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KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE
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JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

MINISTER MACPHERSON AND MEC MEYER DELIVER ON COMMITMENT TO PROTECT SOUTH COAST BUSINESSES AND JOBS

- Minister Dean Macpherson and MEC Martin Meyer have handed over six leases to businesses operating along the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast, following a successful court application that cleared the way for the process to proceed.
- The handover provides businesses and workers with greater certainty ahead of the busy Christmas and summer tourism season, supporting jobs, investment and local economic activity.
- The remaining properties previously managed under the 2016 Property Management Agreement will be addressed through a mediated process.

The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, and the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Public Works and Infrastructure, Martin Meyer, today completed the handover of six leases to businesses operating along the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast, following a successful court application that removed the properties from a previous interdict obtained by Ray Nkonyeni Municipality.

The intervention follows concerns by business owners about the management of coastal properties previously overseen by Ray Nkonyeni Municipality under a 2016 Property Management Agreement, which was then terminated by the national department. These included expired leases, deteriorating facilities and tourism infrastructure that was not being used to its full potential.

The six businesses receiving leases are:

- Palm Lagoon Leisure Centre / Jolly Joker Fun Pub & Grub, Hibberdene;
- Marlin Ski Boat Club, Port Edward;
- Tea House Blue Lagoon / Blue Lagoon Restaurant, Ramsgate;
- Shelly Beach and Protea Ski Boat Club, Shelly Beach;
- Southbroom Riptide Restaurant, Southbroom; and
- Trattoria La Terrazza, Umkobi Beach, Southbroom.

The Minister and MEC also confirmed that the outstanding matters concerning the 2016 Property Management Agreement and the remaining properties will be addressed through mediation, with arbitration available if necessary.

Minister Macpherson said the handover marked an important step in restoring confidence to businesses that had been affected by years of uncertainty and poor management of the properties.

"Two weeks ago, these business owners were ready to sign their leases when the handover was unexpectedly halted by a court interdict. We made it clear that we would not allow this setback to derail our efforts to secure their future. We promised them that we would fight for their future and staff they employed. Today we have delivered on that commitment. These six businesses now have the certainty they need to invest in their operations, support their employees and prepare for the busy summer tourism season. Public property must be an economic asset that creates opportunities for communities, not something held back by mismanagement and unnecessary disputes," Minister Macpherson said.

MEC Meyer said what got the ball rolling for KZN Public Works and Infrastructure was email he received from a local who was employed at one of the local and affected restaurants, which had closed down a few years ago.

"In the email this person pleaded for assistance stating a total of 35 permanent and 30 seasonal jobs had been lost while they received no assistance intervention from the local municipality", said MEC Meyer.

"Looking at the dire knock-on effect that was already happening in the South Coast which had resulted in loss of tourists and economic stimulation, I had to do something. We immediately jumped to action with my national counterpart, Minister Macpherson, and through his assistance and vision we were able to cross this milestone", the MEC added.

"This is further proof that one man and a caring government can make a difference", MEC Meyer concluded.

Both departments remain committed to ensuring that public assets along the South Coast are properly managed, maintained and put to productive use in the interests of businesses, communities and the broader tourism economy.

ENDS

Enquiries:

Luke Albert
Acting Spokesperson to the Minister
luke.albert@dpw.gov.za
076 063 9923

Steve Bhengu
Spokesperson for the MEC
Steve.Bhengu@kznworks.gov.za
083 681 7928

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