



Mr Lester Smith  
Senior Manager  
Fire Safety & Health and Safety  
lestersmith@overstrand.gov.za

28 February 2022

Dear Mr Smith,

Comments on: DRAFT POLICY FOR: CREATING AND MAINTAINING FIRE WISE VACANT ERVEN IN URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS OF THE OVERSTRAND MUNICIPALITY (SEPTEMBER 2021 EDITION)

1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft policy.
2. We strongly support “8.2.2 All invasive alien vegetation shall be eradicated (cut down) and removed from the erven”.
3. However, any policy which “does not distinguish between alien and endemic/indigenous vegetation” in a conservancy area is problematic. Such a policy fails to recognise the critical importance of conserving our region’s natural environment, particularly the preservation of natural and endangered fynbos.

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The fynbos shrublands of the southwestern and southern Cape of South Africa is “one of the most biologically diverse and **endangered** of all the world’s ecosystems”

[Source: Nias, C & Mooney, J (2007) Endangered Ecosystems in Encyclopedia of Biodiversity.]

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4. The retention of natural indigenous vegetation plays a vital role in supporting biodiversity, preserving the rapidly diminishing coastal fynbos. and maintaining the appealing natural character of the three Hangklip Village Conservancies.

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**The fynbos is under serious threat** from increasing urban expansion (especially in the Cape Flats area) and invasion by exotic weed species, including a number of Australian acacias.

[Source: Nias, C & Mooney, J (2007) Endangered Ecosystems in Encyclopedia of Biodiversity.]

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5. Rooiels has a registered Conservancy status. The conservancy regularly undertakes hacks to remove alien vegetation and combustible material from public and private erven.
6. **We request that villages with Conservancies be exempted from this general policy and that a new provision be inserted to the effect that clearing of vegetation in Conservancies be in accordance with a management plan developed in consultation with the individual three Hangklip Village Conservancies.**

Kind regards



Dr Ian Lewis

Chair Rooiels Conservancy