

COMMON CLAIMS BY THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN ON SANITATION

“The City of Cape Town has highest provision of sanitation in the country”

According to the 2011 census, Cape Town has always had higher access to sanitation than other comparable cities in South Africa such as Johannesburg. This is not the result of an administration that came to power in recent years, as the higher access existed prior to that administration – at least as far back as 1996.¹ Simply because Cape Town has marginally higher access to sanitation also says nothing of the urgency of dealing with the lack of basic sanitation of hundreds of thousands of people who do live in this city.

“The number of toilets provided in informal settlements increase[d] from 14 000 in 2006 to over 44 500 this year”

In light of the lack of long-term planning for sanitation delivery, temporary facilities account for, by far, the majority of the increase of toilets to informal settlements between 2006/07 and 2013/14.² While chemical toilets and portable flush toilets together increased from 1569 in 2006/07 to 25 136 in 2013/14, full flush toilets increased at the rate of just roughly 1500 per year. The 44 500 figure also does not represent the number of working or usable toilets. In informal settlements communal toilets require maintenance and toilets can remain unusable for weeks or months before they are fixed.

“There are only approximately 700 bucket toilets in use in the city”

According to the 2011 census, there are actually just under 50 000 households (over 150 000 people) using bucket latrines in Cape Town.³ AfricaCheck did a comprehensive report on the claims regarding bucket toilets, finding that the City was wrong: <http://africacheck.org/reports/claim-that-no-one-in-cape-town-has-to-use-bucket-toilets-is-wrong/>

“This strategy is clearly working, as evidence by the recognition from national government that the City provides 100% access to adequate sanitation”

In making this claim, the City cites a report by the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) commissioned by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) for its national investigation and report on sanitation.

In its final report however, the SAHRC is clear regarding the problems with the empirical claims of the DPME/DWA report. The SAHRC openly discusses the serious discrepancies in the reported numbers and particularly the difficulties in establishing where the DPME/DWA got its data. It notes that the overall findings of universal access in the Western Cape and

¹ See Municipal Fact Sheet and Provincial Municipal Reports available at: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/Census2011/Products.asp>

² This data was provided to the SJC in a letter from Councillor Ernest Sonnenberg on 11 July 2014 following an access to information request by the SJC.

³ Census 2011, Western Cape Municipal Report, https://www.statssa.gov.za/Census2011/Products/WC_Municipal_Report.pdf

Gauteng are extremely difficult to understand in light of all available data, site visits, and public hearings.⁴

The 2011 census shows that roughly 30 000 homes (over 100 000 people) have no access to sanitation in Cape Town,⁵ and the City's own data in its Water Services Development Plan shows that nearly 80 000 homes (nearly 300 000 people) living in informal settlements have 'inadequate access' to sanitation.

“67% of ‘service delivery’ spending in the City’s budget is “targeted towards the poor in the city”

The data explaining the claim of 67% spending has never been released by the City. As it stands there is simply no way to know what constitutes this percentage. While the City's budget is a public document, the spending allocations included in it are very high level, including both wealthy and poor areas. The budget allocations, categories, and data needed to calculate how much money is spent on poor communities specifically are not included in the City's budget, nor has the City published these elsewhere.

“The janitorial service does not need an implementation plan or the Project Initiation Document (PID) is an implementation plan.”

On 11 July 2014, Councillor Sonnenberg stated that an implementation plan was being developed and that a draft plan was in existence. This followed over two years of commitments from the City to produce the plan. The plan to which Councillor Sonnenberg referred is distinct from the PID, which was already in existence in 2013 and is not – as the City itself has admitted – an implementation plan.

⁴ South African Human Rights Commission, 'Report on the Right to Access Sufficient Water and Decent Sanitation in South Africa: 2014', p. 44-48.

⁵ Census 2011, Western Cape Municipal Report, https://www.statssa.gov.za/Census2011/Products/WC_Municipal_Report.pdf