



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement Western Cape Provincial Parliament IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

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Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism on its study visit to the Constantia Wine Valley Region on 25 April 2025, as follows:

Delegation

The delegation consisted of the following members:

Bosman, G (DA)
Bryant, DW (DA)
Masipa, NP (DA: Chairperson)
Nkondlo, ND (ANC)

Apologies were received from members Brinkhuis, G (Al Jama-ah), Constable (PA), Mbombo (DA) and Wessels, DJ (DA).

1. Introduction and background

Section 114 (2)(b)(i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa mandates provincial legislatures to provide for mechanisms to maintain oversight over the Provincial Executive Authority in the province.

At its meeting on 4 March 2025, the Committee resolved to conduct a study tour of the Cape Peninsula Wine Region to understand its significance in the broader context of wine production in the Western Cape. The purpose of the visit was to gain insight into the historical significance of the region, and discuss current challenges and concerns facing the local wine industry. This visit was an extension of the Committee's engagement with the agricultural sector that took place on Tuesday 22 April 2025.

2. Overview

The visit commenced with a welcome by Wesgro, after which the Committee proceeded by coach to Beau Constantia Wine Estate to meet with winemaker Megan van der Merwe and tasting room manager, Wealth Masemola. Megan van der Merwe served as the General Manager, Winemaker, and Viticulturist at Beau Constantia. She began her tenure at the estate in 2015 as an assistant winemaker and assumed the lead role in 2019. Wealth Masemola shared his aspiring journey with the Committee and was in the process of obtaining his Sommelier qualification, a qualification that could become quite expensive. The Committee then returned to Groot Constantia for an estate walking tour that was followed by a cellar tour and a wine tasting introduction. The day concluded with presentations by Groot Constantia, SA Wine and Western Cape Destination Marketing, Investment and Trade Promotion Agency (Wesgro) . Representatives from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism were also present at the engagement.

2.1 Engagement at Beau Constantia

2.1.1 Findings and observations

- 2.1.1.1 Young Black winemakers in South Africa, and globally, often faced a range of systemic, economic, and cultural challenges in breaking into and thriving within the wine industry. One of the central issues was lack of early exposure to wine culture. Many young Black South Africans grew up in communities where wine was not part of everyday culture or lifestyle. This lack of exposure could delay interest, familiarity, or confidence in pursuing careers in viticulture, winemaking, or wine appreciation. Wine education was rarely integrated into schools or community programmes, particularly in under-resourced areas. Formal education in winemaking was limited to a few institutions, like Stellenbosch University and Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute. These programmes could be expensive and competitive, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face language, financial, and cultural barriers.
- 2.1.1.2 Marketing wine to the youth (typically consumers aged in their 20's to early 30's) was a strategic move for the wine industry to ensure long-term market sustainability and brand loyalty. It was important to build the next generation of wine consumers. As the older generations consumed less or age out of the market, the industry must cultivate new drinkers. Introducing wine to younger audiences ensured that demand remained strong in the future. Young consumers were open to experimentation and could develop a lifelong preference for wine when introduced early and appropriately. If wine was marketed effectively, it could compete with beer, ciders, and spirits, categories that often dominated youth markets. Millennials and Gen Z's were drinking less but better, as they cared about origin, sustainability, and story.
- 2.1.1.3 Burgundy in France and the Western Cape Department of Agriculture have a long-standing partnership focused on agriculture, viticulture, and education. This collaboration has led to student exchanges, winemaking training programmes, and agricultural knowledge-sharing between the two regions. Burgundy has hosted Western Cape farmworkers for specialised wine-making courses, helping them refine their skills. Additionally, the Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute in Stellenbosch has built strong ties with Burgundy's agricultural institutions, fostering knowledge exchange in viticulture and food production. The partnership also included practical training opportunities for French wine students on farms in the Western Cape.

2.2 SA Wine - Wine Tourism Strategy 2025–2030

2.2.1 Findings and observations

- 2.2.1.1 SA Wine presented its Wine Tourism Strategy 2025–2030, which outlined a comprehensive roadmap to position South Africa as the world's most authentic and diverse wine tourism destination. The strategy emphasised the importance of connecting wine tourism with local history, gastronomy, and rich storytelling to enhance the visitor experience. It drew on best practices from successful wine regions such as Napa Valley and aligned with global trends identified by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation.
- 2.2.1.2 South Africa's wine tourism sector was well-established, with 23 diverse and accessible wine routes across three key provinces, namely, the Western Cape, Northern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal. In 2022, wine tourism contributed significantly to the economy, accounting for 17.3% of the total turnover among wine cellars that crushed grapes, generating between 9 174 and

11 102 seasonal jobs, and contributing R9,3 billion to the national Gross Domestic Product. The strategy identified various income-generating activities within wine tourism, with wine tasting, accommodation, and restaurant services making up the majority of tourism turnover. Most wineries were equipped with tasting rooms, restaurants, and accommodation.

- 2.2.1.3 SA Wine had a bursary in place to support sommelier and other training in winemaking and production. The South African Sommeliers Association (SASA), in partnership with Perron X Heritage Collection, offered the SASA Perron X Bursary to support aspiring sommeliers in South Africa. This bursary provided 100 awards annually for SASA's Introductory Sommelier Certification program, covering the full cost of the certification exam.

2.3 Western Cape Destination Marketing, Investment and Trade Promotion Agency (WESGRO)

2.3.1 Findings and observations

- 2.3.1.1 Wesgro has undertaken a focused campaign to diversify its international market presence, with particular emphasis on Asia, specifically China and India. Although progress in the region has been slower relative to others due to the complex nature of market entry, significant strides have been made in relationship-building and strategic positioning.

Engagement with China has advanced more rapidly than with other Asian markets. The Chinese market required extensive engagement with government officials and relied heavily on long-term relationship-building. Wesgro has effectively leveraged diplomatic platforms and partnerships to facilitate access, recognising that meaningful penetration into China required sustained effort over several years. Notably, China has become an increasingly important export destination for the Western Cape.

- 2.3.1.2 To strengthen these efforts, Wesgro has partnered with institutions like Standard Bank, which provided both strategic access and financial support. A notable contribution included R500 000 in funding towards the "Made in the Cape" buyers programme. This initiative brought international buyers, especially from China, India, the Middle East, and Europe, to engage directly with Western Cape exporters in structured meetings. The Programme has proven instrumental in opening new commercial channels and expanding export opportunities. A major success under this Programme included engagement with Reliance, one of India's largest family-owned retail conglomerates with over 15 000 outlets. Following their participation as buyers, Wesgro has been invited to showcase "Made in the Cape" products in Reliance stores in Mumbai in September 2025. This marked a significant milestone in market entry efforts for South African products into India. These initiatives reflected Wesgro's broader market diversification strategy, which was grounded in partnership-building, targeted market intelligence, and showcasing regional strengths to global buyers.

- 2.3.1.3 Wesgro reaffirmed its role as the official domestic marketing organisation for Cape Town and the Western Cape, with a core focus on destination marketing, trade facilitation, and tourism sector development. Significant achievements were highlighted, particularly in terms of international connectivity, tourism growth, and inclusive economic participation.

The province has moved beyond post-COVID recovery and was now experiencing real tourism growth. This was evident by increased arrivals and additional airlift capacity. Airlines such as United Airlines, Delta, and Emirates were set to increase frequencies to Cape Town, confirming growing demand and positioning the Western Cape as a competitive global destination.

The importance of air access was emphasised, with the Cape Town Air Access initiative playing a central role in enabling connectivity. Stakeholders in the tourism and airline industries have acknowledged that increased capacity directly drives higher visitor numbers.

- 2.3.1.4 Wesgro supported the Provincial Government's vision to double tourism by 2035, an ambitious goal that required a multi-faceted approach. The agency planned to initiate a research project to assess what is needed to achieve this target. Critical enablers included expanded air and cruise access; improved visitor experiences tailored to growth markets like India and China; streamlined visa and tourism regulation; and infrastructure readiness to handle visitor volumes, including ports.
- 2.3.1.5 The province has seen significant growth in cruise tourism, partly due to geopolitical shifts affecting global travel routes. While this has benefited Cape Town, it has also highlighted challenges such as traffic congestion when multiple ships dock simultaneously. To address this, Wesgro aimed to develop a clear, coordinated cruise strategy, including better integration of smaller ports like Saldanha Bay and Mossel Bay to distribute economic benefits across the region.
- 2.3.1.6 Youth development remained a cornerstone of Wesgro's inclusive growth strategy. The agency's "Giving Back" Programme focused on three main areas, namely, High School Engagements where senior leaders engage directly with high-performing learners in township schools to expose them to career paths in tourism, trade, and investment; Graduate Internships where currently, 19 graduate interns from top South African universities were hosted by Wesgro across various departments, including data science, trade, finance, and tourism; Mentorship and Exposure where interns participated in mentorship programmes and were involved in key events and strategy sessions to deepen their industry knowledge. These interventions aimed to create a talent pipeline and ensured that the youth were equipped for future roles in the Western Cape's evolving economic sectors.
- 2.3.1.7 In line with Wesgro's commitment to talent development and addressing challenges in the competitive job market, it has implemented an extensive graduate internship programme. A significant portion of interns (50-60%) were successfully absorbed into the organisation post-internship, allowing it to maintain a continuous flow of skilled individuals who contribute meaningfully to the Agency's work.
- 2.3.1.8 Recognising the gap in tourism knowledge among young people, particularly those in academic programmes related to tourism studies, Wesgro initiated a "Familiarization Trip" for students from various faculties. Many of these students had not yet visited significant tourist landmarks, such as Table Mountain, and therefore lacked a comprehensive understanding of the sector's offerings. This initiative was aimed at enhancing the students' understanding of the tourism industry, fostering a more informed and engaged future workforce.
- 2.3.1.9 A strong focus was placed on preparing local businesses for international trade through Wesgro's Export Readiness Programme. In the past financial year, 206 businesses were trained to become export-ready, with 59 of those businesses successfully obtaining export declarations. This Programme provided ongoing support and resources to help businesses navigate the complexities of international markets.
- 2.3.1.10 Focused efforts on district-specific projects have resulted in notable progress in key areas such as the Garden Route, where tourism and trade initiatives were gaining momentum. A small budget was allocated to support projects in various districts, which has allowed for targeted funding of activities with high potential for growth and impact.

- 2.3.1.11 Wesgro reported strong activation within the wine tourism sector with specific reference to its participation in the "Best of Wine Tourism Awards" and Great Wine Capitals Programme.

The Agency also hosted international media and travel trade to showcase regional wine offerings and offered support in terms of the Export Advancement Programme for woman-owned wineries, with R88 million in trade declarations recorded. District-focused interventions included tourism event support, export training, and promotion of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises across the Cape Winelands, Overberg, Garden Route, West Coast, Central Karoo, and Cape Town.

3. Resolutions/actions

The Committee RECOMMENDED the Western Cape Government:

- 3.1. Considers establishing a Provincial Wine Library to preserve and showcase the region's rich wine heritage, support research and education in viticulture, enhance tourism and economic development, promote the local wine industry, and strengthen international relations through cultural diplomacy. This initiative would contribute to positioning the Western Cape as a leading global wine destination; and
- 3.2 Considers the establishment of a provincial bursary to students pursuing studies in viticulture, winemaking, and sommelier training, in order to develop a skilled workforce, promote inclusive economic growth and transformation, enhance the global competitiveness of the local wine industry, and strengthen education and training pathways critical to the sector's long-term sustainability.

4. Acknowledgements

The Committee commended all stakeholders for their role in facilitating economic growth and positioning the Western Cape as a globally competitive destination. Wesgro's alignment with public and private partners, focus on youth empowerment, and innovative marketing strategies were particularly noted.

The Committee supported continued investment in tourism infrastructure, skills development, and strategic international engagements to sustain and grow the sector.



MR NP MASIPA, (MPP)

CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

DATE: 18 June 2025

