



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

WCPP 11/4/7

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Report of the Standing Committee on Police Oversight and Community Safety, and Cultural Affairs and Sport on its oversight visit to the Western Cape Archives and Records Services on 13 June 2023**

The Standing Committee on Police Oversight and Community Safety, and Cultural Affairs and Sport having conducted an oversight visit to the Western Cape Provincial Archives and Records Services on 13 June 2023, reports as follows:

### **The delegation**

The delegation of the Standing Committee on Police Oversight and Community Safety, and Cultural Affairs and Sport included the following Members:

#### **Democratic Alliance**

Bosman, G (Chairperson)

Baartman, DM

Fry, C

#### **African National Congress**

Bans, AP

Windvogel, R

#### **Economic Freedom Fighters**

Cassiem, A

### **The link between the oversight visit and the priority strategies**

The Western Cape Provincial Parliament strives to uphold its mandated duty of conducting oversight over the provincial departments. It also aims to effect socio-economic upliftment for the citizens of the Western Cape. The oversight visit served as a mechanism to uphold the WCPP's oversight role. The visit also served the interest of the citizens as the Western Cape Archives and Records Services plays a vital role in connecting people to their history. The WCARS is a hub and source of information for researchers across levels, but also helps individuals to trace their respective genealogical backgrounds, and, inter alia, the history of cultures, religions, and democratic heritage, of the Western Cape and South Africa. The Committee, therefore, inspected the facilities and interrogated the WCARS' financial and resource capacity.

#### **1. Introduction**

The Standing Committee on Police Oversight and Community Safety, Cultural Affairs and Sport conducted an oversight visit to the Western Cape Archives and Records Services (WCARS). The Department of Cultural Affairs' Ms C Van Wyk, Chief Director: Cultural Affairs, led the delegation. Ms N Dingayo, Director: Archives, led the presentation.

Following the introductions, the Chairperson noted apologies tendered by Members M Kama (ANC), G Pretorius and PJ Marais (FFP).

#### **2. Presentation**

The presentation addressed several pertinent matters, including, the WCARS' legislative mandate, the preservation of public and non-public records, stakeholder engagement and partnerships, updates on

the shift digitisation, human and infrastructural resource requirements, and challenges, as well as awareness campaigns.

- 2.1. The WCARS is bound by legislation to receive government records older than 20 years. However, WCARS reached its capacity to receive physical records from Governmental Bodies. This is largely due to inadequate investment in providing the required physical space for archival records in the Provincial Archives.
- 2.2. Although the WCARS is steadily progressing in the digitisation of records, the lack of adequate and industry approved storage space, poses a concern.
- 2.3. There are approximately 27 258 linear metres of records awaiting to be transferred to the archives. These records are spread across the province. Currently, the WCARS has 235, 06 linear metres of records (equating 2.35km). Linear metres basically refer to the measurement of archival material.
- 2.4. The WCARS has plans for renovations to its existing building to add a new wing for the additional storage space. There are existing plans to expand the current facilities by adding another wing to the WCARS building in Roeland Street. Any additional or new facility earmarked for elsewhere would require a purpose-built approach to include several important features such as fire detection and a fire suppression function. Also, the temperature control mechanisms would need to be in place to preserve the archival records.
- 2.5. The implications of not having increased capacity will limit the capacity to adhere to the legislative mandate to receive and store governmental records and place further financial strain on the government departments to use commercial storage facilities. These commercial facilities are not necessarily purposed to optimally store records that require precise temperature settings, and fire prevention and fire suppression mechanisms that are needed to safeguard stored records.
- 2.6. The *My Content* records management system has been rolled out to Western Cape Government (WCG) departments. This system caters for the storage of electronic and digital records, as the WCG moves towards a pro paperless records system, across its departments.
- 2.7. The Western Cape Government has a memorandum of agreement with the Eastern Cape Government (ECG) regarding the storage of the ECG's records. However, there are ongoing discussions regarding the development of a digital portal wherein these records could be stored and availed. It is preferable that the ECG takes the responsibility of developing and maintaining such a digital portal. Digitising the records would minimise the risk of transporting the physical records.
- 2.8. The Western Cape Archives implemented the Access to Memory (AtoM) software in November 2019. This software allows for an electronic records management system, that also allows to easily store archival holdings online. The WCARS captured a total of 38 039 records during the 2022/23 financial year using the AtoM.
- 2.9. The three state-of-the-art digitisation machines costs R15.3 million.
- 2.10. The WCARS has 74 granted posts of which only 45 are actual/filled. It is important to state that should another facility be built, instead of renovating the existing building, then the staffing component for the other facility would have to be appropriately assembled to ensure that the same quality of service is maintained.

- 2.11. The budget capacity for the 2023/24 financial year includes R18 004 88 for Cost of Employment, R3 003 347 for goods and services, and capital is allocated R564 500. The total budget is R21 572 735.
- 2.12. Tour of some of the premises including stack room – one of 45 – viewing the second oldest volume of records, restoration room, digital equipment, and reading room.

After the presentation, the Committee conducted a guided tour of the facility. Some of the key areas visited included the restoration room, where records are repaired, the reading room, and the room housing the three state-of-the-art digitisation machines. Staff demonstrated how the innovative equipment is used to digitise records. The Committee also visited one of 45 stack rooms (storage rooms), which stores the second oldest archive record (a volume of records dating back to 1659).



**G BOSMAN, MPP**  
**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON POLICE OVERSIGHT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY, AND**  
**CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPORT**  
**WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT**