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PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

FRIDAY, 26 JANUARY 2024

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Report of the Standing Committee on Social Development on the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development for the 2022/23 financial year**

The 2023/24 strategic objectives of the WCPP linked to the Speaker's priorities, which have an impact on committees, are as follows:

Priority 1: Building a credible WCPP; and
Priority 3: Strengthening the core business.

The Standing Committee on Social Development, having deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development for the year ended 31 March 2023, reports as follows:

1. **Introduction**

The Western Cape Provincial Parliament's (WCPP) Annual Report programme for the 2022/23 financial year was advertised in newspapers, as well as the WCPP's social media platforms, inviting stakeholders and members of the public to attend and participate in the discussions.

The Standing Committee on Social Development (the Committee) deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development (the Department) on 13 October 2023, as part of its oversight function. The Minister and the Head of Department were allowed to make opening remarks.

The Department was examined on:

Part A: General Information,
 Part B: Departmental Performance Information; and
 Part D: Human Resources Management of the Department's Annual Report.

Members of the public were also allowed to pose questions and make input during the discussions.

2. Overview

The Minister of Social Development, Ms S Fernandez provided an overview of the performance of the Department during the 2022/23 financial year.

The Minister reported that the period under review has been tough for the Department due to the budget cuts, huge constraints, and high demand for services. The Department was doing more with less. Communities across the province have been severely affected by the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department had to respond to increased socio-economic challenges in a constrained fiscal environment. Despite this, the Department remained committed to serving the most vulnerable communities in the province. The focus areas during the period under review were Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Child Protection, Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) Older Persons, and Persons with Disabilities.

Dr R Macdonald, the Head of Department (HOD) also made opening remarks. He reported that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was still felt across all government departments and the NGO Sector. The Department had to make extremely difficult trade-offs to maintain, and where necessary, expand the most critically needed areas of service delivery to the people of the Western Cape. The HOD reported that communities have become more vulnerable to poverty, homelessness, crime, violence, and GBV. The economic conditions have also affected the resources available to the government, most notably with budget cuts implemented across the province. The Annual Report of the Department of Social Development under review represents the Department's response to assisting the most vulnerable communities in the Western Cape in a constrained economic and fiscal environment.

3. Key points from the discussion on the Annual Report of the Department

- 3.1 The Department remained committed to the care, well-being, and protection of children as well as their family members.
- 3.2 During the 2022/23 financial year, the Department responded to 6 916 reported cases of child abuse and neglect.
- 3.3 Alternative care services were strengthened with the full implementation of the web-based Foster Care Monitoring System.
- 3.4 During the financial year under review, various GBV interventions were implemented by the Department as guided by the 2019-2024 Provincial Strategic Plan and the GBV Implementation Plan.
- 3.5 The eight Thuthuzela Care Centres in partnership with the National Prosecuting Authority and the Department of Health and Wellness have also contributed tremendously to the immediate care of GBV victims and survivors.

- 3.6 The Department has seen an increased demand for people requiring psychosocial support service and court support services, with 24 388 accessing services during the 2022/23 financial year, a significantly higher figure than the planned target of 18 525.
- 3.7 During the 2022/23 financial year, the Department has taken the lead in introducing the Western Cape Government's transversal GBV media campaign, "Break the Cycle" into hotspot areas like Khayelitsha and Delft.
- 3.8 Children with disabilities remain a priority for the Department. The Department is planning to increase bed spaces for children with disabilities in alternative care at Non-Profit Organisations (NOPs) and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) during the 2023/24 financial year.
- 3.9 The Department strengthened its care and support to children and youth at CYCCs during the 2022/23 financial year.
- 3.10 During the financial year under review, 10 685 children accessed practical and therapeutic services through the Risiha Model.
- 3.11 It was reported that the 26 funded GBV shelters provided access to psychosocial and therapeutic support services to 2 369 women and their children who were victims of crime and violence.
- 3.12 In addition to temporary accommodation, these shelters provided skills development programmes to 421 women on home-based care and computer literacy supporting them to become economically independent when exiting the shelters.
- 3.13 During the financial year under review, the Western Cape Government hosted a provincial Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) Summit, which was attended by 1500 delegates.
- 3.14 The Department's food relief interventions provided over 109 300 qualifying beneficiaries access to cooked meals at the Department's 111 Community Nutrition and Development Centres (CNDCs) and 512 community kitchens across the province.
- 3.15 The Department continued to implement programmes aimed at youth at risk. This included the expansion of school-based crime prevention programmes which focused on life skills mentoring, anti-bullying, SUD, personal anger, and stress management to address risky behaviour amongst learners.
- 3.16 During the financial year under review, 14 566 youth were able to access and participate in academic and life skills programmes offered at the Youth Cafes managed by Community-Based Organisations (CBOs).
- 3.17 The Department continued to fulfill its statutory obligation to empower, protect and promote the rights of older persons. Services to vulnerable older persons were supported with the full implementation of the national electronic Older Persons Abuse Register and the training of 101 social service practitioners to record and report cases of neglect and suspected abuse.

- 3.18 The Department's vacancy rate has remained at 8% below the 10% norm of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).
- 3.19 Vacancy rate within certain occupational groups, such as child and youth care workers, educators, and professional nurses at CYCCs, however, remains a challenge. In addition, budget constraints, and staff attrition because of resignations, promotions, and retirement in the last financial year have affected the Department's ability to render services.
- 3.20 The Department reported that it has identified posts that will be prioritised in mitigation of the impact on service delivery.
- 3.21 During the financial year under review, the Department was able to provide temporary work opportunities to 1 048 EPWP participants.

4. Public input

Ms L Elliham, a member of the public, was offered an opportunity to make an oral submission on the Annual Report of the Department. She raised concerns about the Walking Bus, Women for Change, and the Safety Youth Ambassador Projects in the Western Cape. She informed the Committee that these projects, which used to employ people, especially women, have been discontinued, leaving them unemployed. Ms Elliham sought clarity on the status of these projects. The HOD reported that the projects were managed by the City of Cape Town and not by the Department.

5. Information requested

The Committee requested the Department of Social Development to provide the following information by 31 October 2023:

- 5.1 A detailed report on the recruitment process of the Department and reasons why it takes 6-9 months to fill vacancies. The report should include the role that the DPSA plays in these delays.
- 5.2 Detailed information on the latest malnutrition rate in the province.
- 5.3 Detailed information on how the Safety Plan addresses the current rape figures in the province.
- 5.4 A breakdown of staff exits by region and its impact on the vacancy rate of the Department.
- 5.5 Detailed information on the number of NGOs that provide GBV services and the kind of assistance the Department provides to the NGOs.

6. Conclusion

The Chairperson thanked Members of the Committee, the Minister, the Head of the Department, and the departmental officials for their preparation, and responses to the questions posed by the Committee.

2. Report of the Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters on the 2022/23 Annual Report of the Department of the Premier as follows:

The Annual Report Programme for the 2022/23 fiscal year was published through newspaper advertisements, invitations to stakeholders and the public calling for their active participation.

The Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters convened on 10 October 2023, to deliberate on the key sections of the 2022/23 Annual Report of the Department of the Premier, namely Part A: General Information, Part B: Performance Information, and Part D: Human Resource Management.

1. Introduction

The Premier's emphasis on transcending the post-COVID-19 "normal" in the 2022 State of the Province Address was to set the tone for progress and innovation. The 2022/23 Annual Performance Plan outlined a comprehensive strategy to propel the Western Cape towards growth, jobs, safety and wellbeing. The Department of the Premier played a pivotal role in facilitating, developing and executing these priorities.

The foundation of Innovation, Governance and Culture provided support for these key priorities, driving initiatives such as advancements in data and technology. Noteworthy accomplishments included the establishment of a Provincial Data Forum and the provision of ICT services through Cape Access Centres.

Significant strides were made in the Province's Digital Transformation Plan, marked by investments in predictive hazard intelligence and infrastructure upgrades. The implementation of a Cyber Security Strategy resulted in no major breaches during the fiscal year. Furthermore, the progress in the development of the Foundation Digital Experience Platform promised enhanced citizen-centric services. Plans were underway for the next phase of the broadband initiative, referred to as Broadband 2.0, ensuring a connected government and citizenry.

Efforts were concentrated on infusing innovation into the WCG, demonstrated by a comprehensive skills audit and the restructuring of the Provincial Training Institute. The introduction of a Values-based Leadership Development Programme and collaborative learning opportunities with external partners were noteworthy initiatives.

The Department highlighted a citizen-centric culture through initiatives aimed at enhancing service delivery sites and meaningful engagement with communities to discern their unique needs.

Strong governance practices were evident in the Department's achievement of 100% of its annual performance targets and cautious budget management. Initiatives were also undertaken to enhance internal audit services, address forensic matters, and refine communication strategies.

In summary, the Department of the Premier reported that their commitment was to deliver value to citizens through the execution of mandates, underpinned by a focus on innovation, governance, and culture.

2. Key issues discussed.

2.1 Policing and crime prevention

Premier Winde advocated for the devolution of policing powers to provinces, foreseeing enhanced effectiveness in crime and law enforcement. The Premier expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the national Police Minister's extortion team, signalling a need for internal reforms within the police force. The Province proposed lifestyle audits for top-level police officials to ensure integrity and accountability. Additionally, the Community Safety Act and a safety plan were identified as supplementary interventions to strengthen safety in the province.

2.2 Land management and development

The establishment of the Department of Infrastructure, tasked with managing land assets, was noted. The land release strategy aimed to make land available for development, particularly in response to a rapidly growing population. Densification in urban areas through high-density development projects was highlighted to accommodate the projected population growth. Challenges related to public participation and opposition to development were acknowledged, underscoring the importance of enabling citizen support and participation. Addressing climate change in land and infrastructure planning, especially in drainage systems for flood risk mitigation, emerged as a critical consideration.

2.3 Harnessing artificial intelligence for future challenges

The Western Cape Government was proactively preparing for future technological advancements, particularly in the realm of artificial intelligence. Its potential to address challenges in transportation, logistics, and policy formulation was recognised. The need for a framework to harness its benefits while mitigating potential drawbacks was highlighted.

2.4 Job growth and employment

Between quarters 1 and 2 of 2023, the Western Cape Province witnessed a notable increase of 87 126 jobs, demonstrating positive trends in employment, with total employment rising from 2,668 million to 2,755 million.

2.5 Skills audit and development

The Department of the Premier conducted a comprehensive skills audit among senior employees, assessing competencies including adaptability, innovation, collaboration, agile thinking, data intelligence, and coping with uncertainty.

2.6 Advancements in digital experience

The Department is actively progressing in the development of a digital experience platform, scheduled for rollout by the end of November 2023. Collaborative efforts with national departments, including the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCT) and the Department of Public Service and Administration, are underway to create a national integrated digital experience platform.

2.7 Legal services and governance

Legal services played a pivotal role in advising the Provincial Executive and departments, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and managing litigation. Ongoing support was provided to enable compliance with data protection laws. The Unit reported various strategies being implemented to manage their workload, including collaboration, database creation of legal opinions, flexible working arrangements, and proactive measures. It was noted that a disciplinary investigation within the Department of Transport and Public Works is currently before the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA).

2.8 Irregular expenditure and measures taken

Two cases of irregular expenditure were identified, one amounting to R298 080 and another for R472 551. The Department took proactive measures to address these issues, seeking condonation from Provincial Treasury.

2.9 Special advisers and priority areas

The Department of the Premier appointed two special advisers, one specialising in strategic communications and the other in energy, both aligned to the key priority areas.

2.10 Fiscal challenges and mitigation efforts

The Department highlighted significant fiscal risks arising from revenue shortfalls and fiscal constraints. Ongoing engagements with the national treasury were emphasised to address this challenge, acknowledging potential impacts on service delivery and commitments to citizens.

3. Information requested

The Committee has requested the Department to provide the following:

- 3.1 A copy of the Skills Audit Report;
- 3.2 A breakdown of the R472 551 irregular expenditure pending condonation from the Department of Provincial Treasury;
- 3.3 The report providing the number of learners assisted under the Shukuma Pilot, the Nourish to Flourish Initiative, and the Family Strengthening Project;
- 3.4 A copy of the Corporate Governance Framework;
- 3.5 A copy of the report detailing the work experience opportunities facilitated for youth;
- 3.6 A summary report on the progress made in phases one and two of the Liquor Bill;
- 3.7 A breakdown of the R25 million earmarked for the Strategic Communication and COVID-19 vaccination communication; and

3.8 A copy of the inputs submitted in terms of the Government Immovable Asset Management Act, 2007, to the provincial Department of Transport and Public Works.

4. Conclusion

The Committee extended its appreciation and commendation to the Department for achieving a clean audit and acknowledged the active participation of its members during the session.

3. Report of the Standing Committee on Mobility on the Annual Reports of the Department of Transport and Public Works and Government Motor Transport (GMT) for the 2022/23 financial year.

The Standing Committee on Mobility, having deliberated on the Annual Reports of the Department of Transport and Public Works and Government Motor Transport (GMT) for the 2022/23 financial year, reports as follows:

1. Introduction

The Department of Transport and Public Works (DTPW) (previous Vote 10) ceased to exist on 31 March 2023 and was taken up into the new Department of Mobility and the Department of Infrastructure with effect from 1 April 2023.

There are however an Annual Reports for the Department of Transport and Public Works and its trading entity Government Motor Transport (GMT) for the 2022/23 financial year.

The Annual Reports of the Department and Government Motor Transport for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 were tabled on 29 September 2023 in accordance with section 65(1)(a) of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999), as amended.

The Standing Committee on Mobility (the Committee) invited the Department of Mobility and the relevant officials from the Department of Infrastructure to attend the deliberation on the Annual Reports of the Department and Public Works and GMT for the 2022/23 financial year.

As part of its oversight function, the Committee considered the Annual Reports of the Department and GMT on 30 October 2023. Annual reports are the key instruments for departments to report on performance measured against their performance targets and budgets as outlined in their strategic plans and annual performance plans. In addition, hereto, it accounts for the success of each programme that was implemented.

Standing Rule 111(1)(a) of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament provides standing committees with the mandate to consider departmental annual reports submitted in accordance with the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999).

The Annual Report Programme for the 2022/23 financial year was advertised in newspapers to invite stakeholders and members of the public to attend and participate in the discussions.

The Committee deliberated on Part A: General Information, Part B: Performance Information and Part D: Human Resource Management, after which the Chairperson afforded an opportunity to the public to ask questions to the Department.

2. Overview

Department of Transport and Public Works

Despite the significant changes resulting from amalgamating the infrastructure components of DTPW and the provincial Department of Human Settlements into a new Department of Infrastructure and moving the mobility components of DTPW into a new Western Cape Mobility Department (WCMD), the DTPW achieved a clean audit report and managed to spend 99,8% of its budget.

The B97 minibus taxi route between Mbekweni in Paarl and Bellville was closed by the Provincial Minister due to violent conflict between rival taxi associations. The closure affected ranks until the conflict could be resolved. The DTPW supported the parties' efforts to agree to peacefully share this route and sign a memorandum of understanding to that effect. While the routes and ranks were reopened in the year under review, the injuries and loss of life that resulted from the conflict is unacceptable.

During the year under review, the DTPW faced significant challenges. The war in Ukraine caused delays in supply chain systems and procurement streams, which are critical for the Department's effective operations. Ongoing power interruptions were another significant hindrance. Consequent fuel disruptions and shortages of material brought about rising costs with a negative knock-on impact on other important sectors. Despite these challenges, the Department continued to respond to these and other crises through innovative solutions based on its embedded capabilities and systems.

Several regions in Western Cape were hit by flooding during the year under review, which had a detrimental effect on transportation systems. This resulted in disruptions in the project delivery cycle and the Department had to respond immediately since communities were cut off and road users had to be diverted to alternative routes. As a result, resources were allocated to emergency flood damage repairs.

The Committee proceeded to engage with the Department by asking questions on Parts A, B and D of the Annual Report. All questions were satisfactorily answered, and the Committee was satisfied that the Department achieved its predetermined objectives for the 2020/21 financial year and that it was accurately reported on.

Government Motor Transport

GMT obtained an unqualified audit with no findings for the eleventh consecutive year thus continuing with the positive trend of the past years.

GMT faced numerous challenges arising from geopolitical tensions, policy frameworks, and operational obstacles. These challenges span various domains, including resource scarcity, rising freight costs, difficulties in demand forecasting, congestion at ports, inflationary cost-of-living increases, the need for digital transformation, and sector restructuring to optimize efficiency. These factors can potentially lead to delays during the initial stages of GMT operations and supply chains.

The rise in commodity prices, driven by macro factors, directly impacts GMT's service delivery costs. To mitigate this, GMT adjusts charges to client institutions monthly while also managing its operations prudently within its budget limits. Recognising the fiscal and economic challenges faced by its client institutions in the current economic climate, GMT remains cognisant of these factors and strives to adapt accordingly.

To stay up to date with the evolving motor vehicle industry, GMT actively collaborated with original equipment manufacturers, specialists, and other stakeholders. This regular engagement allowed GMT to strategically position itself based on expert recommendations and market trends. By doing so, GMT not only demonstrated thought leadership in the mobility sector but also contributed to the development of a collaborative mobility ecosystem, envisioning a future where all stakeholders work together to create innovative solutions.

During the year under review, GMT's Massive Transformative Purpose as outlined in its Strategic Plan 2020-2025, continued to steer the entity in its service delivery to clients. The Strategy also outlines three strategic outcomes for the period, namely leadership in mobility solutions, greening the fleet and satisfaction of stakeholders.

GMT collaborated with client institutions and other stakeholders to executing the projects outlined in the Western Cape's Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy, which received approval from the Provincial Cabinet on 13 October 2021. A fundamental objective of the EV Strategy is for GMT and the WCG to emerge as thought leaders in Africa for EVs, and to establish essential building blocks towards an EV ecosystem.

The Committee proceeded to engage with the GMT by asking questions on Parts A, B and D of the Annual Report. All questions were satisfactorily answered, and the Committee was satisfied that GMT achieved its predetermined objectives for the 2022/23 financial year and that it was accurately reported on.

3. Information requested.

The Committee REQUESTED that:

- 3.1 The Department provides the Committee with the number of vehicles in the Western Cape impoundment facilities as on 31 March 2022, 31 March 2023 and 31 October 2023 and the impoundment fees for the same periods; and
- 3.2 Government Motor Transport provides the Committee with the outstanding debt per client as on 31 March 2022, 31 March 2023 and 31 October 2023 and indicate which of the outstanding debt is older than 30 days.

4. Acknowledgement

The Committee congratulated the Department on their performance for the 2022/23 financial year, wherein they spent 99,8% of their budget. The Committee further congratulates the Department and GMT on achieving their 11th consecutive unqualified audit opinion without findings.

The Committee noted the expiration of Ms Gooch's employment on 31 October 2023 and acknowledged that Ms Gooch is a remarkable woman who is known for her integrity, governance, and ethics, as well as her sharp mind and incredible knowledge. She has been

the Head of Department of the Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works since November 2013. Her respectful leadership style has built a team that is not only innovative at all levels but also empowered through her incredible commitment to improve the lives of all the people of the province.

The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Traffic Law Enforcement Officers and wished them well during the execution of their duties over the upcoming festive season, to ensure roads are safe for all road users.

5. Conclusion

The Chairperson thanked the Members of the Committee, Ministers Simmers and Mackenzie, the Head of Departments, Ms Gooch and Ms Moore and all the officials of the Department for their preparation and responses to the questions raised by the Committee.

4. Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning on the 2022/23 Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture, and its Entity Casidra, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, having deliberated on the Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture and its Entity, Casidra, for the year ended 31 March 2023, referred to it, reports as follows:

1. Introduction

Section 113(3)(b) of the Constitution requires that “Members of the Executive Council of a province must provide the legislature with full and regular reports concerning matters under their control.” Section 65 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999) requires the Minister of each department and public entity to table an annual report in the legislature within six months of the end of each financial year.

As part of its oversight function, the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (the Committee) deliberated on the Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture (the Department) and its Entity, Casidra, on 19 October 2023.

Annual reports are the key instruments for departments to report on performance measured against their performance targets and budgets as outlined in their Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans.

The Annual Report Programme for the 2022/2023 financial year was advertised in various newspapers, inviting stakeholders and members of the public to participate in the discussions.

The Committee deliberated on Part A: General Information, Part B: Performance Information and Part D: Human Resource Management of the respective Annual Reports.

2. Department of Agriculture

2.1 Overview

The 2022/2023 Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture emphasized that the Western Cape was responsible for 51% of South Africa's total agricultural exports, amounting to R59,4 billion in 2022. Furthermore, the Report outlined the Department's actions in response to the key announcements made during the Budget Address in 2022.

These actions included, among others, the development of a Western Cape African Agricultural Strategy, upgrading the Provincial Veterinary Laboratory and extending the Memorandums of Understanding with commodity organizations.

Agriculture's reliance on exports made it susceptible to market instability, and South Africa's response to geopolitical events could have a negative effect on trade relations. Considering this the Western Cape was particularly concerned about the renewal of the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) in 2025.

The traditional agricultural export markets held significant importance for the Western Cape, and the Report emphasized the need to identify opportunities and support initiatives that aimed to increase and maintain the market share in these economies. Simultaneously, there was a focus on exploring opportunities on the African continent due to its potential for trade and other ventures.

Challenges experienced included the energy crisis, biosecurity concerns, shortages of animal vaccines, and climate change. To address these challenges, the Department hosted an Energy Summit for the Agriculture Sector in June 2023, a Veterinary Services Week in September 2023, and expedited the implementation of the Management Improvement Plan based on the evaluation of the SmartAgri Plan.

The Department achieved 96% of its performance targets despite the challenges experienced and received an unqualified audit opinion.

2.2 Key issues discussed.

2.2.1 In order to increase agricultural production in a sustainable manner the Department held 32 farmers day events during the year under review. The Committee was informed that these farmers day events were held based on the needs identified by farmers.

2.2.2 Mitigation measures to deal with the effects of climate change continued to be of concern to the Committee. The objective of the signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Food and Agriculture was to promote the co-operation between the regions that shared similar challenges and climates and to deal with the effects of climate change. The Committee was informed that a departmental delegation visited the State of California in June 2023 as a result of the agreement. Although the visit took place outside of the year under review, the Committee was pleased to be informed that progress had been made on this front and that an extensive report on the visit was available.

Progress in the field of climate change included the establishment a transversal governance structure on climate change that was spearheaded by the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and

Development Planning and an agreement that was signed with the University of Stellenbosch's New School for Climate Change Studies. The latter would establish a link between the Department and postgraduate students at the university that could result in joint projects and international funding. The Committee was informed that international funders were no longer keen to fund government initiatives, and that they would rather fund tertiary institutions.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee, driven by the Minister of Agriculture, on climate change matters was welcomed by the Committee.

- 2.2.3 The Department offered internships and work-based learning opportunities to 173 individuals. These programmes provided practical experience within the Department and on farms, contributing to skills development and income generation through stipends for durations ranging from 12 to 24 months. The Committee was informed that a significant number of these interns found permanent employment within the contracted intern period.
- 2.2.4 The Annual Report of the Department was silent on the status of the possible transfer of the Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute to the national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. The Committee had raised concern about this situation in past meetings where a functional training institute, contributing significantly to the agricultural sector within the province, faced the uncertainty of being transferred to another sphere of government. This remained of concern to the Committee.
- 2.2.5 The purpose of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement was to accelerate integration and economic development through the establishment of organisations which would play a pivotal role in the mobilisation of resources and the management of the African financial sector.

The Committee was pleased to be informed that the Department launched its African Agricultural Strategy for the Western Cape. The Strategy focused on economic development, job creation, and food security. The Department elaborated on the outcomes of the strategy and how specific Programmes within the Department were linked to this Strategy.

3. Casidra

3.1 Overview

Casidra was the implementing agent for the Department and achieved an unqualified audit opinion for the year under review. The focus for the year encompassed regaining the financial stability of the organization, utilizing resources efficiently and enhancing stakeholder relationships. The Entity entered partnerships with other government departments and municipalities to increase its revenue base and modify its funding model.

The focus of the Entity remained on delivering projects on behalf of the Department, assisting with disaster relief projects and financial record keeping, and other services for small farmers. Previous financial years were indicative of leadership issues and losses. The appointment of the new Chief Executive Officer in June 2022 brought much needed stability to the organization.

3.2 Key issue discussed.

Amalienstein and Waaikraal were farms managed by Casidra on behalf of the Department. Both farms were financially unsustainable due to limited funding and the lack of a constant supply of water for irrigation. The Committee has engaged the Department and Casidra on a regular basis regarding the turnaround strategies for these farms, and to ascertain under what conditions transfer could take place to the relevant communities.

The Department informed the Committee that it would be irresponsible to transfer these farms to the communities in its current form, as both farms were financially unsustainable.

Community conflict was experienced on how the transfer and related processes should unfold. Various mechanisms were put in place to ensure the buy-in of the community. The Department had appointed the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation to administer social facilitation in this regard. Casidra received an annual budget to maintain the farms. No further major developments have taken place due to lack of funds.

The Committee had previously requested a summary of the financial results of the farms for the last three years and it was clear that the farms were not financially sustainable. It was clear that the farms were unlikely to ever make profit given the infrastructure issues, the climatic issues that impacted them, and the fact that they annually require government subsidies.

The possibility of seeking additional investment to make the farms viable and the possible establishment of a legal entity was mentioned. There was a need for a significant investment in water infrastructure on these farms.

Despite these challenges, the Department and Casidra were committed to finding solutions for these farms.

4. Resolutions/Actions

4.1. The Committee **REQUESTED** that the Department of Agriculture provides it with:

4.1.1 A list of upcoming Farmers' Day events as well as the topics to be covered;

4.1.2 The Report that emanated from the departmental International Visit to the State of California that took place in June 2023;

4.1.3 Further detail on the type of Internship Programmes that were offered as well as an indication of the type of positions into which these interns were permanently recruited;

4.1.4 An update on the status of the possible transfer of the Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute to the national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development;

4.1.5 A copy of the Western Cape African Agricultural Strategy, and

- 4.1.6 An update on the condition of the dam at the Waaikraal Farm with specific reference to the functionality of the dam, whether the plastic cover that was previously stolen has been replaced, and the cost of constructing the dam.
- 4.2 The Committee **FURTHER REQUESTED** the Department of Agriculture submit a report on past promises regarding the transfer of the farms, Amalienstein and Waaikraal, to the adjacent communities, including when, where and by whom these promises were made.
- 4.3 The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Department of Agriculture investigates the possibility of workplace integrated training at the Waaikraal and Amalienstein farms, similar to that offered at the Oudtshoorn Research Farm.
- 4.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** that members, on receipt of the list of Farmers Day events and the topics, could determine whether any of these topics may be of interest and then be supported to undertake an oversight visit to observe the Department's input at these events, subject to the Parliamentary Programme.

5. Conclusion

The Committee recognized the challenges experienced during the year and congratulated the Department and Casidra on sterling working under difficult circumstances. The Committee was satisfied that the predetermined objectives for the 2022/23 financial year were adequately achieved and that it was accurately reported. The Committee further expressed its appreciation for the comprehensive responses from the Department of Agriculture and Casidra to the scrutiny of the Annual Reports and thanked the Minister, Head of Department, Chairperson of the Casidra Board, its Chief Executive Officer and officials for their contributions and efforts in this regard.

A special word of thanks was extended to the Chairperson of the Casidra Board, Professor Johan Kirsten, whose terms had ended, and to the Chief Financial Officer of the Department, Mr Floris Huysamer, who will be retiring at the end of the year.

5. Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning on the 2022/23 Annual Reports of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, and its Entity CapeNature, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, having deliberated on the Annual Reports of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and its Entity, CapeNature, for the year ended 31 March 2023, referred to it, reports as follows:

1. Introduction

Section 113(3)(b) of the Constitution requires that “Members of the Executive Council of a province must provide the legislature with full and regular reports concerning matters under their control.” Section 65 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999) requires the Minister of each Department and public entity to table an annual report in the legislature within six months of the end of each financial year.

As part of its oversight function, the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (the Committee) deliberated on the Annual Reports of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (the Department) and its Entity, CapeNature, on 17 October 2023.

Annual reports are the key instruments for departments to report on performance measured against their performance targets and budgets as outlined in their Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans.

The annual report programme for the 2022/23 financial year was advertised in various newspapers, inviting stakeholders and members of the public to participate in the discussions.

The Committee deliberated on Part A: General Information, Part B: Performance Information and Part D: Human Resource Management of the respective Annual Reports.

2. Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning

2.1 Overview

The year under review was a challenging year due to the lingering impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of loadshedding. This resulted in an increasing number of service delivery pressures which was exacerbated by limited fiscal resources. However, the Department ensured the continuation of its services and the achievement of its targets as set out in its Annual Performance Plan. The Department ensured that Environmental and Spatial Resilience, together with Climate Change Responses and Water Resilience, were included as part of the Priority Focus Areas of the Growth for Jobs Strategy.

The budget constraints had a particular impact on the Air Quality Management Directorate as it had to decommission the air quality stations in Hout Bay and Oudtshoorn. This was aggravated by the high levels of loadshedding.

Key highlights for the year under review included the Department being recognised as the leading provincial department in administering and managing Environmental Impact Assessment projects in South Africa by the Environmental Assessment Practitioners Association of South Africa. These authorisations were often one of the first legislative requirements for new developments, and as such, played a critical role in the speed with which projects could be completed.

Waste minimization to landfills was a focus point for the Department where it worked closely with municipalities. Through the Waste Management Directorate, the Department has set ambitious targets to reduce the volumes of waste that reach landfill sites. Recycling, composting and several awareness community initiatives were designed and will continue to be emphasized. There was also an ongoing focus on organic waste management and its diversion.

The Western Cape Biodiversity Act, 2023 (Act 6 of 2021), was assented to by the Premier on 14 December 2021, and was being implemented in a phased process during the year under review.

The Green Scorpions were honoured during the Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Lekgotla Awards of Excellence Event in 2023 for the Best Enforcer

(Administrative Enforcement) and for Best Compliance Team (COVID-19 Blitz Operations). The Unit was also recognised with Environmental Management Information Long Service Awards, which reflected well on the Department's institutional knowledge and continuity within the unit.

During 2022/23 the Department worked closely with the Western Cape Department of Local Government on the development of the 15-Year Western Cape Integrated Drought and Water Response Plan and participated in the internal and external Water Indabas which were coordinated by the Department of Local Government during the year.

The Department managed to maintain its clean audit outcome.

3. CapeNature

3.1 Overview

The core mandate of CapeNature was the conservation of biodiversity in the Western Cape.

It was clear to the Committee that it was becoming increasingly more difficult to execute this task because of the poor economic climate. Other factors hampering the execution of CapeNature's core mandate included climate change, resulting in extreme weather conditions, droughts, floods, and fires. The huge increase in biodiversity crime, and increasing urbanization also impacted on the ability of Cape Nature to do the work that they were meant to do.

Despite these challenges, Cape Nature continued to strengthen good governance and achieved good results in the past financial year. This resulted in another unqualified audit for the eighth consecutive year. The Entity's performance indicators that were distributed throughout its programmes were aligned to that of the Western Cape Government and 100% of all predetermined objectives were achieved and performance in some of the objectives were exceeded.

Highlights for the year under review included the generation of 608 full time equivalent employment contracts against a target of 450, and the creation of 1 105 work opportunities through the Small and Medium Enterprise Contractors in the reserves.

While the Entity had to reduce their conservation estate slightly by the de-proclamation of the Driftsands Nature Reserve, the protected area estate expanded by 9 905 hectares.

Eco-tourism was a key source of income for the Entity. The Entity's tourism income performance exceeded expectations and totaled R51 million in the 2021/22 financial year. In the year under review the Entity managed to generate R61 million in tourism revenue demonstrating that it had not only recovered from the effects of the pandemic, but also outperformed pre-pandemic tourism income performance.

4. Resolutions/Actions

The Committee REQUESTED that the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning provides it with:

- 4.1 A written response on how the Capital Expenditure Framework will be amended in light of the looming budget cuts;

- 4.2 A summary of the 14 Regional Socio-Economic Projects with specific reference to the type of project and what it aims to achieve, who stands to benefit, and how and why these projects were selected;
- 4.3 A copy of the latest Integrated Coastal Management Plan; and
- 4.4 The status of the phased implementation approach of certain sections of the Western Cape Biodiversity Act, 2021 (Act 6 of 2021) by outlining the sections that have already been implemented and providing a draft timeline for the sections still to be implemented.

5. Conclusion

The Committee congratulated the Department and CapeNature on sterling work and was satisfied that the predetermined objectives for the 2022/23 financial year were adequately achieved and that it was accurately reported.

The Committee noted its appreciation for the responses of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and CapeNature to the scrutiny of the Annual Reports and thanked the Minister, Head of Department, Board Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of CapeNature, as well as the officials for their contributions and efforts in this regard.