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# Durbs in top gear for A1

SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

**T**HE Durban A1 Grand Prix is just two weeks away, and with preparations in overdrive, civic leaders are confident of another "roaring" success.

The three-day event, the only street race in the 12-country A1 GP calendar, is run on a twisty 3.2km stretch along Durban's golden mile. This will be the third time Durban hosts the South African leg of the series.

City Manager Michael Sutcliffe said the 40 000 spectators expected at the race could look forward to a "very well planned event."

"Everything is going as planned and the valuable lessons learnt from hosting the past two races have assisted us to better plan for this year's event," he said.

## Millions

Mayor Obed Mlaba said spectators and millions of television viewers around the world would catch a glimpse of the Moses Mabhida stadium, under construction nearby, and the Point Waterfront, providing invaluable marketing exposure for the city.

Lunga Lamula, from the city's Strategic Projects unit, said race preparations were 80% complete with spectator stands, route markers and crash barriers already erected along the route.

He said there would be some local traffic restrictions and road closures in the build up to, and over the three days of the race, but everything possible would be done to minimise inconvenience to motorists.



**ZIG-ZAUGG:** Adrian Zaugg of team South Africa leads Sergio Jimenez of Brazil in the Sydney leg of the A1GP World Cup of Motorsport. Zaugg went on to take the feature race last Sunday and is now well set for a win on home turf when the series comes to Durban from 22 February

Pictures: A1GP.com



**THE** sight SA motorsport fans will be hoping to see repeated in just over a fortnight. A1 Team South Africa driver Adrian Zaugg celebrates a nail-biting win in Sydney, Australia last Sunday. Zaugg, with the word "Durban" emblazoned prominently on his car, drove a sensational race in heavy rain. The result was a huge boost for the South African team as it gears up for its home event. Asked about the chances of a proudly South African podium moment in Durban on 24 February, Zaugg said: "The win gives you lots of confidence, but each time it's a new race and a new day and I always give it my best. "But definitely, we have a great motivation coming to Durban," Zaugg said.

This race has received the all important green light from the provincial environmental watchdog.

The Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs has approved an environmental management plan for the event that takes into account its social and environmental impact.

Department spokesman Mbulelo Baloyi said: "We have accommodated (public) concerns about noise, par-

ticularly in the vicinity of the racetrack, but unfortunately because of the nature of motorsport this is really inevitable."

## Noise

Baloyi said organisers would be required to provide a shuttle service for affected residents and accommodation for frail and vulnerable people who might not be able to tolerate the

noise during the main events. "Special precautions have been taken to ensure the dune vegetation is not interfered with during the race," said Baloyi.

Stringent conditions on the storage and handling of dangerous substances have been put in place and the department has asked the A1 GP team to provide weekly construction environmental audit reports.

Special arrangements have

again been made for the disabled, with wheelchair access to some of the best viewing points, and ablution facilities.

The A1 GP has firmly established itself as the World Cup of motorsport.

Unlike the better known Formula 1 series, drivers race for their countries instead of for corporate teams.

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# Sutcliffe pooh-poohs 'alarmist' rates hike predictions

METRO REPORTER

CITY Manager Michael Sutcliffe has urged ratepayers to pay no heed to sensational headlines warning of massive property rates increases.

He was commenting ahead of a meeting on Monday of the full eThekweni Council, called specially to discuss the city's rates policy.

**The eThekweni Council will meet in the City Hall on Monday to discuss the new rates policy**

"The past few months have witnessed many headlines making controversial claims about the new property rating legislation and its implementation."

Behind these headlines,

said Sutcliffe, was the assumption that huge increases were inevitable now that rates would be linked to market values of properties.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," Sutcliffe said.

"Last year's budget indicated that rates may go up by 10% this coming year.

"Once we have determined how much money will need to come from rates, the actual amount of rates each person will pay will be dependent on the valuation of their property.

"While some ratepayers may find their rates going up

by more than 10%, others may in fact find their rates going down."

For the past year a team had been valuing all properties across the city, including sectional title properties which would now pay rates individually.

"This new valuation roll will be published on 13 February and will be widely advertised.

Ratepayers can raise any queries they have and might want to appeal the valuation if they believe it is incorrect.

"Each step of the way we will be explaining to the public what we are doing and what rights they have to be consulted or how they may appeal."

See Sutcliffe's column, Page 7