

## Western Cape

 <b>Western Cape</b>	
Capital:	Cape Town
Principal languages:	Afrikaans 55,3% isiXhosa 23,7% English 19,3%
Population:	4 839 800
Area (km <sup>2</sup> ):	129 370
% of total area:	10,6%
GDPR* at current prices (2004):	R199 412 million
% of total GDP**:	14,4%

\* *GDPR (Gross Domestic Product per Region)*

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The Western Cape is situated on the southernmost tip of the African continent. It is a region of majestic mountains; beautiful valleys; wide, sandy beaches; and breathtaking scenery, making it one of South Africa's prime tourist destinations.

The cold Atlantic Ocean along the west coast is a rich fishing area, while the warmer Indian Ocean skirts the province's southern beaches.

Visitors to the Western Cape can disembark at Cape Town International Airport, George Airport or at the ports of Cape Town, Mossel Bay or Saldanha. A network of roads also leads to Cape Town, the capital, fondly known as the Mother City.

Cape Town houses Parliament and is the country's legislative capital.

Other important towns in the province include Saldanha, a notable harbour for iron exports and the fishing industry; Worcester and Stellenbosch in the heart of the winelands; George, renowned for its indigenous timber and vegetable produce; Oudtshoorn, known for its ostrich products and the world-famous

Cango caves; and Beaufort West on the dry, sheep-farming plains of the Great Karoo.

The Western Cape boasts one of the world's six accepted floral kingdoms. Although it is the smallest of them all, the Cape Floral Kingdom, which is characterised by fynbos, contains more plant species than the whole of Europe. These include the famous proteas and heathers.

Covering an area of more than 553 000 hectares (ha), the Cape Floristic Region World Heritage Site comprises eight separate protected areas stretching from the Cape Peninsula into the Eastern Cape. The Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden is included in this area, which makes it a world-first for South Africa, since no other world heritage site includes a botanical garden.

The Knysna-Tsitsikamma region has the country's biggest indigenous forests; a fairyland of ancient forest giants, ferns and colourful birdlife. Products of the forests include sought-after furniture made from the indigenous yellowwood, stinkwood and white pear trees.

## **Tourism**

The Western Cape's natural beauty, complemented by its famous hospitality, cultural diversity, excellent wine and colourful cuisine, make the province one of the world's greatest tourist attractions.

In 2006, the number of foreign tourists to the Western Cape totalled 1,6 million while three million domestic tourists visited the province. They contributed R16,8 billion to the Western Cape's gross domestic product (GDP) and sustained 200 000 formal jobs.

## **The People**

More than 4,8 million people live in the Western Cape on 129 370 km<sup>2</sup> of land (*Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2007*). Afrikaans is spoken by the majority, with isiXhosa and English being the other main languages. The Western Cape has the highest adult-education level in the country, with only 5,7% of people aged 20 years or older having no schooling (Census 2001). The province has a strong network of Higher Education (HE) institutions, including the University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, the University of the Western Cape and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

A potpourri of diverse cultural back grounds gives the province a cosmopolitan ambiance, resulting in a demographic profile quite different from that of the national pattern.

The profile draws on elements from different parts of Europe, south-east Asia, India and Africa, which are richly reflected in the diversity of the area.

The official unemployment figure for the province is 17,2% (*Labour Force Survey, March 2007*). This was somewhat lower than the national unemployment rate of 25,5% in March 2007.

## **Agriculture and Marine Fishery**

The Western Cape is rich in agriculture and fisheries. Agricultural exports have increased threefold over the past few years, manifesting in a growth rate of 7,4% in 2005/06.

Primary industries, i.e. agriculture, forestry and fishing, and mining and quarrying, contributed 4,7% to the GDP of the province in 2004, which translated into R9 321 million (gross domestic product per region [GDPR], 2004).

The sheltered valleys between the mountains provide ideal conditions for the cultivation of topgrade fruits, such as apples, table grapes, olives, peaches and oranges. In the eastern part of the Western Cape, a great variety of vegetables is cultivated.

The province can be divided into three climatic regions. The area around the Cape Peninsula and the Boland, further inland, is a winter-rainfall region with sunny, dry summers.

Towards George, along the south coast, the climate gradually changes to year-round rainfall, while inland, towards the more arid Great Karoo, the climate changes to summer rainfall.

The Western Cape is known as one of the world's finest grape-growing regions. Many of its wines have received the highest accolades at international shows.

The wheat-growing Swartland district around Malmesbury, and the Overberg around Caledon, form the bread basket of the country.

The inland Karoo region (around Beaufort West), and the Overberg district (around Bredasdorp), produce wool and mutton, and pedigree Merino breeding stock.

Other animal products include broiler chickens, eggs, dairy products, beef and pork. The Western Cape is the only province with an outlet for the export of horses. This earns the country millions of rands in foreign revenue.

The province has also established itself as the leading facilitator in the export of ostrich meat to Europe. In addition to meat, fine leatherware and ostrich feathers are also exported to destinations all over the world.

The plankton-rich cold Benguela current flows along the west coast of the province and is considered to be one of the world's richest fishing grounds. This resource is protected from overfishing by foreign vessels by means of a 200-km commercial fishing zone and a strict quota system.

Snoek, Cape lobster, abalone, calamari, octopus, oysters and mussels are among the most sought-after piscatorial delights from this region.

## **Industry**

The Western Cape's economy is growing at an average of 5% a year. By mid-2007, it was growing at 5,7%. Some 99 900 jobs had been created since 2004. The construction sector showed an average growth rate of 8% a year since 2004, resulting in full employment in the industry.

Many of South Africa's major insurance companies and banks are based in the Western Cape. The majority of the country's petroleum vehicle companies and the largest segment of the printing and publishing industry are located in Cape Town.

Information and communications technology (ICT) is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the province, and operations are being expanded to other countries.

After Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape's manufacturing sector is the third-largest contributor to the national manufacturing sector. The clothing and textile industry remains the most significant industrial source of employment in the province.

Cape Town remains the economic hub of the province, encompassing industrial areas such as Epping, Montagu Gardens, Parow and Retreat. Along the west coast, the Saldanha Steel Project has led to increased economic activity.

## **2010 FIFA World Cup™**

South Africa is preparing to host the 2010 World Cup. Government is using the hosting of the 2010 World Cup to fast-track the growth and development of the country. The investment in 2010 will benefit South Africans long after the tournament.

The Western Cape Government has allocated R212 million for preparations for the tournament, in addition to the R1,9 billion contributed by national government.

The R2,7-billion investment into the Greenpoint Stadium is expected to attract at least another R7 billion to R8 billion in linked public investments for transport and infrastructure. Greenpoint Stadium will be able to accommodate 70 000 spectators.

A similar amount in private-sector investments into the leisure, tourism and retail sectors of the surrounding economy in the V&A Waterfront, the Somerset Hospital Precinct and the larger inner city bowl is expected.

This investment is expected to benefit ordinary citizens through employment in the construction, leisure, transport, tourism and service sectors.

Other benefits include:

- dedicated bus and taxi lanes from the R300 into Cape Town along the N2
- expanding the Cape Town International Airport through a R2-billion expansion investment
- a dedicated rail link from the airport into town
- doubling the capacity of the Cape Town Convention Centre
- building at least six new hotels in the Western Cape by 2010.

Source: [South Africa Yearbook 2007/08](#)

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