Cape Town awarded Blue Flag status for 8 beaches and 2 marinas

The National Minister of Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, confirmed that eight of the City of Cape Town's beaches and two of its marinas have been awarded Blue Flag Status. He was speaking at the National Blue Flag launch event at Grotto Beach in Hermanus on 11 October 2012.

The National Minister of Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, confirmed that eight of the City of Cape Town's beaches and two of its marinas have been awarded Blue Flag Status. He was speaking at the National Blue Flag launch event at Grotto Beach in Hermanus on 11 October 2012.

The Blue Flag is a voluntary eco-label awarded annually to over 3,650 beaches and marinas in 44 countries across Europe, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada and the Caribbean. The City has successfully participated in the Blue Flag Beach Programme since its inception in South Africa in 2001.

Having Blue Flag beaches and marinas is a significant tourism drawcard because international visitors know what to expect when visiting a Blue Flag beach or marina. The programme challenges local authorities, beach operators and yacht and marina management to achieve high standards in environmental management, environmental education, safety and security and water quality.

This year the City applied for Blue Flag status for eight of its beaches across the metropole – all of which have been granted this coveted status. This means that the City has the highest number of Blue Flag beaches in South Africa. The beaches that have been awarded Blue Flag status for this season, which runs from 1 December 2012 to 31 March 2013 are Bikini, Mnandi, Strandfontein, Muizenberg, Llandudno, Camps Bay, Clifton 4th and Silwerstroomstrand.

Blue Flag beaches are required to meet 32 criteria spanning four aspects of coastal management: water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management and safety and services. The status indicates that the beaches are clean, have adequate ablution facilities and parking, are environmentally sound, are safe and secure to visit, and adhere to international safety and tourism standards. The accreditation is awarded for one season at a time, and if conditions deteriorate at the beach, it can be withdrawn.

Not all beaches in Cape Town have Blue Flag status – but this is not a negative reflection on the beach. The Blue Flag serves merely as a yard stick to assist the City in improving and enhancing services and facilities on all public beaches.

Two of the City of Cape Town's marinas, Granger Bay Water Club and the False Bay Yacht Club, received full Blue Flag status, together with YachportSA in Saldanha Bay and the Royal Alfred Marina in Ndlambe.

The City aspires to maintain the highest recognised international environmental standards. Given this, when the City learnt that marinas were able to achieve Blue Flag status in addition to beaches, it approached 15 yacht clubs and marinas in Cape Town to determine if it was possible to register local marinas for this prestigious award.

After almost two years of work, Cape Town is proud to announce that it is the first African city south of the Mediterranean to have its marinas achieve Blue Flag accreditation. The Royal Cape Yacht Club will continue with pilot status and apply for full status in 2013.

"The Blue Flag Programme provides a quality holiday experience for local and international tourists visiting South Africa, and Cape Town in particular. It is also about enabling local communities to enjoy a better quality of life through increased socio-economic benefits and improved natural resource management. The Blue Flag brand adds value to Cape Town's Responsible Tourism offerings and supports the implementation of the City's Responsible Tourism Policy. One of the key elements of Responsible Tourism is the development, management and marketing of tourism in ways that create competitive advantages, and the Blue Flag Programme for marinas could only benefit and help to sell Cape Town as a world-class destination," said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Economic, Environmental and Spatial Planning, Alderman Belinda Walker.

SA - the Good News