



The staff of CMAI Architects.

Thesen Island creators get global nod

● Yaseen Gaffar

Architecture firm CMAI in Knysna has scooped two international awards at the prestigious AAPME awards, comprising countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and the Middle East. The official ceremony will take place in July in Singapore at the International Federation of Landscape Architects World Congress 2018.

One of the awards is for excellence in the development of Thesen Island – in particular the enhancement of the biodiversity and wildlife in conjunction with human living.

Geoff Brown, one of the directors of CMAI, explains that Thesen Island is a "development model".

He says the embankments of the canals provide a prime environment for marine organisms including the Knysna seahorse, and that since their construction, various scientific papers have borne out and justified the original design decision to use wire-caged gabions, which have now proven to be a fantastic habitat for

the Knysna seahorse. There are 13 hectares of parkland in which birdlife is thriving in the naturalistic planting and the man-made nesting boxes of the wetland area.

The second award is for outstanding analysis and master planning of Crossways Farm Village, situated 20km south of Port Elizabeth.

The entire development is phased and designed over various walkable neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods are integrated with the prime agricultural land and the conservation areas.

Brown says the awards are an important recognition of the company by an international and prestigious federation of landscape architects, and that they are judged on four enduring values: economic; sociocultural; environmental; and



Geoff Brown (director) and Dr Chris Mulder (CEO) of CMAI Architects. *Photos: Yaseen Gaffar*

sensory.

Brown also praises the hard work and creativity of a very dedicated staff complement as well as the sound leadership of CMAI's founder, Dr Chris Mulder, whose innovative vision gave birth to Thesen Island and Crossways Farm Village.