



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

Ref Number: 11/4/1/2/5

---

## **Draft Report of the Standing Committee on Local Government on its oversight visit to the Western Cape Disaster Management Centre on Tuesday, 7 June 2022 as follows:**

### **Delegation**

The delegation consisted of the following Members:

Botha, L (Chairperson) (DA)  
Van der Westhuizen, AP (DA)

### **1. Introduction**

Section 114 (2)(b)(i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 mandates provincial legislatures to provide for mechanisms to maintain oversight over the Provincial Executive Authority in the province.

The Standing Committee on Local Government embarked on an oversight visit to the Western Cape Disaster Management Centre (the Centre) and was briefed on the operations of the Centre, fire related disasters during the past year and the readiness for possible floods in view of the approaching winter season.

### **2. Overview of the visit**

The visit commenced with a briefing by the Department of Local Government on the operations of the Centre after which the Committee undertook a tour of the facility to observe the way in which the Centre reacted to and managed disaster related calls.

The main purpose of the Centre is to promote an integrated, coordinated and multi-disciplinary disaster management and fire rescue service at a provincial and local level and to ensure the establishment of effective and efficient disaster management practices.

The Centre derived its mandate from the Disaster Management Act, 2022 as amended, the National Disaster Management Framework of 2005 and the Provincial Disaster Management Framework of 2010.

Disaster management is located within the Provincial Department of Local Government, which is also responsible for the administration of various sections of the Fire Brigade Services Act, 1987 and "Non-Security" operations such as disasters.

The Centre is not only responsible for the effective application of the national objective but is also responsible for disaster management coordination and institutional arrangements for disaster risk management with the City of Cape Town and the five District Municipalities.

### **3. Key issues discussed**

Even during the fight against COVID-19 the Centre played an important role. The Provincial Disaster Management Centre's Joint Operations Centre (PDMC JOC) was activated on 20 March 2020 and it is still operational 24/7 to date in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All stakeholders were represented in the PDMC JOC, which assisted in better coordination and planning. The PDMC JOC focused on coordinating the COVID-19 response.

During the pandemic, the Centre relied on the use of technology such as software applications, drones, disaster management software programmes and the accessibility of expertise as well as benchmarking opportunities. Virtual meetings were used during the assessment and analysis of information.

The Department provided funding to disaster management interns through its Graduate Internship Programme. They also offered various programmes to mitigate disasters such as the Hazard Awareness Programme, which focused on the creation and building of partnerships with other stakeholders.

The Department supported and co-ordinated Fire and Rescue Services in the Western Cape and administered the Fire Brigade Services Act, 1987 and associated legislation on behalf of the Western Cape Government. Fires in informal settlements and wild veld fires proved to be a major challenge for Fire and Rescue Services.

One of the major support programmes of the Department was the installation of smoke alarms in informal settlements. The project is aimed at combating fire related deaths in informal settlements across the Western Cape, and at the same time, assisted in creating awareness about fire safety.

The new smoke alarm system had a 10-year battery life and has been proven to detect smoke in less than 15 seconds. This helped to raise the alarm of a fire danger, lessened the level of smoke inhalation and in so doing, saved lives.

Veld fires was another major challenge and to assist the Department a Provincial Incident Command System was implemented as an integrated, scalable command and control system used by all municipal and designated fire services. The system was implemented across all municipal fire services.

The department highlighted their Winter Readiness and Preparedness Plans to ensure an effective response to emergency incidents during the 2022 winter season.

In preparation for the upcoming winter season, the WCDMC communicated with organs of state, the Metro, District Municipalities and relevant role players to submit comments and inputs to the Winter Readiness Plan after which the plan was finalised and communicated to the National Disaster Management Centre and relevant role players.

Heavy rains, flooding, low temperatures, informal settlement fires, electricity constraints; and mudslides associated with continuous wet weather were some of the risks identified in the plan. These risks were further impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

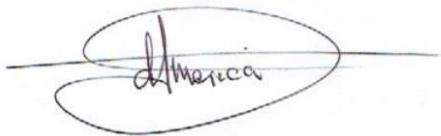
The main aspects of the Centre's winter readiness plan was to ensure that the vvarious provincial plans were in placed and communicated with all the relevant stakeholders. Stakeholder relationships and partnerships were key to a successful response plan. The Centre also ensured the conducting of awareness and training exercises, dissemination of early warnings, representation on the City of Cape Town's Flood and Storms Task Team and the monitoring of dam levels.

The Centre further ensured that the Standing Operating Procedures for the activation of the Centre and 24/7 standby procedures were in place. The disaster management centres were in a state of readiness.

#### **4. Acknowledgements**

The Standing Committee commended the Centre together with the Metro and district municipal disaster management centres for the work done in preparation for the 2022 winter season and the state of readiness for all other disaster related incidents.

The Standing Committee also expressed its heartfelt appreciation to the Centre for availing themselves to brief the Committee on their operations and congratulated them for winning silver, in the category of Best Responsive Government Institution of the Year 2021/2022, at the 77th Annual Batho Pele Excellence Awards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Botha', is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape. A horizontal line passes through the center of the oval, extending slightly beyond its left and right edges.

**pp MS L BOTHA (MPP)**

**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT**