

Mossel Bay to host 2010 media hub

Eden District, which comprises the Garden Route and the Klein Karoo, will be establishing a media hub for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in Mossel Bay, it was announced earlier this week.

Explained Louis Harris, Mossel Bay municipal co-ordinator for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, "Originally, the Eden District was to have had three public viewing areas (PVAs) - one in Oudtshoorn that would have accommodated 5000 people, one in Plettenberg Bay for 10 000 and one in Mossel Bay for 20 000 - while the media and transport hubs were to have been situated in George.

"But cutbacks in National and Provincial expenditure forced a rethink of this idea, and when it became known that the Province would only fund one PVA in the District - for a maximum of 10 000 people - the Eden Co-ordinators' Committee decided that the official PVA should be in George, which is the most centrally situated.

"It was then decided that while the Transport Hub would remain in George (because of the presence of the airport), the Media Hub would now be established in Mossel Bay."

"Stories beyond football"

"It is almost certain that the Eden District will host at least a handful of national teams, and this will draw both supporters and the media to our area. This is significant, because the reporters who will be here will be looking for stories beyond football, and the district can expect to receive unprecedented exposure.

"From a marketing point of view, the long-term effects of [the 2010 FIFA World Cup] cannot be underestimated - especially as we know that the Garden Route and Little Karoo boast world-class tourist attractions and adventures, and, by then, that it will also be home to one of Africa's most innovative conservation projects: the Garden Route National Park."

Harris said that the decision to establish the official PVA in George did not prevent other towns (such as Mossel Bay) from establishing unofficial public viewing areas or fan zones - as long as they conformed to FIFA requirements, such as free entrance for all.

Harris also said that the Co-ordinators' Committee had decided to establish the region's countdown clock in Mossel Bay. "We're not sure yet what it'll look like, but it's bound to be quite a landmark," he said.

"One thing we do know, though, is that everyone who comes to Mossel Bay falls in love with it - and we're sure the footballers, their supporters and the members of the media who come here will do so, too."

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