

Loeriesfontein wind farms launch community substance abuse prevention programme

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Loeriesfontein residents are to benefit from a community based substance abuse prevention programme which aims to provide support for victims and their families.

Community members, representatives from the local schools, SAPS, Health Care Services, the Department of Social Development, Municipality, and church based organisations attended the official launch of this programme. The event, was hosted by Loeriesfontein Wind Farm and Khobab Wind Farm, together with [South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence \(SANCA\)](#), who are responsible for the implementation of this initiative.



The programme, which is part of Loeriesfontein Wind Farm and Khobab Wind Farm's socio economic development initiatives, will encompass elements of counselling and support for both substance abuse victims and their immediate families, outreach and prevention programmes at local schools and organisations, referral of patients to

rehabilitation centres, as well as provision of after-care services to rehabilitated patients.

In addition to providing immediate relief to the community this programme is designed to be financially sustainable and ensure long-term support for the community. “The initial programme will be rolled out over a three year period but within this timeframe, we will offer the support and tools to create a sustainable community organisation,” said Kevin Foster, Project Manager for Khobab Wind Farm.

The programme has come about following an independent social research study that identified youth boredom as the leading cause of teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and petty crime. This need was reinforced by various local community members through an in-house needs analysis conducted in 2015.

The study indicated that due to its remote location and stagnant economy the town of Loeriesfontein does not offer much for young adults in the form of employment opportunities or constructive recreational outlets. There is also a lack of accessible tertiary education facilities in the Hantam Municipality, all of which are contributing factors to young adults engaging in negative social behaviour. The Namakwa District Municipality Integrated Development Plan also cited alcohol and drug abuse as the leading cause of crime, poverty, reduced productivity, and dysfunctional family life, the escalation of chronic diseases such as HIV and AIDS and related health factors as well as injury and premature death in the district’s municipal area.

“A multi-pronged approach will include, amongst other things, a school’s improvement programme, specifically focusing on the bottle necks in the education pipeline and the support of local sports, arts and cultural initiatives to serve as a diversionary programme for bored youth,” added Christo Loots, Project Manager for Loeriesfontein Wind Farm.

This community based NGO will work in consultation with the Department of Health, SAPS, Community Policing Forums, Department of Social Development, Department of Education and Local NGO’s to improve integrated service delivery and impact.