



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

WCPP 11/4/4

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, signaling 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 Advisors and Priority Areas

The Department of the Premier appointed two special advisors, 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.



HON. C. FRY

CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE PREMIER AND CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

DATE: 3 November 2023