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## BLUE FLAG NATIONAL LAUNCH – October 2010

Beautiful Mossel Bay hosted the 2010 Blue Flag National Launch on Thursday 28 October 2010. The event, held on Santos beach, brought together representatives from all the municipalities participating in the programme. It was great to welcome (back) our Tourism Minister, Marthinus van Schalkwyk who was the guest speaker, and Sophie Bachet from FEE in Denmark.

Officiating at the event, Minister van Schalkwyk highlighted the growing number of foreigners visiting our country. Statistics just released indicate that compared to the same period in 2009, foreign visitor numbers had increased by almost three quarters of a million people, an increase of 18 percent. "I have no doubt that 2010 is going to be .....

Above: Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Mossel Bay Mayor M. Ferreira and Malcolm Powell of WESSA.



..... a bumper year for tourism in South Africa, and by launching the Blue Flag beaches today, we kick off the summer season in the country. I invite local and international visitors alike to enjoy the fantastic tourism offerings of our municipalities. Our government, in close cooperation with the tourism industry, is continuously investing in tourism services and facilities in order to provide tourists with an exceptional experience. Having Blue Flag beaches helps make us more competitive as a tourism destination” said the Minister.

Blue Flag has grown from only three beaches in the first year to 27 for this, the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the programme. Growth has been significant and sustainable for most coastal municipalities and each year sees new beaches being introduced to the programme.

Visit [www.blueflag.org.za](http://www.blueflag.org.za) for further news of the National Launch.



**Marthinus van Schalkwyk with Sophie Bachet, International Blue Flag Programme Manager from Denmark.**



**WELL DONE! The Ugu/Hibiscus Coast team who share the honours with the City of Cape Town in having the most Blue Flag beaches in a municipality. (Below) The City of Cape Town team.**





## Celebrating 10 years of Blue Flag

The National Launch in October was also the occasion to acknowledge the role that a number of people played in helping to establish Blue Flag in South Africa.

Anton Botha, manager of the six Blue Flag beaches in Hibiscus Coast, is the only beach manager who has been involved in the programme since the outset. During the feasibility phase in the late 1990s, Anton was a major role-player in helping to shape Blue Flag South Africa. Thanks to his practical expertise important aspects of operational elements were brought into the programme.

## Growing Tourism markets

At a time when the global tourism market is still feeling the effects of the global recession, many countries are now factoring into their tourism strategies, tourism for people with physical disabilities as recognition grows that this sector of the market remains largely untapped.

The Blue Flag criteria require that at least one beach in a municipality have facilities for those with physical disabilities, e.g. toilets, parking, access. What South Africa has tried to do is to get every Blue Flag beach to meet these requirements.

Over the past two years, some Blue Flag municipalities have reported the overwhelming success since they introduced beach-friendly wheelchairs. And we hear news that more Blue Flag beaches will soon have these resources available to the public. In many cases, these wheelchairs have been sponsored by local service organisations, e.g. Rotary groups, and in so doing everyone benefits.

The pictures on the right show the wheelchair being used at Lappiesbaai Blue Flag beach.



For more information about companies that can supply these chairs as well as general information on accessibility issues, contact Karin Coetzee at [info@disabledtravel.co.za](mailto:info@disabledtravel.co.za) or visit <http://www.disabledtravel.co.za> It is interesting to note that Proudly Accessible have found that only 21% of facilities which claim to be accessible are actually compliant and meet the accepted criteria!!!!



## Rescue Jet Ski Training – taking the initiative



Internationally, the PWC (jet ski) is being favoured as the correct asset to use for in-shore surf rescue. With the jet ski there is no exposed propeller in the water thereby reducing the risk of harming bathers, and a jet ski is more manoeuvrable than the traditional Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB).

In an effort to meet with International trends, Ocean Lifeguard Solutions, together with Getsea Skippers Academy (SAMSA/SADSAA accredited agent), has formulated a surf rescue jet ski course. This course is run for all surf rescue personnel and includes the national requirement of a Skippers Licence Category E.

Amongst a whole range of aspects, the course covers the following topics:

- Powercraft Code of Conduct
- Operational Requirements
- Emergency Drills
- Transiting the Surf Zone
- Hazard identification.

Ocean Lifeguard Solutions has put together a comprehensive training manual and training regime as this has not existed in South Africa before. The course covers two days of classroom work for theory, two days of flat water work and three days of surf work for the practical. This is based on the candidate being in possession of a valid Cat E or higher skippers licence.

“I believe that PWCs will be the way of the future for Surf Rescue. I am also, however, of the opinion that certain beaches will retain their boats as they have specific applications for their beach” says Leon Garbade.

For further details, contact: Leon Garbade  
Director-Ocean Lifeguard Solutions  
Cell: 0716826433  
Office: 039 3121291

# 2010 BLUE FLAG BEACHES



**NORTHERN CAPE**  
 1 MacDougall's Bay

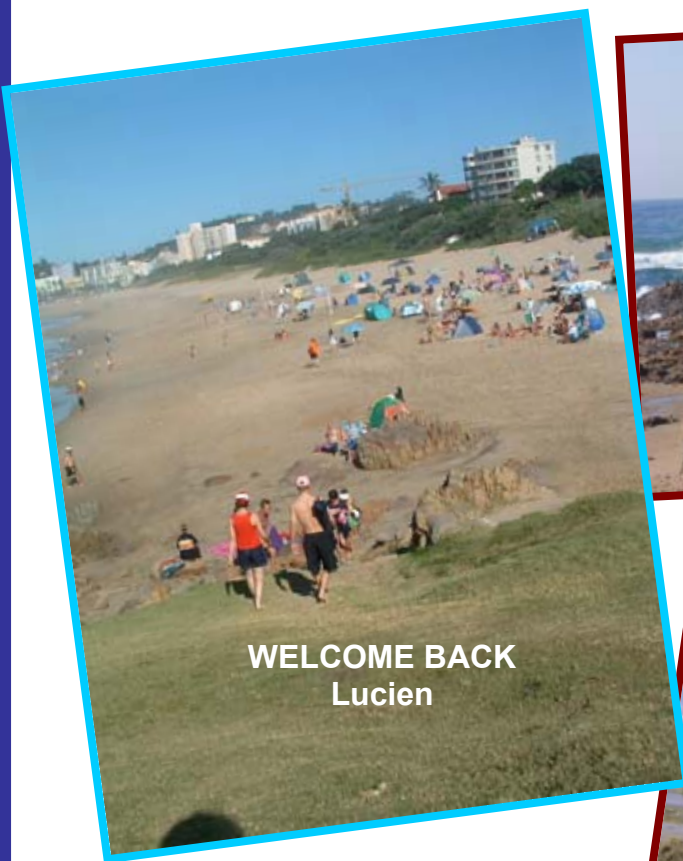
**WESTERN CAPE**  
 2 Yzerfontein  
 3 Clifton 4th  
 4 Camps Bay  
 5 Strandfontein  
 6 Muizenberg  
 7 Mnandi  
 8 Bikini  
 9 Kleinmond  
 10 Herxton  
 11 Grotto  
 12 Witsand  
 13 Lappiesbaai  
 14 Santos  
 15 Hartenbos  
 16 Robberg 5

**KWAZULU-NATAL**  
 27 Trafalgar  
 28 Marina  
 29 Ramsgate  
 30 Margate  
 31 Lucien  
 32 Umzambe (Pumula)

**EASTERN CAPE**  
 17 Dolphin  
 18 Humeswood  
 19 Well's Estate  
 20 Kariega  
 21 Kelly's

## BLUE FLAG BEACHES

**BLUE FLAG SEASON GUIDE:** ● December Holidays ● December - March ● December - January ● November - April ● All Year



**WELCOME BACK**  
 Lucien



**NEW**  
 Umzambe

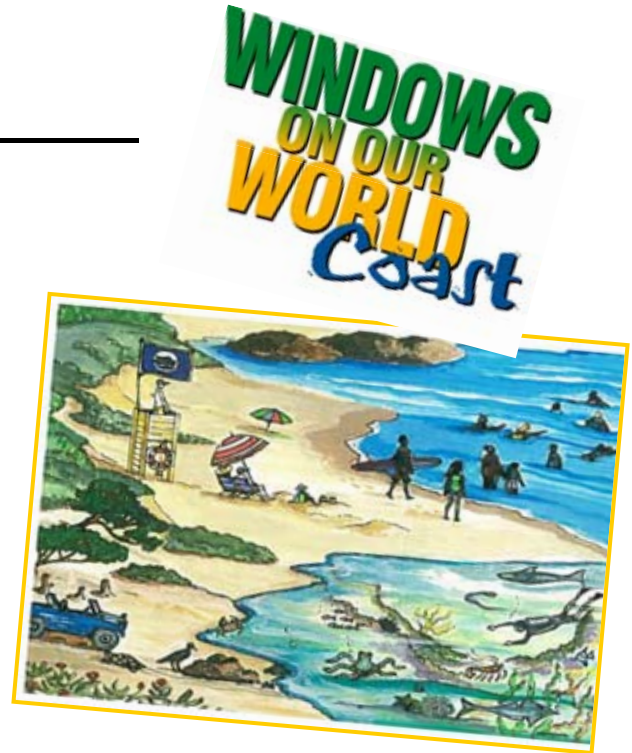


**NEW**  
 Witsand

## NEW RESOURCE IN THE PIPELINE!

All Blue Flag beaches must comply with relevant environmental legislation. In light of the new ICM legislation and the need for all municipalities to ensure that the Act is implemented at Blue Flag beaches, WESSA plans to develop an *EnviroPicture resource (Windows on our World: Coast)* focusing on the coast. This resource will explore management issues, environmental challenges within the coastal zone and makes links to the legislation and appropriate responses to deal with issues.

This resource can only be effectively developed in a collaborative manner drawing on expertise and insights from a wide range of stakeholders. Workshops are planned for early 2011. If you would like to be part of this process or wish to find out more, please contact Alison Kelly at [blueflag@wessa.co.za](mailto:blueflag@wessa.co.za) or phone 0823371273.



## What next? The mind boggles.....

During this past summer, Russian beachgoers got the shock of their lives as a donkey rigged to a parachute went parasailing over a resort on the Sea of Azov. Apparently, a marketing company had decided to use the animal as part of a summer promotion to get more tourists to visit their private beach. The plan backfired, however, as the bleating donkey terrified children and onlookers on the ground. The donkey landed in a nearby lake and nearly drowned.



Do you have any news for future issues of this Blue Flag newsletter? Please send it to [blueflag@wessa.co.za](mailto:blueflag@wessa.co.za) and we will happily put it in future issues. Have you visited the new Blue Flag South Africa website? Go to [www.blueflag.org.za](http://www.blueflag.org.za)

