and accountable

leadership, while the clean audit reports it received over the past three years also bear testament to that.

### **Aqua-loc water control system for Swartland**

Water control devices are new to the Swartland. These devices regulate water consumption and are able to limit water consumption up to a certain number of litres a day when required under special circumstances.

This system is regarded as a mechanism that Swartland Municipality (SM) can use to meet its responsibility in terms of preserving scarce natural resources. Needless to say, water is an expensive trading commodity and the SM is currently suffering heavy losses as far as this commodity is concerned.

The first Aqua-loc water control devices will be installed at the new housing settlement in Abbotsdale. An information meeting was held with the housing committee of Abbotsdale on 5 February, while the way the system works will be explained to residents at a public participation meeting to be held in the Abbotsdale community hall on 20 May, at 19:30.

The Aqua-loc water control device regulates water at the required full flow of 10 L a minute and is accordingly not a drip system. If the consumer is placed on water control, 325 L will be let through every 24 hours. If the entire amount of 325 L is consumed during the period, the meter will not provide additional water until 00:00, whereafter the water meter will let through the next 325 L for the day.

The community will be requested at the meeting to sign an undertaking by each owner in which they agree to the credit control policy of the SM and confirm that the working of the Aqua-loc meter was explained to them in full.

Water control mechanisms are aimed at improving credit control, to help residents get into the habit firstly of using water sparingly and secondly of cultivating the responsibility to pay their water services accounts faithfully.

The Aqua-loc water control device is not the same device as the one that communities protested against in Cape Town and the media reported on recently.

The SM plans to install water control devices in the 2014/2015 financial year at approximately 600 inaccessible erven where the Municipality finds it difficult or impossible to obtain water readings. Electronic readings can be obtained within a distance of 50 to 100 m when a meter reader walks past the meters.

#### ***Why the major concern about our water resources?***

The pressure on cash recovered from the water tariff is aggravated because the SM, being one of three B municipalities who buy water from the West Coast District Municipality (WCDM), is required to make a financial contribution to the WCDM in order to ensure that the infrastructure from Withoogte and Voëlveidam is replaced and maintained as required. Currently, this is a source of grave concern and will be discussed at the Council meetings of the SM and the WCDM during the acceptance of the budget in May this year.

The SM will be seen to neglect its duty if it does not consider the gravity of its responsibility to supply water to its communities, as water is vital to life. In the light of this, the public is once again requested to use water with great circumspection.

**How can I assist?**

Use water sparingly and fix or replace all leaking taps, toilets and water pipes on your premises.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** The SM is in the process of revising the entire water tariff structure and is considering the possibility of introducing a basic tariff again in order to recover fixed costs. The implementation of the adjusted tariff is planned for 1 July 2015.

## Safe electricity in order to prevent load shedding

Due to the nationwide shortage in capacity that persists, Eskom once again urge all consumers to save electricity in order to reduce the possibility of load control.

When the available generating capacity becomes insufficient, load shedding will be unavoidable in order to prevent long-term power outages and the declaration of an emergency situation by Eskom.

Load shedding will then be commissioned according to the schedules published on Eskom's website (<http://loadshedding.eskom.co.za/>).

Everyone can contribute and work together to avoid load shedding by positively responding to requests via the media and by applying saving tips, especially during weekdays between 17:00 to 21:00.

## SAVE, SAVE, SAVE!

### Action needed from households



"If you're not using it, switch it off."

- **Geyser:** Switch off geysers between 06:00 and 22:00, reduce thermostat to 60 degrees, insulate geyser and water pipes and replace geysers with solar water heaters.
- **Lighting:** Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy savers, and switch off lights in unoccupied rooms
- **Bathing:** Shower rather than bath as less hot water is used, and install an energy efficient shower head
- **Climate control:**
  - Minimise use of air conditioners by first opening windows to allow cool air to circulate
  - When using an air-conditioner keep the temperature setting between 22 – 23 degrees C
  - Insulate ceilings to keep home cool in summer and warm in winter
  - Pool pumps: Reduce the operating time to limit water circulation and set the pool pump to operate between 24:00 and 05:00
  - Vampire appliance usage - Don't leave appliances in standby mode.
    - Unplug cellphone charger
  - Participate in the Power Alert programme on national TV (SABC and etv)

## Swartland Municipality leads with reduction of red tape

A commitment to excellent service delivery and a mindset that encourages development in the interest of progress are the two most important factors that led Swartland Municipality to introduce measures to dramatically speed up the turnaround time of building plans approval. The initiative was such a success that the Western Cape Red Tape Reduction Unit voted it a best practice.

Following a special client satisfaction survey conducted by Swartland, red tape-related delays with building plans was highlighted as one of the Municipality's weaker points. A turnaround strategy was subsequently introduced to reduce bottlenecks and delays caused by rules, regulations, bureaucracy and over-complicated procedures, and to speed up processes. This was done with the knowledge that the speedy approval of building plans would result in positive development benefits.

The turnaround time of 26 days in 2011 evidently slowed down development initiatives. However, the new strategy soon yielded fruit and within a year's time the approval period for building plans that meet all the requirements was reduced to 18 days. Since then, another evaluation followed and the period currently comes to 15 days, almost half the original time.

Applicants now receive an sms with a reference number within 48 hours of submitting a complete application with the full application fee, while the relevant departments now meet twice a week to consider applications. In cases where applications are incomplete or do not meet the requirements, applicants are provided with a complete set of guidelines to facilitate the process and speed up approval.

In the light of these successes, Municipal Manager Joggie Scholtz said, "This is a case of the correct attitude, will and perseverance to render an excellent service to the community, especially a service that contributes to the economy. I am really proud of the staff in the directorate and division who are committed to making this work."

## Drug Action Committee established

"I was in hell for 22 years."

Curt Green was once addicted to drugs. At the founding meeting of the Drug Action Committee in Malmesbury, Curt (who has been clean for five years) related his life story:

"At the age of 13, I began experimenting with dagga and later with other drugs, which caused my parents enormous grief. I was also later in a relationship, my ex-girlfriend and child also suffered a lot because of my drug addiction."

"Now I am trying to come to grips with my past and with the ugly things I did to so many people. I finally realise how selfish one gets when one turns into a junkie, how one isolates oneself completely from society."

According to Green, he started using dagga as a child, but soon turned to harder drugs. "I was later kicked out of the house, but that did not stop me."

"Not even a stab wound, or overdosing and having to be admitted to hospital twice, brought me to my senses. You should know that when you are a drug addict, your brain spends the whole day thinking of drugs and finding ways to get your next fix."

Curt (he was still employed), tells how he once bought R2 500 worth of drugs over a weekend and locked himself in with a single purpose in mind: To use as much as possible, as soon as possible. His body collapsed completely, even before he could take the lot and he eventually awoke that Monday morning. "I realised then that I needed drug rehab treatment and that I was the only one who could make that decision!"

Five years later Curt is still clean.

"We have a dire need for support groups in Malmesbury. We should take care not to go into denial. Pretending the problem does not exist will not make it disappear. We should move beyond talking and holding meetings, and take action, because it's tough up there!" Curt says.

\* During the founding meeting, Mayor Tijmen van Essen said: "I was completely stunned by Curt's story. Let's assist people with addictions, let's empower ourselves with knowledge of the symptoms, let's support them; and let's be preventive in our approach and ensure that we create healthy families at home!"

The committee comprises representatives from every facet of society and its main objective is to establish a database of the needs of addicted persons and their families. Support groups are also in the pipeline.

"We need to realise that drug addiction is a complex matter. We are not looking for oversimplified or ready-made solutions," Marguerite Holtzhausen of the Swartland Municipality said in conclusion.

### **Adjustment to compassion subsidy**

The Council of the Swartland Municipality (SM) on 27 March 2014 approved in principle that, with effect from 1 July 2014, the criteria for compassion or indigent subsidies will be based on a valuation according to market value of R100 000 and less. In addition to this concession, the indigent household will, in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act, 2004, receive an additional rebate of R15 000 on the valuation. Although the Municipality will not conduct further socio-economic surveys in the field, the Council receives the right (when information is received that a household maintains a lavish lifestyle) to withdraw the indigent subsidy of the household concerned.

Where the valuation on market value exceeds R100 000 and the specific household is burdened by unemployment, the Municipality may grant an indigent subsidy to such a household at its discretion. Despite enormous pressure on the water service to provide a sustainable service to its community, the Municipality decided to maintain the status quo of providing households with 10 kL free water every month. An additional concession to the residents of the 56 and 96 flats in Malmesbury, because of their socio-economic circumstances and the fact that these flats do not have hot water systems, is that the Council will not recover the cost of blockages in the main sewer system from the residents. This concession may also be extended to other similar cases at the discretion of the Financial Services Department.

The following subsidies will be granted to indigent households in terms of the criteria of the SM's Credit Control Policy:

- An average of 10 kL free water every month
- 50 kWh electricity
- Free sewerage service
- Free refuse removal once a week
- Valuation on market value of property, of R100 000