



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

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## **Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning on the 2021/22 Annual Reports of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, and its Entity CapeNature, for the year ended 31 March 2022.**

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 2022, 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 21 October 2022.

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 2021/22 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**

#### **Overview**

Key highlights for the year under review included the release of the third iteration of the Western Cape Air Quality Management Plan (2021 to 2025) that focused on air quality, air pollution and climate change.

The Committee commended the work done that focused on Water Catchment Programmes in the Berg River and Breede River catchments through the Berg River Improvement Plan and the Breede River Environmental Resource Protection Plan.

The Department and CapeNature released a total of 29 Estuary Management Plans for public comment. The Plans underwent evaluation before finalisation and approval by the Department and Entity. These plans aimed to manage and coordinate the many activities that occurs within, and impact on the estuarine functioning zone. In some instances, this could ultimately lead to declaring an estuary as a protected area or special management area. Such has been the case with the Berg River Estuary, which was declared a Ramsar Site under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The Committee congratulated the Department and CapeNature on this sterling achievement.

The Department managed to maintain its clean audit outcome and succeeded in achieving 100% of its performance indicators, exceeding some of the indicators in various Programmes.

### **3. CapeNature**

#### **Overview**

CapeNature continued to strengthen good governance and achieved good results in the past financial year. This resulted in another unqualified audit for the seventh 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.

Highlights for the year under review included the finalisation of the Western Cape Biodiversity Act, 2021 (Act 6 of 2021) that provided improved framework legislation to govern biodiversity in the province and outlined the conservation mandate of CapeNature. The protected area expansion and stewardship model played a pivotal role in biodiversity conservation and ecological sustainability. The entity exceeded the planned target by adding 5 000 hectares to the conservation estate. The Committee noted with appreciation the growth in the number of protected areas and the number of reserves established in the year under review.

With the lifting of travel restrictions, eco-tourism had significantly increased, which was a key source of income for the Entity. The Entity's tourism income performance exceeded all expectations and totaled more than R50 million, demonstrating that it has not only recovered from the effects of the pandemic, but also outperformed pre-pandemic tourism income performance. Additionally, the glamping sites at Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve were launched, and the Mbali Collection at Kogelberg Nature Reserve received a renowned architecture award for its creative and nature-sensitive design.

One of the major challenges during the year under review was the outbreak of avian influenza in October 2021. The outbreak subsided in March 2022 and many seabirds of different species succumbed to the outbreak.

### **4. Key finding and concern**

The Department and CapeNature reported a high staff vacancy rate within its respective establishments and, judging from the audit outcomes obtained as well as the quality of the report that was presented to the Committee, it was commendable that the Department and CapeNature

managed to achieve their performance targets. The Committee however expressed concern that this situation could have an impact on employee health and wellness and implored the Department and CapeNature to address the filling of critical posts. The Committee noted that the adjustments in the budgets of the Department and its entity, CapeNature, have not kept up with the increased responsibilities brought about by changes in legislation, the expansion of nature reserves and the like.

#### **4. Resolutions/Actions**

- 4.1. The Committee **REQUESTED** that the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and CapeNature provides it with a Report on the high staff vacancy rate that exists, with specific reference to the period that each of these posts have been vacant, the vacant posts that are funded and vacant posts that were not funded.

The Committee further **REQUESTED** that CapeNature provides it with its Equity Plan.

- 4.2 The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and CapeNature:

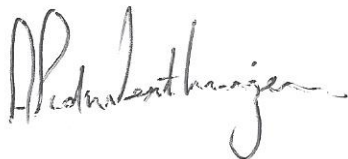
- 4.2.1 Address the issue of the high vacancy rate as this may impact on the quality-of-service delivery within the Department and Entity; and
- 4.2.2 Extend an invitation to the Committee to attend ceremonies and events such as the Ramsar Ceremony and the launch of the Berg River Improvement Plan, so that the Committee is kept abreast of developments within the Department and Entity.

The Committee further **RECOMMENDED** that CapeNature inserts the name of the Reserve, Facility or Project and its respective location to the pictures in its Annual Report.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The Committee congratulated the Department and CapeNature on sterling work and was satisfied that the predetermined objectives for the 2020/21 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.



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**MR AP VAN DER WESTHUIZEN, MPP**  
**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING**

**DATE: 22 November 2022**

