



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
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New Eco-Centre benefits people and planet

10 April 2015

The conversion of a former whaling station to an Eco-Centre benefits nearby communities and helps to conserve the planet's natural resources.

Launching the Stony Point Eco-Centre in the Overstrand region of the Western Cape today, Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom said the new centre and the adjoining restaurant was an important asset for tourism, for nearby communities and for conservation efforts.

Large numbers of endangered African Penguins breed at Stony Point, attracting over 100 000 visitors a year.

The project was funded by the National Department of Tourism through the Expanded Public Works Program. It was developed in partnership with the Mooiuitsig Community Trust, who hold the commercial rights to manage the restaurant and eco-centre.

The On the Edge restaurant is staffed by members of the nearby Mooiuitsig community, who underwent training before the restaurant opened.

The project included the construction of a parking area, paving and walkways, and ablution facilities, which will enhance the experience of visitors.

“Stony Point is a perfect example of how social, economic and environmental responsibility comes together to create a workable and sustainable solution,” said Minister Hanekom.

“This will bring hope for the youth and the people of the Mooiuitsig Community, who have been involved from the start, and who will continue to be involved as operators of the facility.

“It’s a shining example of how to go about integrating conservation, commercial, tourism, heritage and recreational objectives within one consolidated planning unit.”

Minister Hanekom said the conversion of buildings used for the unsustainable practice of whaling in the past to an Eco-Centre would help to spread the message of sustainability and the conservation of natural resources for the future.

“The project has created job opportunities and economic activity in an area which is desperate for development,” he said. “Stony Point can become a node which could support a local curio industry and other small businesses providing tourism services.”

Intense community participation from the project’s inception supported the project’s social sustainability. Jobs and skills training were provided to 70 workers from the Mooiuitsig community during the construction phase, and all the trained workers were able to find work after completion.

The Stony Point Peninsula is adjacent to the Betty’s Bay Marine Protected Area and forms part of the Overstrand Hope Spot. The Overstrand coast is home to an important seabird colony which includes five endangered species.

The African Penguin is one of these species, and is experiencing a catastrophic decline in the global population. The Stony Point colony is the only population of African Penguins that is increasing in population numbers.

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