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Pilot taken to hospital after plane crashes while fighting fire

SIBUSISO NKOMO

Staff Reporter

A WATERBOMBING plane crashed in Pearly Beach in the Overberg after picking up two tons of water to help put out a fire in Stanford.

The pilot, Wessel Pienaar, was taken to hospital.

Local Government MEC Anton Bredell's spokesman, Peter Pullen, said the plane

landed at Pearly Beach to pick up water late yesterday.

"As he took off with a full load of water, the left wing veered into the sea and caused the plane to cartwheel. It was his last drop of water to water-bomb the fire," he said.

Pullen said the plane had been seriously damaged and the Civil Aviation Authority would investigate.

Overberg District Municipality

fire chief Reinard Geldenhuys said the Stanford fire had been put out but a smaller fire was still burning in the Caledon mountains.

On Sunday, fireman Kallie Muller, 34, fell to his death while working on a mountain fire in Moutonshoek Valley, Piketberg, EMS spokeswoman Keri Davids said.

Davids said seven firefighters were battling a fire on Sun-

day evening when the ground they were standing on gave way and one of the fireman fell 30m to his death. The others escaped injury.

Muller, who lived in Durbanville, leaves his wife, two-year-old daughter and one-year-old son.

Yesterday, a vegetation fire in Hout Bay, which left the valley smothered in smoke, was put out after 3pm.

Fire and Rescue spokesman Theo Layne said while there was a lot of smoke in the air, residents of a retirement village in Victoria Road, close to the fire, were not evacuated. Two residents were given oxygen at their homes.

The fire spread to the fence of the Ambleside School of Hout Bay Pupils were sent home early because of the smoke.

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Fears for shebeens as province mulls new liquor rules

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ESTHER LEWIS
Staff Reporter

SMALLER liquor traders would be the worst off if the provincial government introduced a high street model, which would push shebeens to the periphery of residential areas, says a body representing liquor traders.

Two weeks ago Finance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC Alan Winde with Premier Helen Zille, Councillor Belinda Walker and members of the provincial liquor regulation team went on a fact-finding mission to Namibia, where the high street model has been implemented.

Winde said while the system worked, liquor outlets were found wall-to-wall in the high streets.

He said that if implemented in the Western Cape, other businesses, particularly food outlets, would be encouraged to form part of a broader, varied economic hub.

Inkanyezi Foundation head Samukelisiwe Coka said the model wouldn't work for everyone.

The foundation represents traders in the city, West Coast and Overberg.

Bigger outlets could afford to move. But smaller shebeens may be left behind to struggle, said Coka. She said smaller businesses would have difficulty accessing loans and may not be able to raise the capital to buy or rent premises in the high street. "There's a reason most people trade from their homes," said Coka.

A possible solution was for smaller traders to form co-operatives and in that way move out of residential areas.



MISSION: Finance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC Alan Winde

The prospect of taking shebeens out of the community, however, would benefit children and neighbours, she added.

"Communities need more alcohol-free zones, with social activities to keep the youth out of shebeens," she said.

Elton Oosthuizen, who chairs the Mitchells Plain and Southern Cape Liquor Traders Associations, said there had been regular interaction between trader organisations and the government but no decisions had been reached. His concern was for the traders left behind in residential areas.

Winde said they would not lose their licences if they refused to move. However, they would be subject to further restrictions on trading hours.

Oosthuizen said the current agreement allowed them to trade Monday to Saturdays, 8am to 8pm. Sunday trading is allowed from noon to 5pm. The proposed change could see traders operate from 9am to 6pm Mondays to Saturdays and Sunday trading prohibited.

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Street where boy was killed to get speed bumps

NONTANDO MPOSO
Staff Reporter

FOUR speed bumps and a high raised pedestrian crossing will be built in a street in Mfuleni where an 11-year-old boy was killed more than three months ago.

Transport and Public Works MEC Robin Carlisle made the announcement yesterday in Mfuleni after he was invited by the community and the boy's family to give a report back on the city's plan to make the road safer.

On October 15, Lwandile Tongo and a group of friends were playing on Tokwana Street near his home, which is 50m from where he was killed.

Yesterday one of his friends, who didn't wish to be named, said they were playing catch with a football.

"The ball went to the other side of the road. When Lwandile was fetching it, a car came down the road and knocked him over. He was looking down to pick up the ball... he never saw it coming."

Another witness, Sipho Dlamini, said last year the car, a maroon Audi, was veering from side to side and "going too fast" before it hit him.

Tokwana Street is a busy road full of children running around playing and dodging cars and taxis.

Lwandile's death sparked an outcry among residents because they believe the police "botched the investigation".

The day after the accident,



VICTIM: Lwandile Tongo, 11, was knocked over and killed by an alleged drunk driver.

the community marched to the Blue Downs police station where they were told no case of negligent driving had been opened, no blood samples had been taken from the driver, and only an accident report had been filed.

The accused was released on the day of the accident because of lack of evidence.

Family member Busiswa Kwindla, 41, said the community had repeatedly complained to the councillors about the busy road, and a few weeks before Lwandile died they had built "fake speed bumps" to make it safer.

"Taxi drivers removed them after a few days and said we were slowing them down. If they (speed bumps) were still



SAFETY MEASURES: MEC for Transport and Public Works Robin Carlisle and mayoral committee members gathered to register complaints of Mfuleni about speed bumps after an 11-year-old boy was killed last year.

PICTURE: JEFFREY ABRAHAMS

there, Lwandle would still be alive, his death could have been avoided. Our children have no choice but to play on the streets. We don't have yards and the park we have is far away. People get raped or killed there."

Carlisle said the police who responded to the scene were under investigation for negli-

gence. "I am monitoring the case very closely and following up with the family's complaints," he said.

The city's Brett Herron, mayoral committee member for transport, said the city would be building a high raised pedestrian crossing in a four-way stop, next to Lwandile's school.

"It's important that the streets are safe for the community. The intervention that we are doing will force the cars to slow down while driving down the road."

Lwandile's aunt, Lungiswa Cweni, who raised him after the death of his mother five years ago, was too distraught to speak yesterday and said the

incident was still "too fresh".

Kwindla added that the family wanted to see justice done and the driver in jail, and also the police who "didn't do their jobs properly must be disciplined accordingly".

"We won't rest until he is in jail. He is carrying on with his wife and children as if nothing happened. Every day he drives

past here with his loud music on. It's sad and painful because we have lost someone special. What makes it even worse is he hasn't come to us to say sorry."

The suspect will appear in the Blue Downs Magistrate's Court soon on charges of negligent and reckless driving, and culpable homicide.

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Hikers rescued after suffering dehydration

THREE hikers had to be rescued from Table Mountain after apparently suffering from fatigue and dehydration, as temperatures soared to 34°C yesterday.

EMS spokeswoman Keri Davids said two women were rescued from Platteklip Gorge just before midday, having both suffered severe symptoms of dehydration and fatigue.

In another incident a hiker was rescued from Silvertree, between Platteklip Gorge and Devil's Peak after he had trouble getting off a ledge on the mountain at about 2pm.

He did not suffer any injuries and was airlifted to safety. – Staff Reporter

Saldanha Bay IDZ is coming into view

Approval process is well on its way but there is some time to go to get approval

LYNNETTE JOHNS
Business Writer

TURNING Saldanha Bay into an Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) has come one step closer after the provincial government consented to apply for the area to be designated and for an operator permit.

Provincial MEC of Finance Alan Winde said they were hoping that the national cabinet would ratify the IDZ by the end of the year. The provincial government started the process in 2008 when it commissioned a feasibility study



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Winde said: "We are standing behind our commitment that we made to creating this IDZ, and are pleased with this latest step in the process as it brings us closer to getting national cabinet ratification by the end of the year."

An IDZ is a purpose-built, industrial estate linked to an international air or sea port, which may contain Customs

Controlled Areas (CCA) tailored for manufacturing and storage of goods to boost beneficiation, investment, economic growth and the development of skills and employment.

The feasibility study outlined six projects: marine and repair facilities, establishing an offshore supply base for the oil and gas sector; a hot briquetted iron manufacturer; titanium and zircon processing and a solar water heating industry.

These projects are seen by some experts as holding the highest market potential for

economic growth and development in the area.

"The Western Cape government's primary strategic objective is to create growth and jobs for the people of our region. In view of the visible benefits that this IDZ will bring, (the provincial) cabinet was pleased to give approval for the steering committee to finalise the business case and apply for IDZ designation and an IDZ operator permit," Winde said.

Now the Saldanha Bay IDZ steering committee will draw up the application for Saldanha Bay to be officially designated

as an IDZ. The committee is a partnership between all three spheres of government and is represented by the DTI, the provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism, the provincial Treasury, the provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Wesgro and the Saldanha Bay Municipality.

The operational arm of the committee will register a wholly-owned subsidiary company, the Saldanha Bay IDZ Licensing Company (Lico); through which the application

for IDZ status will be sought.

The feasibility plan will be submitted to the DTI and the National Manufacturing Development Board. The DTI will open the process for 60 days for public comment.

Depending on the inputs received, the DTI will then recommend that it be ratified by the national cabinet, following which the zone will officially be designated and receive the necessary designation status.

It is envisioned that the IDZ will be a world-class hub for national and foreign direct investment and will boost

export-oriented manufacturing industries in the region.

According to the study, after 25 years the IDZ should generate a minimum annual return of R11.2 billion for the economy and create 12 000 sustainable jobs. In the most optimistic scenario, it will generate an annual economic return of R31.6bn and sustain 29 000 jobs.

The study also found that there was sufficient non-environmentally sensitive land upon which the development could take place.

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Not home sweet home

HOW CAN Helen Zille say they want to change the fact that black people in the Western Cape feel marginalised when this DA-governed province keeps on testing our Xhosa-speaking Grade 6 learners only in English and Afrikaans.

I thought all three languages were seen as “official” in this province. To make matters worse, they even label schools “under-performing” when the pupils are unable to master these tests. It’s a fact that black people do not feel at home in the Cape.

**Evelyn Mouton
Western Cape**

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Link to alcohol and drugs provides sobering example of how to reduce crime

HELEN ZILLE

THE SOCIAL Justice Coalition's Joel Bregman and Angy Peter raised a number of important issues in their article "Citizens have lost faith in policing" (February 1).

First, they ask valid questions about whether murder or aggravated robbery is the best indicator of the extent of violent crime. When analysing such indicators, the key question the government must ask is: what are the most effective interventions we can undertake to bring down the crime rate?

The answer is not the same for all categories of crime. Because most murders are perpetrated by family members or friends of the victim, policing is not particularly effective in reducing the number of

these crimes. Rather, we have to focus on alcohol abuse, which is associated with at least 80 percent of murders in this province.

Our Liquor Act, which will come into effect in April, is one way of doing so. Substance abuse – particularly tik – is also associated with a growing percentage of all violent crimes, including aggravated robbery. While drugs and alcohol are key drivers of crime, I have never stated that they are the sole drivers.

I agree that many other complex, inter-related factors contribute to crime rates, and that these often differ from area to area. However, I do not believe that crime can be attributed primarily to poverty. This is an insult to the millions of poor people, world-wide, who live ethical lives and do not do crime.

I have just returned from a fact-finding visit to Namibia where I learnt a great deal about how they are implementing their law and regulations to control liquor sales in residential areas. I was told that the country has a 50 percent unemployment rate – but much less crime than South Africa. In Malawi, where the majority of people live in extreme poverty, crime rates are far lower than in South Africa.

The theory that indigence is a root cause of crime has also been undercut during the recent recession in America. A study revealed that crime during this period plummeted to its lowest level since the early 1960s despite over seven million people losing their jobs.

The reason for crime rates falling in traditionally violent cities such as

New York (where there was a 77 percent drop in crime over 16 years) and Los Angeles is due, in large measure, to a management information system adopted by the police called Compstat. This process is centred on using crime data to determine police strategies and, more importantly, to hold precinct commanders accountable for their performance.

When I visited the New York Police Department to learn more about it, it was interesting to learn that a significant reduction of crime also correlated directly with a change in the "drug of choice" by addicts in the city. The Police Chief told me that, when "crack" cocaine was the drug of choice, violent crime spiralled out of control.

The ravages of the drug soon became apparent (as down-and-out

addicts actually expired on the streets) after which marijuana regained the ascendancy. Because the police had access to the relevant information, they could correlate crime statistics with a range of factors – including alcohol and drug abuse – which turned out to be one of the most significant variables.

Violent crime incidents also closely correlated with the number of criminals on parole, or on bail in any specific neighbourhood.

In other words, this study reveals that the most effective way to drive down crime is policy interventions based on detailed and relevant information, as well as accountability in the policing system.

The Western Cape government does have some constitutional oversight powers over the SAPS. But the

administration of both the police and the justice system lies with the national government. As far as the provincial government's role in bringing down crime is concerned, we believe that our priority must be to tackle the high levels of alcohol and drug abuse in the province.

This approach has proven effective in the past. For example, a major four-day operation in Nyanga in 2010 where 400 shebeens were closed across seven policing districts over the festive season led to a significant drop in serious and violent crime.

During my recent visit to Namibia, we had clear confirmation of this correlation. For example, in Kuisebmond, the number of cases reported per week dropped from around 70 to between 15 and 25 after illegal liquor outlets were closed in

residential areas.

This is the reason why our government has introduced a number of initiatives including the Western Cape Liquor Act and our Substance Abuse Strategy to drive down alcohol and drug abuse in the province.

However, we also take our oversight role extremely seriously as will become evident when I announce the latest steps in this regard in the State of the Province address later this month. Finally, while the criminal justice system has a crucial role to play in reducing crime rates, every citizen also has a duty to prevent crime and to take responsibility for their own lives by steering clear of narcotics and using alcohol in moderation.

● *Helen Zille is the Premier of the Western Cape*