



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

Ref Number: WCPP 11/4/7 and WCPP 11/4/2

---

**Draft Report of the Standing Committee on Mobility and the Standing Committee on Finance, Economic Opportunities and Tourism on their oversight visit to the Cape Winelands Airport on Tuesday, 19 September 2023 as follows:**

## **Delegation**

The delegation consisted of the following Members:

America, D (Chairperson, Standing Committee on Mobility)

Murray, CAT (Chairperson, Standing Committee on Finance, Economic Development and Tourism)

Van der Westhuizen, AP

Nkondlo, N

Brinkhuis, G

De Villiers, P

The Procedural Officers, Ms Z Adams and Mr J Coetzee, accompanied the delegation.

## **1. Engagement with the Cape Winelands Airport**

### **1.1 Introduction and background**

The Cape Winelands Airport (CWA), formerly the Fisantekraal Airfield, currently operates privately as a general flying airfield and acts as a base for aviation training in the Cape Town region. The area is conveniently located between the Cape Town city centre and Paarl. The 150-hectare location was acquired by a group of business entrepreneurs and experts in the aviation sector in 2020, who have planned to transform the space into a viable commercial airport over the next few years.

According to the CWA team, the airport had the remarkable potential to completely reshape the landscape of the Cape Winelands and become a strategic asset to the area, the Western Cape, and South Africa as a whole. Through a collaborative approach and working with innovative minds, businesses and organisations, the CWA aimed to be recognised as a significant strategic asset and would serve as a catalyst for growth and development in the region and the Western Cape as a whole. The CWA's vision was to unlock its full potential, bringing together innovative minds, businesses and organisations that would contribute to the economic and social advancement of the region, and that would enable the airport to become a destination itself.

The CWA team was represented by the following persons:

- Mr Nicholas Ferguson, Executive Managing Director
- Mr Deon Cloete, Managing Director

- Ms Adele Klingenberg, Head of Planning and Strategy
- Mr Mark Wilkinson, Director
- Ms Deidre Davids, Head of Communications

The Standing Committee on Mobility and the Standing Committee on Finance, Economic Opportunities and Tourism engaged with the CWA team on its development and expansion plans for the CWA.

In terms of the 2023/24 Strategic Objectives of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, linked to the Speaker's Priorities, the outcome of this report is linked to the following priorities:

- Priority 2: Expanding citizen services.
- Priority 3: Strengthening the core business.

## **1.2 Observations**

1.2.1 According to the CWA, the success of the airport was contingent on the following:

1.2.1.1 Adopting an embedded sustainable approach by implementing eco-friendly practices, such as using renewable energy sources, minimising carbon emissions, and promoting water and waste management initiatives. This approach would assist in minimising the environmental impact and support a positive relationship with the surrounding local communities;

1.2.1.2 Implementing a social agenda as the engagement with, and the involvement of, the surrounding communities was important for the airport to become a source of pride and to create a sense of ownership within the local community. This could include programmes for job creation, skills development and community outreach initiatives;

1.2.1.3 Implementing an economic agenda to develop an aeronautical and non-aeronautical agenda, which would drive economic growth in the region. Aeronautical activities included airline operations, aviation-related businesses, and supporting infrastructure. Non-aeronautical activities included retail establishments, dining, entertainment and exhibition space. Careful planning was needed for this to ensure the long-term economic viability of the airport. These activities would contribute to the CWA becoming a destination for both local and international travellers;

1.2.1.4 Ensuring a positive impact on the environment by prioritising the use of environmentally friendly practices such as green transportation options, promoting local agriculture and organic farming, and supporting conservation initiatives;

1.2.1.5 Contributing to a net cargo agenda that would involve attracting cargo carriers, logistics companies and distribution centres. This would also create job opportunities; and

1.2.1.6 Focusing on the CWA's capacity, redundancy and route viability. The CWA's capacity and "redundancy" had to be carefully planned to accommodate future growth and to ensure operational efficiency. Given the unpredictable impact of the weather and the subsequent delays at airports (and further impact on the economy), establishing "redundancy" was of utmost importance for the CWA. This meant that the CWA could serve as a reliever/alternate or "back-up" airport if planes were unable to land at the Cape Town International Airport (CTIA), which only has one runway (with a second cross runway for domestic flights). Regular assessments of route viability would be conducted to attract

airlines and ensure a strong connectivity network, providing travellers with convenient options to reach the CWA from various destinations. Many international airlines have confirmed their routes and have committed to more frequent flights. Wesgro and Cape Town Tourism have also done well to promote flight routes and the Western Cape as a travel destination.

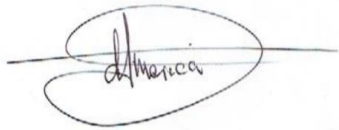
- 1.2.2 Currently the “fundlers” of the CWA are the shareholders of the airport, who would be using the future agreements/contracts they conclude with airlines to seek financing through banks for the development and expansion of the CWA.
- 1.2.3 The CWA’s research indicated that there was a benefit to having a second airport close to the CTIA. Besides acting as an alternate destination/reliever airport for CTIA, the existence of two airports near one another could also result in expanding the travel market in the province, it could drive trade and investment, and more capacity meant a reduction in cargo rates. An independent study conducted by the CWA showed that the existence of the airport could result in massive reductions in reserve fuel requirements, fuel consumption, and carbon dioxide emissions. A major cost saving for airlines created incentive for international airlines to travel to Cape Town.
- 1.2.4 In terms of fuel consumption savings and reserve fuel requirements, airlines are currently required to carry additional fuel if they cannot land at their original destination and would need to seek an alternative landing destination. For flights destined for CTIA, airplanes are required to carry additional fuel in case they need to divert to OR Tambo International Airport. The CWA provides an alternative destination that is closer to the CTIA, which would result in many airlines saving on fuel costs and being able to lower their reserve fuel capacity.
- 1.2.5 The CWA was fortunate to be located just above sea level, on flat ground, as aircrafts did not perform well at higher altitudes, such as at Lanseria Airport. The CWA’s prime location ensured better weather, which would enable them to become a superior airport that is able to operate aircrafts to and from the United States, Middle East, Europe and many other destinations. It also worked in the CWA’s favour that the site was 80 years old and was an existing airport with existing rights. It was easier to expand on an existing site than to start anew.
- 1.2.6 Instead of competing with existing airports, the CWA planned to expand the tourism market and general aviation sector. The CWA had approached various airlines highlighting the value that would be created by building the CWA, and marketing themselves as a reliever airport for the CTIA. The CWA would service domestic and international flights.
- 1.2.7 In terms of airspace capacity, the CWA was creating more flight paths in and out of the airport. This allowed for greater opportunities for “redundancy”. These flight paths also would not interfere with flights to and from the CTIA, as the CTIA’s flights were at a different altitude that would not interfere with the CWA’s flights.
- 1.2.8 The development of the CWA would have a significant impact on the contribution to the economy, employment opportunities and household income growth. The CWA had already consulted the ward councillors and local community leaders in respect of their involvement in the airport. In terms of job creation, the CWA’s focus was on creating jobs during the construction period, as well as in the operational activities of the airport, such as shop owners, cleaning contracts, security contracts etc. The idea was to find skills within the local community in a structured way.
- 1.2.9 One of the key features of the CWA was that it has the potential to bring significant benefits to the surrounding area and contribute to its growth and development. The CWA wanted to create a unique experience for its passengers, highlighting the Cape Winelands experience. The CWA also wanted to create accessibility to aviation, especially for people who had never flown before. This included spaces within the airport that allowed people to observe the air site.

- 1.2.10 The CWA emphasised the importance of embracing new technologies, which was included in their development plans. This included the consideration of drone technology, heliports, vertiports, electric planes, air taxis etc.
- 1.2.11 In terms of its development plans, the CWA was in the process of completing the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the site. The goal was to complete this EIA stage and move forward with the necessary regulatory processes, which they had to navigate through. Extensive consultations with domestic and international airlines were conducted, ensuring that all decisions were well informed. In respect of construction and completion of development, the projected date that the CWA will be in commission is early 2027; however, this was subject to the EIA approval.
- 1.2.12 The CWA planned to launch with a 3.5km runway; however, alongside the runway, the commercial developments would be phased in over time, and would be market driven (based on market demand).

The goal is not just to view the airport as a transportation hub, but as a gateway by recognising its

### **1.3 Acknowledgements**

The Chairpersons thanked the CWA team for engaging with the Committees and for their transparency in respect of the development and expansion plans for the airport, noting the impact the CWA would have on economic growth and job opportunities in the province.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D America', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape.

**MR D AMERICA (MPP)**

**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON MOBILITY**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cat Murray', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape.

**MS CAT MURRAY (MPP)**

**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**