

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Greater Knysna Business Chamber
7 December, 2023 at 34 Waenhout Street, Knysna

PRESENT: 48 members (quorum: 44)

MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM

- Proposed: Richard Sohn
- Seconded: Jan Van der Westhuizen

FEEDBACK

DRIES VAN ROOYEN: We are very excited to move ahead. To give you an overview we have decided that we will establish an investment committee which is there to provide a partnership amongst quite a few parties, and we're working very closely to establish opportunities for new businesses, creating jobs, creating skills, but also to work quite closely with the bigger community - Garden Route and the whole district. We believe that we have to work closely with the district - there are some very good things happening on that side. And if I may just highlight the ocean economy - we see the boatbuilding as a significant industry in our town. When we started off about 20 years ago there was one boatbuilding company for the export market, but all of a sudden we have now got 15 boatbuilding companies in Knysna, and we need to expand on that because we have the water, and we have the cooperation from SANParks. We have made a lot of inroads into that and we want to grow that even further.

We're excited to move forward to our investment conference, where we'll have the support of Alan WInde, as well as from the UK, Spain, and others.

BEVERLY POTHIER: The Knysna Educational Skills Hub (KESH) was set up fairly recently - about 2 months ago. As someone from the Garden Route Skills Mecca said the other day, in order to grow any business you need skills, and those skills need to come from somewhere.

Garden Route Skills Mecca looks for funding from various organisations, and they have achieved that funding. They have placed a representative in every municipality in the Garden Route who works with the communities and the municipalities to identify what is needed for upskilling and growing the economy.

The other very exciting thing that's happening in Knysna in terms of skills development is that the South Cape College is opening a branch here next year. The nice thing about South Cape College is that they don't just open a branch and say, 'These are the courses we offer,' they speak to business and they find out what skills are needed in the area so that there are jobs available for the learners when they come out of whatever courses they're doing.

STEVE OLIVIER: One of the committees that we've been asked to establish is for churches and NPOs in Knysna. We met for the first time last Thursday, and we collated a list of a lot of

organisations that are doing great things here in Knysna, and that many people are not even aware of. We've divided this into fifteen categories:

- Education
- Sport
- Welfare towards children and the aged
- Churches
- Skills development
- Nature
- Animals
- Community service and development
- Arts and culture]
- Women
- Feeding schemes
- Safe houses for babies and children
- Ministries to the poor
- Miscellaneous

There are already about 150 NPOs in Knysna and many churches. So what we're trying to do is just gather as much information as possible for those NPOs that are registered with Section 18(A) certificates so that if you as businesses donate money to an NPO you can claim tax back and it can help you with your social responsibility rewards. We're trying to make sure that we have registered NPOs, and not just fly-by-nights looking for money.

I think it's a great partnership to be able to work business and people who have feet on the ground, helping those who are the most vulnerable and the poor in our town. We are unique in that we have the poorest of the poor, and the wealthiest of the wealthy living with a 5km radius of one another. I think there's a great synergy between business and helping our community where our community needs to be helped.

We are just doing our best to get the information as accurate as possible so that you have a wide array of community projects that you can be involved in.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

PIERRE GOUWS: I just want to take you back to last year's AGM where we basically said we were at a difficult point for the Chamber because we felt like everything was falling a bit flat. We had an open discussion about whether there was a need for the chamber, and I think we all agreed that, yes, there is. We also felt we needed a bit of new leadership but we had challenges with getting people on board straight away, and couldn't immediately vote people in, so we left the current board officially in force.

We did get lots of help from a lot of you, and we're very thankful for that. I think the new leadership has definitely shown that we can move this to the next level. At the beginning, Lester Day helped a lot in terms of things like commentary on the municipal budget, coordinating that

and submitting it to the municipality and to province. Those of you who have never been involved in that process will not understand the amount of work that goes into that: it's enormous, so thank you very much for that, Lester.

Jan also stepped up in a lot of areas: He was key in setting up a lot of these committees and got things going in town. I think one of the highlights to me was the energy summit, so thanks a lot for that as well.

You've seen the new committees recently formed - Dries had done a lot, Bev has done a lot, and others in the background in terms of marketing, so thanks to everybody: I don't want to mention names because I might forget somebody, but there are lots of things like - the Chamber has been very instrumental in getting a homeless shelter to the point where I hope it will happen soon. I know there are lots of hoops to jump through, but I believe it's in the pipeline.

There have been a lot of interventions like for instance earlier this week some of us met with a delegation from the Provincial Government that was in town on a fact-finding mission to try and find out what's going on at the municipality with all the issues with service delivery; yesterday Jan and I went to George where there was a meeting with the Provincial Police Commissioner about their ideas and how they want to work with all the chambers in the Garden Route. So there are a lot of things happening.

A lot of the work that goes into the Chamber is not very visible, so people might say, 'What do you actually do,' because we're not as visible as other people who do stuff that you see next to the road - which is also great, and we're very thankful for that. But a lot of the effort we put in is behind the scenes.

I think it is time to take it to the next level - we have already seen a lot of traction being gained - even our membership, last year we had 70-something, but this year we have 163, so it is positive, and I still think there is place for the business chamber.

I want to use this opportunity to thank everybody, thank the previous board who've been in for a long time - thank you for all the work that you've put in. I think the current board all think that we've had our innings, and it's time for new leadership to take over, and we'll get to that shortly.

FINANCIALS

PIERRE GOUWS: As you will remember, last year the financials were a contentious point for the Chamber. Obviously as a non-profit organisation we are not supposed to make money and sit on piles of investments, but we need to remain solvent and be able to cover our costs. Last year was a bit of a problem because of low memberships and so on, so our audited financial statements showed a loss of R83,000, which basically wiped out our reserves. Remembering this is for the year ended February 2023, our membership fee income was only R41,000 versus R76,000 the previous year, with other income of R64,000 versus R59,000, and our expenses

went up to R195,000 versus R165,000, so that's where the loss came from - versus the previous year's surplus of R19,000.

Current year we are positive. Year-to-date we are on a R48,000 surplus, which put us back into a solvent position, so if we carry on this way, we're fine financially. Again, we also need to keep in mind this is an NPC so we're not supposed to make profits, but we do need to cover costs, which is why we maybe need to look at other ways of finding finance beyond membership fees alone.

The auditors have signed the financials off, so if there are no objections, can we have a proposer?

Proposed: Andries Fourie

Seconded: Dries van Rooyen

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

PIERRE GOUWS: Now we need to appoint auditors. Last year at the AGM we appointed Mazaars from Plett. When we came to audit time, their quote was substantially more than the previous year. Because of our financial situation we have to be prudent and look around, and one of our members is an accountant who has connections with an auditing firm in Johannesburg, which has offered to do it at a much lower fee. My firm can't because I'm not independent, so we've decided to go with them, which is Jacques Bloemhof from JCB Accounting, and he works with a firm in Johannesburg called Burn Reynolds, and Co., and the audit has been done and signed off. So I would like to propose that we re-appoint the same people. Again, we can't do it, and local bigger firms are a lot more expensive.

Are there any objections to that?

JAN VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: I would like to object. We as a business chamber must support local business.

PIERRE GOUWS: Let me just clarify that Jacques is a local and he does the work: the auditor in Johannesburg just reviews his work and signs it off. But we can shop around if that's the general feeling.

The fees that Jacques charged was about R9,000, the fees that Mazaars quoted was R30,000. I have to say from a compliance point of view, I don't think that our firm could have done it much cheaper than Jacques - maybe at R20,000 or R25,000, so the R9,000 was really a help for the Chamber.

We don't have to make this decision now, we can leave it for the new board to decide and come back to the members.

VOTING

PIERRE GOUWS: I've been chairman for three years, and our constitution doesn't allow for anyone to stand for more than three years so it is my time to step down as chairman. As I understand our constitution, current directors who have to resign after three years can make themselves available to be voted in. Our current board has decided that we all resign, and those who want to stand can do, and let the members decide. We don't have to decide today who's going to be chairman, treasurer, etc. We are just going to vote for new directors.

We have currently five directors, but the constitution allows for up to 12. We have seen in the past that 12 is a bit too big, it creates admin nightmares, which was why we reduced it to five. It's also not ideal to have an even number like four, because it becomes difficult when you get stuck on a vote.

Nominations received: My arm has been twisted to stand again, so I can stand for the board, but not for the position of chair. Others are Jan van der Westhuizen, Dries van Rooyen, Beverly Pothier, Richard Thorpe, and Alan Bell.

So if each person can briefly introduce themselves.

JAN VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: There is a dilemma if I am part of this because, as you know, I'm driving the waste-to-energy in town. I want to make it clear that I do not want to get the chamber into a position where people are saying, 'the chamber is using its own position to favour itself.'

But I think there is a lot of work to be done, and therefore I am still willing to stand. I have seen the progress in the last 6 months, and I think we can do a lot more, and we need to do a lot more.

When our company is awarded tenders, they score us on locality, so I feel strongly that we need to support our own businesses, even in a small case like an auditor.

DRIES VAN ROOYEN: I'm an investment strategist economist, and I have the Discovery franchise here in Knysna. We've been in Knysna for 25 years. I'm totally committed to Knysna, and we have a huge vision to really grow all the facets of the Knysna area, to develop the strategic partnerships between this Business Chamber and the Municipality, as well as the NPOs. I think that is ready to bring everybody together. Those partnerships will grow - we've already seen that - I think we have a good relationship with some of the people in the Municipality, with SANParks, and so on.

My plea is that we should see a far more inclusive chamber, and we can do that. There are some good people but we have to take hands to move forward. If I can play a role in that I'm very excited to move ahead in the new year, and to grow our vision not only for growing businesses, but also for growing the community and to put back the hope for jobs, the hope and

the dignity. If we can do that for all our people, for all our young people, that'll be something high on the scoreboard.

BEVERLY POTHIER: I own KnysnaOn, a network service provided here in town. I'd like to take a little about Alan and Dries and Jan, because I don't think they'll blow their own trumpets sufficiently. Alan's been working very hard on every event we've had this year, raking in sponsorships and making sure that everyone pays to attend the events. Dries, you and your subcommittee produced an amazing workshop last Saturday (the Pre-conference Investment Workshop). Jan, bringing subcommittees together, and creating and forming them, taking people around Knysna and finding a piece of land for the South Cape College, that kind of thing. You've been involved, you're already doing the job.

ALAN BELL: Thanks Beverly. I've been coming to Knysna since the '70s, and then moved here in June last year, and got involved in quite a few things. At the Leisure Isle Festival, I got involved with the Honorary Rangers, and I'm now a qualified honorary ranger. And then there was a call earlier this year from the Chamber for people to get involved in Active Citizenry, and I went to that meeting, and I've been involved in the Chamber since then. I helped Jan make the Energy Summit a success, which was measured by the number of participants and the comments, and also, we didn't incur any loss for the chamber. I've also been involved in the Investment Conference, and I'd love to get involved in organising the Knysna Oyster Festival, and I look forward to helping out next year.

RICHARD THORPE: I'm a chartered accountant but not an auditor living in Johannesburg. On Monday I was with Jan when we met with the Provincial Government go through the ills of this municipality.

I stopped being a chartered accountant a number of years ago, and consulted to Anglo Platinum, Daimler-Chrysler, Altron and a lot of smaller businesses as well and it was all really about developing their strategies, and putting in place strategies that could work. I'm very conscious that we all go to strategy conferences and come back with roles of flip-chart paper, and then do nothing about it for the next twelve months.

Since I came here, I started working with, and talking to, the Gauteng Provincial Government in 2003. Since then I've worked with many National Departments within government. I then began working the City of Johannesburg. Here in Knysna the DA asked me to help them, and I spent quite some time putting together a document for them on how you become a mayor – transitioning from being a business person. I've also been deputy chairman of the Audit Committee, chairman of the Knysna Disciplinary Board, currently chairman of the Homeless Forum, and I'm on the exco of the Knysna Safety and Security Committee.

When people look at their objectives for the upcoming year, they somehow make them too complicated or put unrealistic timetables on them. What I've done in the past is to go out to the community and ask them for the five or seven most pressing needs; the real things that inhibit their ability to do business or to grow their businesses. Then by aligning with the appropriate

bodies - the municipality or industry bodies - to resolve those quick wins. And there's no point in achieving quick wins if you keep it to yourself. So you need a very vibrant communications strategy, and my recommendation is that we focus long and hard on social media.

I think that the board has a role in facilitating the work of the various committees we have - and I'm chairman of the Municipal Affairs and Finance committee - and to make sure that the various committees deliver what they're supposed to deliver because if they don't, we don't have the quick wins, and if we don't have the quick wins, we can't communicate them. The idea, finally, is that what we need to do as an overarching principal is to get this town going again and more than that, to develop this town in a diverse, sustainable way, thus attracting investment and helping the town grow.

PIERRE GOUWS: If there are no other people who want to put up their hands, should we vote? Or do we all agree to appoint all six?

As there's no objection, we accept all six candidates as the new board of directors.

STRATEGY for 2024

PIERRE GOUWS: We can't decide on what to do next year if we don't have a long-term vision. Jan has put together a document, which has also been distributed.

JAN VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: I noticed when I joined the Chamber that we're doing a lot of things, but we don't have a plan for the future. The same is true for the town. I've asked the mayor and the MM how this town will look in 2040, but they can't tell me. So one of the things that I did was speak with the COGTA representative and told them that next year, we will take the Municipality into a long-term vision strategy session. That's the only way that we can support and make sure that this town is going somewhere, together.

The vision 2040 that I have in mind - and I have already supported other companies which have 2040 visions for themselves (including SANParks). I also know that the strategy of the Western Cape Government includes their Growth 4 Jobs which is focussed on 2035.

The thing is we all need to know what we are going towards.

The purpose of a vision is not only to have this on paper, but it is a living document. One of the key qualities of a vision is to give people hope, and this town is losing hope. If you get into Concordia and Nekkie, where they're every day going to wake up and they're not going to go to job and they don't know what to do, they're losing hope.

Any society consists of mainly four pillars. One is the political pillar, the representatives of the people; the second is the municipal pillar - the people that are supposed to implement the things that are important for the society; the third pillar is business - us; and finally there's a community

pillar, which is all the other people who do not have businesses, but who support our businesses, and is the community which all of us are living in, also. ,

From a business perspective we cannot control political issues. We can vote for them and they'll come up with their own ideas. but once they're in office, they'll do what they can to stay in office, and we cannot control that. But we can control community, and we can control municipality. And by control I mean not controlling them directly but working with them through proper relationships. If we manager to do this, our pillar can be a very strategic pillar to take this town forward. So the 2040 vision is based on business, and the community social pillar is important because the community plays a large role. We must use that to manage and lead the municipality - and believe me, this municipality needs leading. I say that if we do not lead them, they will not implement.

To come up with a vision, you follow certain processes. First, you need to establish your purpose - why are we here? That will tell us what is our vision.

A vision is supported by certain strategies, without being too deep. Wherever we taks our strategies will take us to where we want to be in 2040.

Strategies are supported by structures. Structures are the things that we do - like choosing a group of people to sit together on a board, or choosing different subcommittees to lead us, choosing certain events to make it happen. And those structures that we need to put in place will move our strategies forward for us to reach our vision.

We achieve this through our communications and working with other people - we cannot be in isolation. And if you do that correctly, ideally it will lead to certain performance. The things that you see have happened in the Chamber over the last year, are exactly the things that we know will lead to our desired result.

So if somebody asked me what's the purpose of this chamber, what's our vision, I would promptly say we need to make Knysna a better place than it was yesterday. We need to make this town, a town that matters, where all people and all inhabitants matter, and if somebody arrives here from outside, they must ask us, 'how did you get it to work?'

That's our purpose - we need make a difference. If we cannot make a difference as a chamber, then we do not have a role. And now you can understand - when we first started with this exercise, people asked us if we supported animal welfare or child welfare or others, but we didn't say 'no,' we said, 'we support all of these things to make Knysna a better place..'

Out of this purpose we have a vision, and you don't need to buy into it immediately, but I can tell you that our vision should be that we are the most inclusive business chamber of the region by retaining and attracting businesses to Knysna. If we aren't keeping ourselves healthy, and ourselves wealthy enough to attract and retain more businesses, this town will be gone. For every wealthy individual who comes here, he brings along 20 other families who aren't that

wealthy and they're sitting in Concordia and Nekkie's, and they are draining what we have in the town. So we need to manage this selectively, and we need to make sure that this is a catalyst for bringing and retaining new businesses into the town. This is why I started an Investment Committee, because it needs to create an investment agency which attracts new businesses that can support other businesses, NPOs and churches. An investment agency will make sure that we have new jobs in this town - which is why we started a skills committee, because it brings in an education system which can grow our people.

So our slogan - our tagline - is that we are the inclusive business forum of choice by making sure that we attract and retain business for Knysna.

We need to be actively involved and engage the community to make Knysna better.

Knysna cannot be the holy grail of tourism anymore. Knysna cannot be a sleepy town which relies only on tourism. We will die with that because Knysna - like all the coastal towns around the Western Cape - is the future of South Africa's economy.

With the vision, we need to understand that we have certain values. Inclusivity, integrity, accountability, and performance.

We need to make sure that in our term on the Chamber, we leave something behind that was not there before. We cannot be stagnant and not proactive.

We need to collectively work to ignite each other towards teamwork and creative ideas that will help make this chamber make a difference.

STRATEGIES

The balanced scorecard says that things need to be in balance and that the four main drivers of our strategies should be

(1) growth - we need to grow the economy of the town, we need to grow our businesses, we need to help each other grow our businesses and we need to collaborate and promote tourism as an initiative;

(2) service - this is not only the responsibility of the municipality, but its service to each other. When I've asked for a quote in this town, 75% of the time, I did not get that quote. Then if they do do the work, chances are that you will find you should have asked somebody in George to come and do it. This needs to stop - we need to be a service town where you can serve and attract new businesses because if we want attract Suzuki here - which, by the way, is coming - if they're presented with shoddy deals, they will sooner or later say they don't want to be in Knysna anymore.

(3) Socio-economic strategy - how do we answer to the people of this town who do not have what we have, that don't have businesses; how do we make sure that the economy grows in terms of partnerships whereby we can have educational institutions here, and make sure that the socio-economic aspect is addressed.

(4) Community - how do we make sure that people feel they are part of something bigger.

We are here to serve just as much as the person who cleans our streets or delivers our amenities.

This scorecard is set up very simplistically. If we can understand that we want to grow, and if you do not offer the service in your business you will not grow. If you're growing, you will be able to offer more service because your business will work. So the balanced scorecard is saying that the one will impact the other.

With that in mind, we need to understand that our strategies are not in isolation with what is happening in this town. Dries spoke about the Western Cape's Growth 4 Jobs strategy; if we do not latch onto this, we will isolate ourselves and not get what we can - we will not get a college into town, an investment agency - because Wesgro has an agency to ensure that towns are growing which has been appointed by the Western Cape Government. So we latch onto strategies that are broader than this town. We also need to understand that they want to grow a R1 Trillion economy within a certain timeframe. You can see that driving investment is a key strategy.

We are already working with Wesgro as our partner. We also need to influence the IDPs through strong subcommittees, because if we don't, we won't be able to grow this town.

Our subcommittees are the backbone of the chamber. The members of the Exco cannot go and do these things; it's the subcommittees that can run and master on their own to go out and do what they were created to do. The rest of us can only support, because we need a balanced approach.

The next strategy that we latch onto is the strategy of small town regeneration. This is a strategy of the Urban Development Framework on Government level around how to revive small towns. This is a lengthy and difficult process, but a corner stone of that process is relationships with the communities. If we cannot get our subcommittees to run very closely with the municipality and with other people in the communities that we serve, this will not work. Regeneration of a small town is about the inhabitants of that town. All that we need to do is to ask, 'Please help us to do this.'

If we focus our strategies on the alignment with key issues in our bigger environment, the next thing that we need to do is focus on our structures, because structures drive strategy.

We have a water, waste, and electrical subcommittee; we have the investment and business development committee; the jobs and skills committee; municipal affairs; churches and communities committee; we still need to form one on the regeneration of small towns; we need to have people focusing on our membership and networking, events, social media, projects, and properties: the ocean economy; we need to form a committee for tourism.

Subcommittees need to be established in order to make sure that people address the issues in town.

FROM THE FLOOR: The Knysna Accommodation Association has made a request to see how we can work with them.

JAN VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: We do need to form a number of other subcommittees - Safety is one of them. Out agricultural sector hasn't been addressed.

Relationships will make this work. There is a movement called Knysna Together that was started to unite Knysna by Schalk van der Merwe. We need this initiative - not only for regeneration of our town, but to have relationships with people in our larger communities. This needs to be a golden thread in the Chamber because we need to unite Knysna around a vision for 2040.

SUBCOMMITTEES

This year, you know that we had the Energy Summit, and we established KESH. KESH is not only about bringing the South Cape College to Knysna; it is to address the needs of industry in the Western Cape and Garden Route and Knysna.

The top four areas of jobs that need to be created are is finance; trades; ICT; and education and health.

The idea with KESH is to have a pathway for development of people because the majority of the people in this town will not get through matric. 10% of people make it from grade 1 to matric. So we have created a pathway with various actions in order to make sure that people are caught, and they get various skills, as well as hopes and jobs,

The idea for KESH is to have a multiple-campus in Knysna training multiple people at various levels. We did an audit on the number of institutions in Knysna that are training - but if we do not have a South Cape College here, we will not get money because money flows from government to government, not government to private people. But private people here are already doing a great job.

We've had the pre-conference for the Investment Summit with Wesgro as our partner, and we're looking forward to a bigger conference next year with companies such as Grenadier, Jupiter, and Suzuki.

We had our first meeting with the Churches, Communities, and NPOs subcommittee, with 168 NPOs invited: in that first meeting alone, there were 31 people saying they do want to be part of this

The same happened with the Investment Committee: it started with 21 people.

The skills committee started with 15.

FORUM vs CHAMBER

JAN VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: I want to put it to this meeting that we want to reinvent ourselves to become more inclusive. Therefore we could consider calling ourselves the Knysna Business Forum vs. the Knysna Business Chamber. We've debated it and said - what's in a name? Perhaps we shouldn't worry too much about it. I'm not fixed about 'Forum,' but we need to be seen as more inclusive. The fact is, in the communities that we've driven, we are very inclusive. The people that are there are also as concerned as we are about business. We just need to make sure that we can stay on this track and work closely with them. We cannot afford to be seen as white privileged people not doing what we're supposed to do.

MARTIN HATCHUEL: I don't think it's important to change the name of the Chamber. What is important is to communicate what we're doing - like for instance the Investment workshop and the Energy summit - and for that we need a strong Social Media Subcommittee. Our subcommittee has dwindled because a number of members of the subcommittee have resigned.

GUEST

PIERRE GOUWS: Sorry, I neglected to introduce Dr Willie Cilliers, who is the chairman of the George Chamber of Commerce and also of the AHI

WILLIE CILLIERS: Good afternoon, friends. Today is officially my last meeting before our break. I'm in the same field as Pierre; my day job is auditor, but 50% of my time is spent on business chambers. In the Western Cape there are 65 of them.

I just want to make a few points: Jan, you have presented a comprehensive strategy. Form learning from the past 15 years as chairman of the George Business Chamber, there are certain things that we need to focus on.

Dries mentioned the Growth 4 Jobs strategy. I was personally involved in compiling that strategy, and finding a space for the chamber in it. The Premier was quite clear - it can't be just a strategy, it must be implemented, and the Chambers will implement. From the AHI side we have already established where we will take a big role firstly to unlock opportunity.

I want to suggest something for the board: you as a team in the form of the town's economy don't understand the informal economy. So you and your leadership need to create a structure in Nekkies and Concordia. You need to establish some sort of business grouping there, and with them, you must create a forum. You must meet with them on a regular basis, and see what are the issues in those areas, and they must know what's happening in town. That's the way that we create an inclusive economy. Everyone will do their jobs in their own areas - that's vitally important.

Growth 4 Jobs is about unlocking opportunities. Jan, you mentioned a number of these, but you need to focus on the ones you can achieve immediately. Thus, focus on the top 5 priority areas. You as a chamber will struggle with an income of R40,000 - we have an income of over a million from memberships and fundraising activities such as golf days. This year we became the second business chamber in South Africa to receive funding from ACSA to train entrepreneurs.

I want to applaud you for the way that you've constructed this meeting this afternoon. I attend almost all the meetings in the Western Cape, and my experience at the last AGM you held was a bit shocking. But today it's a constructed, well managed, focussed approach. I have hope for Knysna that with this approach you will take this town forwards.

We are neighbours, and we are really willing to share knowledge of what we have experienced over the 15 years, from best practice. And you can also teach us from your side, from your experience from a small town perspective. Clearly, we can't remain in silos, we need to work together as a region, as the Garden Route. And that's also the point I want to make here: we've had discussions with the TVET Colleges. I picked them up in Cape Town with discussions with NBI (National Business Institutes), and they're working closely with TVET Colleges and municipalities. I was briefed about their plans in the Garden Route. Apart from my role in the Business Chamber, I'm the chairman of the AHI in the Western Cape, with a total in the Western Cape of 18,200 members. We decided that we need to create a situation where all groups can work together. The AHI is part of that - it's not purely Afrikaans anymore, and we can change the name tomorrow. It's not a matter of a name, it's what you're doing. So the AHI is in that Business Western Cape network.

The next one is NAFCOG - in the old days, the economic wing of the ANC, although they're not linked to the ANC anymore. Then there's the Black Business Chamber, in the townships with several chapters and connected groups with different names. Then we have [unclear], representing the very strong coloured business community, and finally the top 50 companies in Cape Town. So we can say we represent from the biggest companies to the smallest town's spaza shop. And the moment we established ourselves, was the moment government wanted to talk to us. We've signed an agreement with the government about how we can implement as Business Western Cape (of which I am the chairman).

So what I'm trying to tell you is that we're working very hard from the top, to bring a benefit to Knysna as well.

Every chamber will be involved in implementing what we said we're going to do, with an allocation of budget from the minister's office.

At our AHI congress three weeks ago, I saw that we have two big issues to talk about: what is the current political climate in South Africa. We are not a political organisation, we are businesspeople. But we need to know what's happening in the landscape today. We also need to know what will happen after the elections in 2024: it could change the environment totally.

There are threats coming our way. Prof Jannie Roussow, and economist with the AHI, Prof Erwin Schwella, and Willem Jordaan from Die Burger were on the panel that discussed this.

The second one is entrepreneurship, which, I say, is the solution for job creation. On my panel, I invited the minister of education, a representative from agriculture... I said, entrepreneurship must be taught at school practically. When you leave school, you must be able to carry on with a business, and sustain yourself. We also talked about crime, and I said we won't clear the crime issues if we aren't fixing the social ills in our country so that there's opportunities to get money - and stealing is not the answer. But if you haven't got bread on your table, and food for your family you will make a plan.

So we need to get business people with knowledge to help the teachers to understand what entrepreneurship is all about. How can they train children if they have no idea of what entrepreneurship is?

So we decided that in every school in the Western Cape there will be a businessperson allocated with knowledge to train the teachers how to bring entrepreneurship over to the kids.

In conclusion, there's a lot happening at the top. It will come also to Knysna. I will share with your new leadership what the plan is coming from AHI, from Government, from Alan Winde's office.

So well done on what you're doing, and we look forward to support you in the future.

Thank you.

PIERRE GOUWS: Thank you Willie, and thank you for all the support you've given us already. And thank you to Bruce van Helderer for making this venue available to us.

That concludes our meeting