

increasing social cohesion



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1. Strategic objective

Social cohesion refers to the extent to which a society is coherent, united and functional, providing an environment in which its citizens can prosper.

Social cohesion is deemed to be present when people live relatively peaceful and harmonious lives, and their basic needs are fulfilled. It also refers to society's capacity to cater for the development needs of all its members, and to ensure that everyone is treated equally. A cohesive society is a community with free individuals who support each other to reach common goals by democratic means and who live lives they value.

The objective of the PGWC is to bridge historical divides between people from different races, cultures, genders and socio-economic backgrounds, thereby fostering social inclusion. The PGWC aims to create an environment in which citizens of the province can develop their capabilities, live together in peace and feel a sense of belonging and ownership. Lastly, the PGWC seeks to promote participation in civic and socio-economic life.

To achieve these outcomes, our strategy will be to mobilise the resources, knowledge, creativity and concern of all role-players – including all spheres of government, civil society, business and individual citizens – to increase social cohesion on a partnership basis.



The PGWC aims to achieve the following three outcomes in order to realise its objective of increasing social cohesion:

1. Empowered individuals
2. Functional and bonded families
3. Connected communities that, through social capital, are bridged to one another across racial, gendered, linguistic and class divides, and feel linked with government and organisations in civil society

2. Problem statement

The Western Cape is not a fully cohesive society. There are a number of reasons for this.

2.1 Poverty and unemployment

Although there has been some success in reducing poverty, there has not been even progress throughout the province. Poverty has increased in some district municipalities and decreased in others. Despite the fact that the unemployment rate is lower in the Western Cape than in other provinces, the provincial unemployment rate of 23.62% continues to undermine social cohesion.

2.2 Substance abuse

A recent study of substance abuse trends in the Western Cape between 2000 and 2008 emphasised the serious extent of substance abuse, with alcohol being the most frequently abused substance in the province. Compared to other provinces, the Western Cape has the second highest rate of harmful drinking during pregnancy, while the use of methamphetamine (also known as tik) is highest in the Western Cape.

2.3 Child abuse

Children in the Western Cape face a high risk of being abused. Issues such as child abandonment, missing children, corporal punishment and child sexual exploitation as well as domestic violence continue to raise concern.

2.4 Gangsterism

Gangsterism is endemic in the Western Cape and increasingly affects young people, particularly learners at school. A 2006 survey found that in 22 of the schools in so-called "at risk" areas, 61.6% of schools were affected by gang violence and robbery.

2.5 Families and social disintegration

Dysfunctional family structures are one of the main reasons for social disintegration. Issues such as absent fathers, teenage mothers and the burden on grandparents caring for their grandchildren all point to a breakdown of functional families.

Other phenomena that point to serious ruptures in the social fabric include high levels of crime, lawlessness (general disrespect for law), xenophobia, racism and sexism.



2.6 Civic life

Disempowered individuals, dysfunctional families and disconnected communities are at once a cause and effect of social disintegration. They have a negative impact on civic life, which further tends to decrease social cohesion. This can be seen in the low levels of effective public participation in the processes of local and provincial government in the Western Cape.

Incidence of social conflicts and public protests over service delivery are symptoms of dissatisfied communities. Communities are unhappy about the lack of meaningful participation in decisions affecting their lives and the lack of service delivery. Therefore, the government needs to involve the community more in decision-making and provide them with the opportunities to influence government processes.

3. Plan to achieve outcomes

The PGWC's plan to achieve its objectives is based on:

- Creating an environment to build social cohesion
- Repairing the social fabric by addressing the causes and effects of social disintegration
- Strengthening the social fabric by building social capital

3.1 Creating an environment to build social cohesion

To increase social cohesion and establish a sense of social inclusion, belonging, purpose and individual empowerment, the PGWC will:

- Take responsibility for carrying out its core functions, while citizens must take personal and collective responsibility for using their opportunities and helping their fellow community members to do the same
- Create opportunities for citizens, while individuals and communities have a responsibility to make use of the opportunities on offer
- Provide the required services, be responsive, and create an environment in which citizens are able to use their opportunities, with the result that citizens will be more likely to feel part of a functioning society

3.2 Repairing the social fabric by addressing the causes and effects of social disintegration

Over the next five years, the PGWC will continue to strengthen those of its policies and programmes aimed at both preventing the causes and reducing the effects of social disintegration.

In particular, the PGWC will:

- Analyse all its existing policy and programmes to ensure that they encourage behaviours which increase social cohesion
- Pay special attention to reducing and alleviating child poverty
- Design and implement programmes that can effectively deal with children who are at risk of falling into a life of crime. These programmes must also extend to children living on the streets
- Design and implement integrated services for substance abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation through a provincial substance abuse strategy by March 2015, giving special attention to the treatment and prevention of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, increased access to treatment services, and reduction of substance abuse amongst the youth
- Design and implement integrated services for the victims of gender-based violence and child abuse by March 2015



- Design and implement programmes that deal with the root causes of gender-based violence and child abuse
- Design and implement programmes and interventions that support socially responsible behaviours and discourage socially irresponsible behaviours, including interventions to discourage teenage pregnancy and encourage maintenance payments by fathers
- Design and implement programmes and services to promote functional families and prevent vulnerability in families

3.3 Strengthening the social fabric by building social capital

In order to help create connected communities that, through social capital, are bridged to one another across racial, gendered, linguistic and class divides, and feel linked with government and civil society, the government will:

- Fund research to determine both the existing values that drive civic behaviour in the Western Cape and the values the public believe should drive civic behaviour in the province
- Facilitate greater public participation in the business of government
- Facilitate greater participation in social and community life by ensuring that government facilities such as schools, libraries and multi-purpose centres are available for community events
- Create the conditions for sports and cultural talent to emerge from across all communities in an equitable manner, and to be nurtured and supported so that excellence can flourish
- Design and implement programmes to promote inclusion through programmes such as Women in Sport, Girls in Sport, and Sport for the Disabled
- Design and implement programmes and services to promote engagement with, and appreciation of, the arts, cultural and heritage sites, museums and archives
- Promote a culture of human rights through an advocate for children's and women's rights in the Office of the Premier, as well as by emphasising human rights in departmental programmes
- Enhance diversity by:
 - Promoting the three official languages and the marginalised indigenous languages of the Western Cape
 - Using sport, arts and cultural events to facilitate integration or "bridging" between different linguistic, racial and socio-economic communities
 - Using museums, heritage sites and archives to promote social cohesion and understanding through the promotion of the national symbols and pride and appreciation of our shared heritage.



