

*Thursday, 7 August 2025]*

No 75 - 2025] SECOND SESSION, SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

# PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

## ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

THURSDAY, 7 AUGUST 2025

### COMMITTEE REPORT

#### **Report of the Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters on the appointment of the Western Cape Commissioner for Children.**

The Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters included the following Members:

#### **Democratic Alliance**

Van Minnen, B (Chairperson)  
Kaizer-Philander, W  
Van Wyk, L  
Walters, T

#### **African National Congress**

Sayed, K

#### **GOOD**

Herron, B

#### **Patriotic Alliance**

Stephens, D

### **1. Introduction**

The processing of the appointment of the Western Cape Commissioner for Children, as outlined in section 2 of the Western Cape Commissioner for Children Act, 2019 (Act 2 of 2019) (the Act), was referred by the Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament to the Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters on 5 February 2025.

The Department of the Premier briefed the Committee on the Act's provisions on 14 February 2025, covering key aspects such as:

- Role and responsibilities: The Commissioner for Children is tasked with protecting and promoting children's rights and interests in the Western Cape.
- Powers and duties: The Commissioner will monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby and advise on matters related to children.
- Budgetary implications: The Department provided insight into the financial requirements for the Commissioner's office.
- Staffing requirements: The briefing included information on the necessary personnel to support the Commissioner's role.
- Legal obligations: The Department explained the legal framework governing the Commissioner's duties and responsibilities.

## **2. Nomination process**

The Committee issued a public call for nominations in media notices in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa for 14 days from 1 March to 14 March 2025.

### **2.1 Key dates and actions**

Nominations were received from 61 persons, and the Committee published the names of the nominees on 19 March 2025. The public was invited to submit objections to the nominees in accordance with section 2(2)(b) of the Act, with a closing date of 4 April 2025.

The nominees were informed of their nomination on 18 April 2025. The nominees were required to accept their nominations and submit CVs, IDs, qualifications and references by 21 March 2025. A total number of 44 nominees accepted, 16 did not respond and 1 declined.

The Committee resolved to consider objections only after the shortlisting process.

The Committee held a workshop on 25 March 2025 to discuss the appointment process for the Western Cape Commissioner for Children. During this workshop, the Committee reviewed the 2019 scoring framework and updated it for the current process. In alignment with the Act, the Committee established a shortlisting criterion that included mandatory qualifications, such as South African citizenship, expertise in children's rights, human rights or public policy, and no political or state employment at the time of appointment.

### **2.2 Finalising criteria and scoring system**

On 3 April 2025, the Committee met to finalise the criteria and it agreed on a 1 to 3 scoring scale for each criterion, with weightings allocated as follows:

- Competency (40%)
- Professional experience (40%)
- Academic record (20%)

The Committee also decided to conduct background checks, including criminal, credit and qualification verifications, of the shortlisted candidates only.

### **2.3 Shortlisting candidates**

On 8 April 2025, the Committee met to finalise the shortlist. Consensus was reached by highlighting commonalities in Members' top choices, and individual top candidate lists were consolidated into a unified shortlist. The following candidates were shortlisted for interviews:

- Denlia Diana Leppan
- Deon Ruiters
- Louw Samuel Schoeman
- Marquin Enrico Smith
- Mfundo Nomvungu
- Patricia Martin-Weisner
- Rochelle Philander
- Sarah Helena Roberts
- Sixolile Ngcobo

The Committee also decided to invite two child monitors to provide a 10-minute non-binding submission during the preparatory meeting, sharing the qualities they sought in a commissioner.

#### 2.4 Interview process

A preparatory meeting for interviews took place on 14 April 2025, where the Committee finalised the interview questions, discussed logistics and reviewed legal opinions on public versus private interviews. The Committee decided to hold interviews in public, with recordings made available afterwards. The candidates would be requested to provide a 10-minute presentation outlining their vision for the role, followed by a 45-minute question-and-answer session. The scoring system was finalised with 20% weight for the presentation and 80% weight for the question-and-answer session.

Solahka Noyi and John Lee Plaatjies, child government monitors, also made a presentation to the Committee and shared their perspectives on the qualities they sought in a commissioner.

#### 2.5 Interviews and post-interview deliberations

The Committee conducted interviews on 15 and 16 April 2025, assessing nine candidates for the position of Western Cape Commissioner for Children. The interviews were attended by the public and livestreamed on YouTube. During the interviews, the Committee addressed objections raised about specific candidates, providing them an opportunity to respond and clarify their positions.

Following the interviews, the Committee thoroughly evaluated the candidates based on:

- Interview scores: Reviewing scores to identify top candidates; and
- Cross-member consensus: Ensuring agreement among committee members.

### 3. Recommendation

In terms of section 2(1)(2)(e) of the Western Cape Commissioner for Children Act, 2019 (Act 2 of 2019), the Committee recommends the appointment of **Sarah Helena Roberts** as the Western Cape Commissioner for Children.

The Premier must appoint the recommended candidate within 21 days or refer the matter back to Parliament.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Committee's thorough and inclusive process has laid the groundwork for appointing a dedicated advocate for children's rights in the Western Cape. By building on the progress made since Commissioner Christina Nomdo's appointment in 2019, this process aims to identify a passionate individual who will drive positive change and champion the rights of children in the region.

Report to be considered.