

Executive Summary

This destination fact sheet provides key trade and investment related statistics for the Central Karoo district. Specifically, it shows the Central Karoo district's area, employment, trade, and investment trends with the rest of the world. The key highlights are provided below:

Economy

- The Central Karoo district's real gross value added (GVA) increased by 0.28% y-o-y to a value of ZAR2.94bn in 2023, up from ZAR2.93bn recorded in 2022.
- The Beaufort West local municipality was the largest contributor to the Central Karoo district's GVA in 2023 at a value of ZAR2.05bn.
- In 2023, the community, social and personal services sector contributed the most to the district's GVA with a value of ZAR574.98m accounting for 19.56% of economic output.
- The food, beverage and tobacco sub-sector was the largest contributor to the Central Karoo district's manufacturing sector in 2023, accounting for 46.95% of total manufacturing GVA.
- Community, social and personal services sector was the largest contributor to the Central Karoo district's services sector in 2023, accounting for 26.90% of total services GVA.

Trade

- In 2023, the Central Karoo district exported goods to the value of ZAR179.46m and imported goods to the value of ZAR44.55m, resulting in a trade surplus of ZAR134.91m.
- In 2023, Zambia was the largest destination market for the Central Karoo district's exports, which at a value of ZAR87.98m, was equivalent to 49.02% of total exports.
- The United States (US) was the district's leading import source market in 2023, which at an associated cost of ZAR16.37m, accounted for 36.75% of the district's total imports.
- Dairy products were the district's leading export product category in 2023 with earnings of ZAR69.85m, equivalent to 38.92% of total exports. Molluscs, and wine ranked second and third, accounting for 21.05% (ZAR37.78m), and 9.37% (ZAR16.81m) of total export earnings, respectively.

Investment

- The Central Karoo district's alignment to the Western Cape Government's Growth for Jobs (G4J) framework focuses on infrastructural development and attracting private-public sector investment to the district, specifically in the primary and tertiary sector including agriculture, mining and the community, social and personal services sector.
- Wind and solar renewable energy projects are among the top priority investments aimed at attracting public-private partnerships in the Central Karoo district.

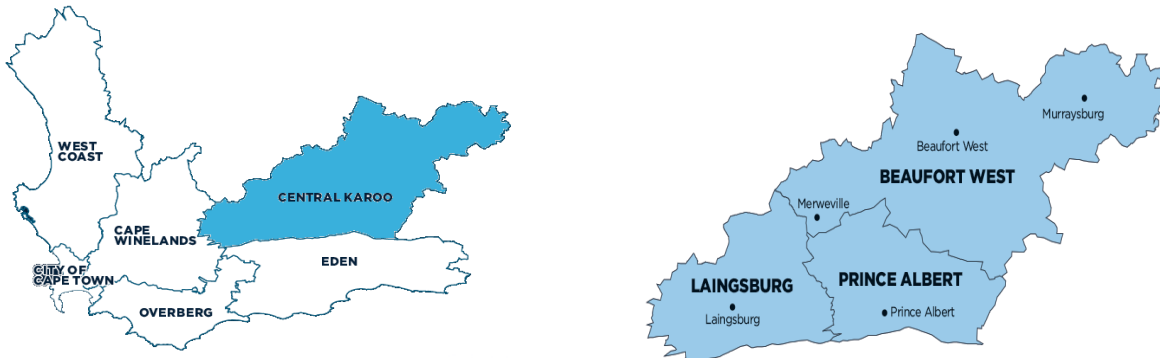
Tourism

- Key attractions in the district include Karoo National Park, Gamkaberg Nature Reserve, Anysberg Nature Reserve, and Swartberg Nature Reserve. Collectively, the attractions welcomed 32,527 visitors in the course of 2023, marginally less than visitor numbers recorded in 2022.

1. Area

The Central Karoo district is one of five districts in the Western Cape and is positioned in the northern parts of the Western Cape province. With a land cover of 38 854km² the district covers approximately 30% of the Western Cape. Three local municipalities lie within this district including Laingsburg, Prince Albert and Beaufort West.

The Central Karoo district is well known for its agriculture, specifically sheep farming, and the agricultural sector is one of the region's main driver of economic activities. While Beaufort West is the central economic hub of the district, the region is home to a number of smaller towns including Prince Albert, Laingsburg, Merweville and Murraysburg amongst others.



2. General Information

The table below shows the key indicators for the Central Karoo district.

CENTRAL KAROO KEY INDICATORS	
Executive Mayor (2023)	Johanna Botha
Population (2023)	104 175
Population Density (2023)	1.9/km ²
GVA (2023)	ZAR2.94bn
GVA growth (2023)	0.28%
Literacy rate (2022) ¹ (Age 20+ years)	61.15%
Unemployment rate (2022)	25.59%
Ethnic groups (2023)	Coloured (75.5%), Black African (16.7%), White (7.5%) & Indian/Asian (0.5%)
Languages (Census 2011)	Afrikaans (85.72%), IsiXhosa (8.34%), English (1.75%), Other (0.35%)
Gini Coefficient, current income per capita ² (2022)	0.51
Human Development Index (2022)	0.79

Source: Central Karoo District Municipality, 2024; 2023-24 Municipal Economic Review and Outlook: Central Karoo District, 2023/24; Quantec, 2024; Stats SA, 2024

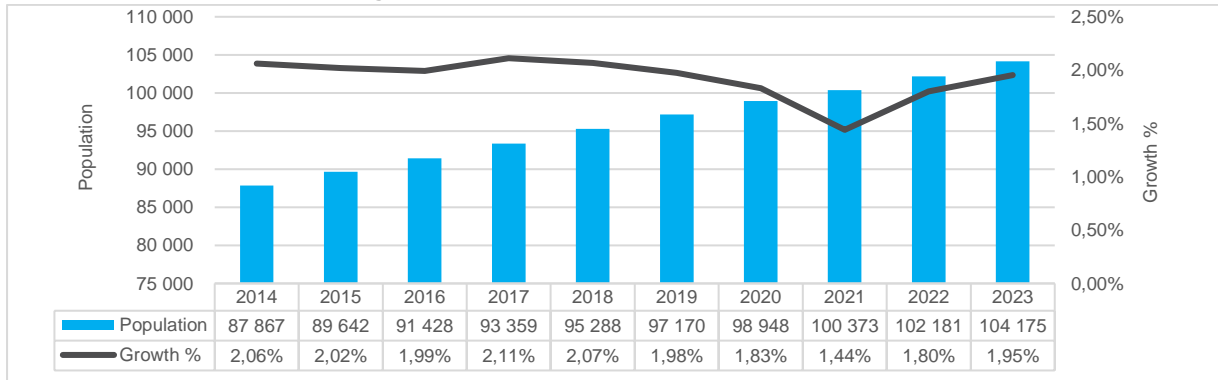
¹The literacy rate is used to indicate a minimum education level attained. A simple definition of literacy is the ability to read and write, but the strict definition is interpreted as the successful completion of a minimum of 7 years of formal education.

²Current income = Compensation + Unearned income

2.1 Demographics

The Central Karoo district is the least populated district in the Western Cape province. With a population of 104 175 in 2023 spread over 38 854 km², this equated to a population density of 2.7 people per km², the lowest amongst all districts in the province. The district's population grew from 87 867 people in 2014 to 104 175 in 2023, marking a 1.92% average annual growth rate over the ten-year period reviewed. More recently, the population grew by 1.95% y-o-y to 104 175 in 2023, up from 102 181 recorded in 2022.

Figure 1: Central Karoo population 2014-2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

The table below shows the Central Karoo's district's population breakdown by racial group. In 2023 the Coloured population represented the largest population group at 77 693 equivalent to 77.54% of the district's total population. The Black African population with 17 146 people, equivalent to 16.46% of the district's total population, was the second largest grouping, followed by the White population at 7 902, equivalent to 7.53% of the population.

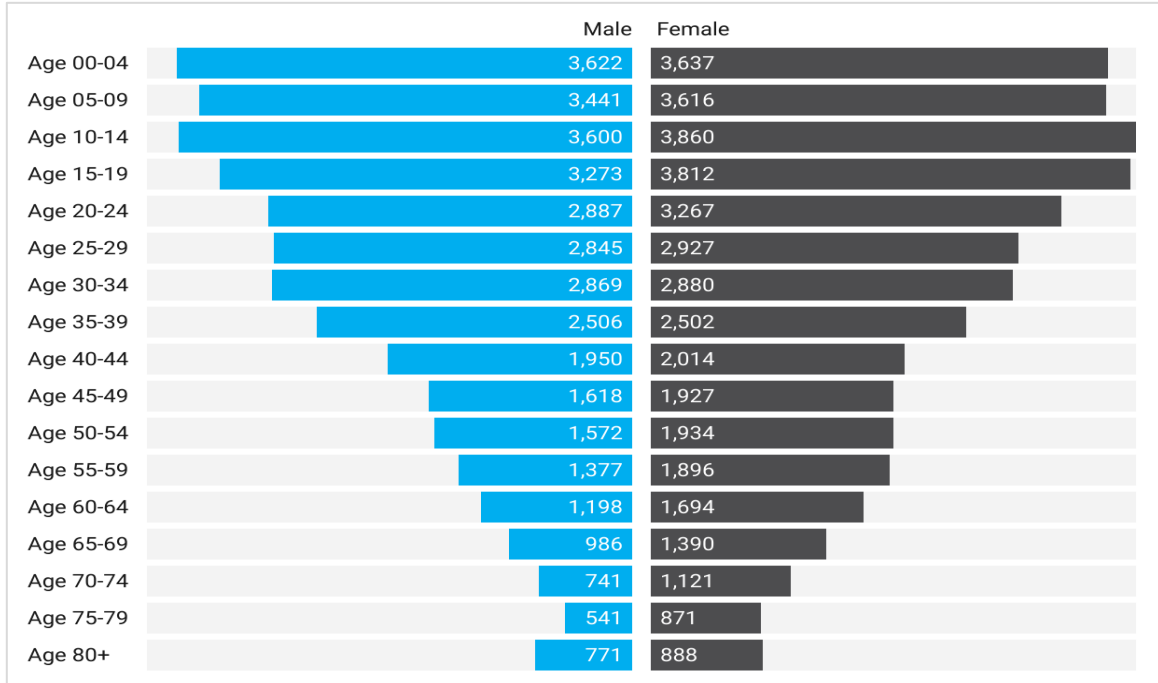
Table 2: Central Karoo's population breakdown, by group (2023)

	2022	2023	% share of 2023	2022-2023 change (%)
Coloured	77 143	78 693	77.54%	2.01%
Black African	16 673	17 146	16.46%	2.83%
White	7 902	7 846	7.53%	-0.70%
Indian or Asian	463	490	0.47%	5.95%
Total	102 181	104 175	100.00%	1.95%

Source: Quantec, 2024

Figure 2 below shows the population of the Central Karoo district according to gender and age in 2023. According to the data, the population ratio of females is larger than that of male counterparts (8:9 ratio); half of the population is comprised of young individuals from age 0 to 19 (infants to adolescents) and young adults (age 20 to 39); and the size of the cohorts tend to decrease the older the age group becomes (from age 40 to 80+).

Figure 2: Central Karoo's population by age and gender, 2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

Figure 3 represents the Central Karoo's district's population by municipality from 2014 to 2023. The Beaufort West municipality consistently recorded the largest population in the district throughout the period under review, followed by the Prince Albert and Laingsburg municipalities. While each municipality recorded an increase in population overall in the period reviewed, most recently, Beaufort West recorded the highest growth rate with a y-o-y growth rate of 2.00% in 2023, followed by Laingsburg (1.88%) and Prince Albert (1.81%).

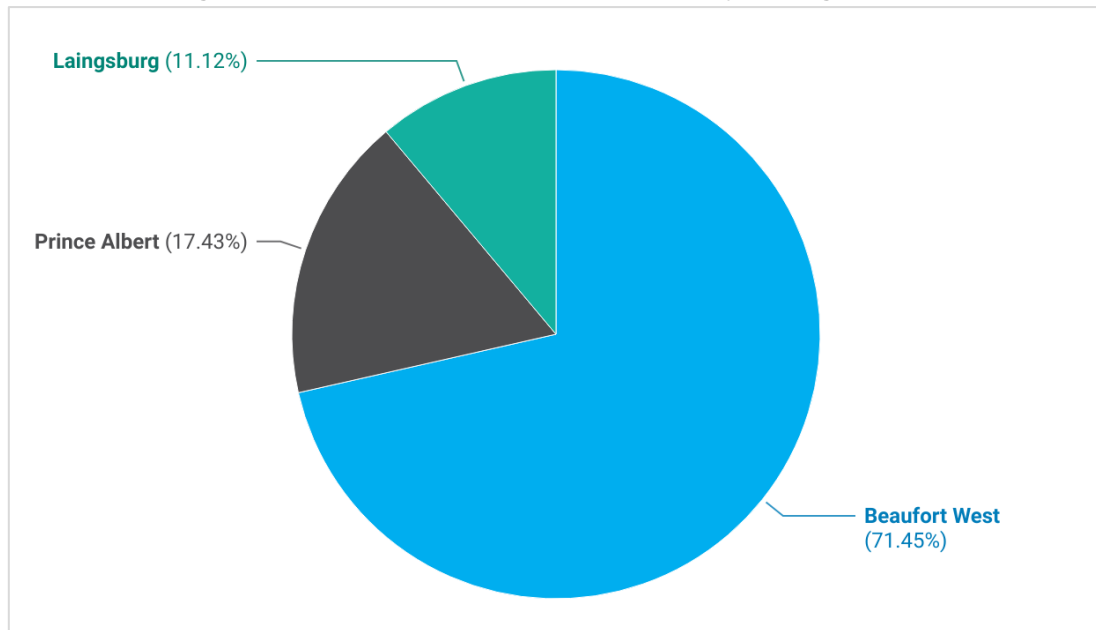
Figure 3: Central Karoo local municipality population, 2014-2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

The pie chart below shows the sub-regional breakdown of the Central Karoo district's population in 2023. As noted above, the largest proportion of the population resides in Beaufort West (71.45%), followed by Prince Albert (17.43%) and Laingsburg (11.12%).

Figure 4: Central Karoo population breakdown by sub-region, 2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

Figure 5 outlines the levels of education in the district. Based on 2023's level of education statistics, 14,478 individuals, equivalent to 13.90% of the population, had no schooling, while 56,425 residents, equivalent to 54.17% of the district's population, had a Grade 1-11 education level. Residents with Grade 12 totalled 21,717 equivalent to 20.85% of the population, which was higher than residents who had completed their Grade 12 certificate with either a certificate (0.74%) or diploma (1.92%). Residents with a tertiary qualification (bachelors', honours, master's & PhD) totalled 1,567, equivalent to 1.50% of the district's population.

Figure 5: Levels of education in Central Karoo, 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
No schooling	14,910	14,551	14,343	14,338	14,478
Grade 1-7	16,929	16,571	16,364	16,360	16,501
Grade 8-11	33,857	33,142	32,729	32,719	33,003
Grade 12	19,215	20,099	20,661	21,210	21,717
Certificate with Grade 12	749	743	744	755	769
Diploma with Grade 12	1,891	1,921	1,939	1,968	2,000
Bachelor's Degree	1,198	1,265	1,297	1,322	1,341
Honours's Degree	15	5	1	0	0
Higher Degree (Master's, Doctorate)	235	232	228	227	227

Source: Quantec, 2024

Note: The statistics presented above outline the educational/enrolment population in the district and not the actual residing population.

2.2 Employment

The table below provides a snapshot of employment indicators in the Central Karoo district. In 2023 the district's unemployment rate was estimated to be 29.87%, notably higher than the provincial unemployment rate of 21.77%. In 2023, there were 19 117 employed residents, 8 144 unemployed residents and 41 833 residents that were not economically active. The labour force participation rate for the district (39.45%) was lower than the Western Cape's rate (61.19%).

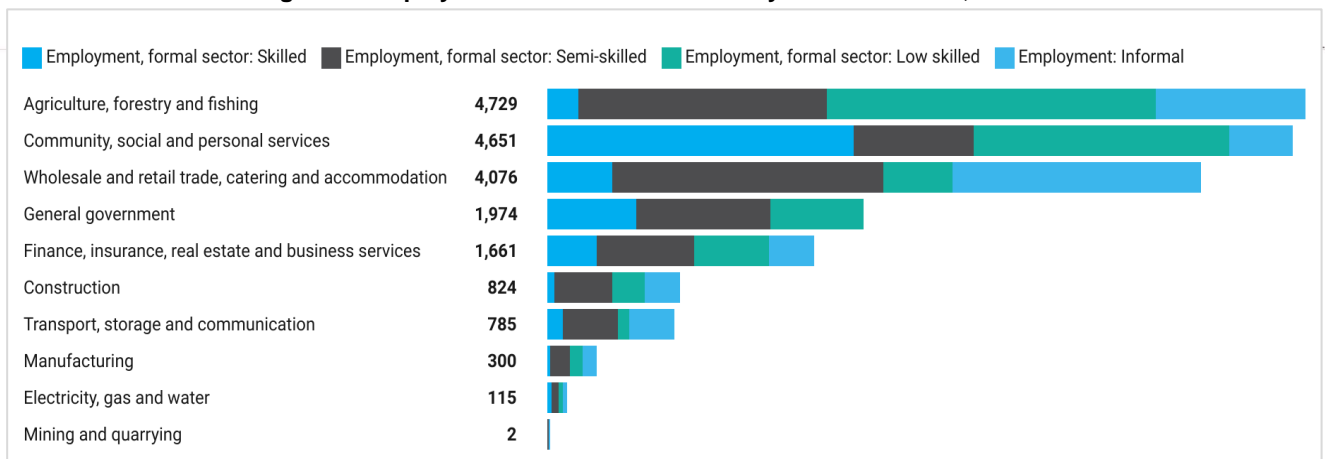
Table 3: Central Karoo district employment indicators, 2023

	Western Cape	Central Karoo
Population aged 15-64 years (2023)	5 330 951	69 094
Labour force participation rate (2023)	61.19%	39.45%
Employed (2023)	2 552 061	19 117
Unemployed (2023)	710 075	8 144
Not economically active (2023)	2 068 815	41 833
Unemployment rate (2023)	21.77%	29.87%

Source: Quantec, 2024

Figure 6 provides an overview of employment by economic sector in the Central Karoo district in 2023. In terms of total employment, which includes formal and informal employment, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector was the leading sector in the district in 2023, employing 4,729 workers. The community, social and personal services sector followed at 4,651 workers, with the wholesale and retail, catering and accommodation sector the third largest employer with 4,076 workers. From a skills-level perspective the community, social and personal services sector had the highest number of skilled workers (1,908), followed by general government (551) and the wholesale and retail trade, catering and accommodation sector (400). Sectors with the highest number of informal workers include wholesale and retail trade, catering and accommodation (1,550), followed by the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (937) and the community, social and personal services sector (397). An estimated 33.00% of the workforce in the Central Karoo district are semi-skilled workers, 28.85% are low-skilled workers and 18.49% are skilled workers.

Figure 6: Employment in the Central Karoo by sector and skill, 2023

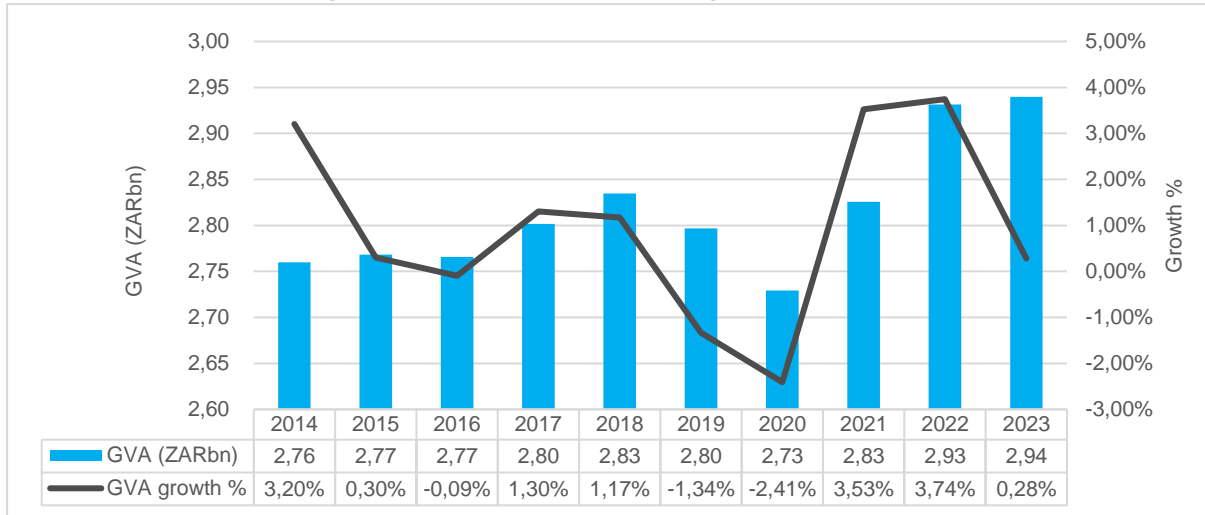


Source: Quantec, 2024

3. Economic Overview

The Central Karoo district's GVA rose to a value of ZAR2.94bn in 2023, an increase of 0.28% y-o-y on the ZAR2.93bn recorded in 2022, resulting in an average annual growth rate of 0.97% over the period 2014-2023.

Figure 7: Central Karoo's GVA and growth, 2014-2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

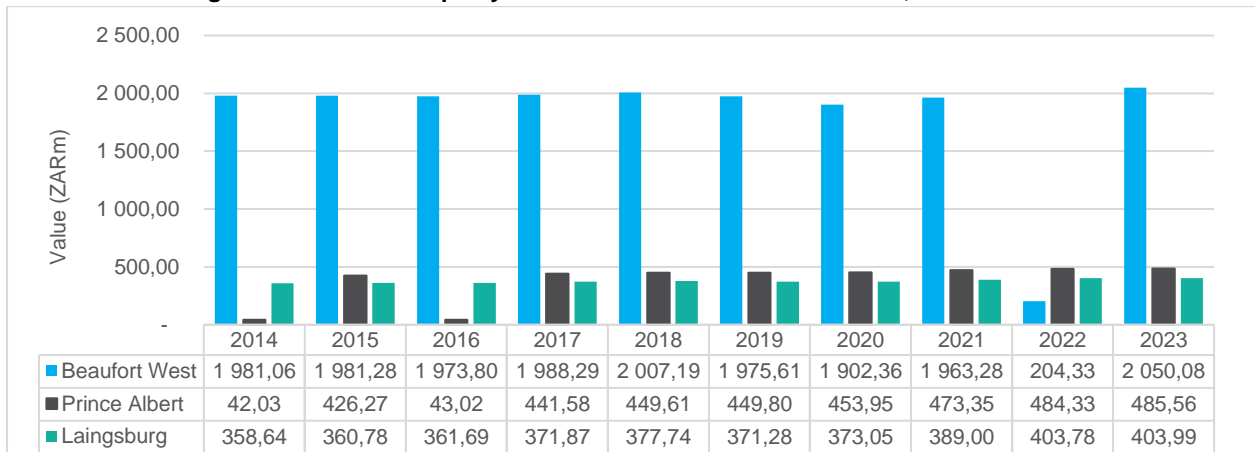
Note:

Concept: GVA at basic prices

Unit: ZAR million constant 2015 prices

The three municipalities respective contribution share to GVA for the Central Karoo district are represented in Figure 8 below. Beaufort West, the economic hub of the district was the largest contributor to the Central Karoo district's GVA in 2023 at a value of ZAR2.05bn. Prince Albert and Laingsburg municipality contributed ZAR485.56m and ZAR403.99m respectively.

Figure 8: Local municipality GVA contribution to Central Karoo, 2014-2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

Note:

Concept: GVA at basic prices

Unit: ZAR million constant 2015 prices

The community, social and personal services sector was the district's largest contributing sector in terms economic activities in 2023, which at a value ZAR574.98m accounted for 19.56% of the Central Karoo district's GVA. The agriculture, forestry and fishing industry placed second, accounting for 17.50% of the district's GVA at a value of ZAR514.39m, while the transport, storage and communication sector was the third largest contributing sector, accounting for 14.74% of total GDP (ZAR433.45m) in 2023.

Table 4: Central Karoo's GVA by sector, 2019-2023

Sector	Value 2019 (ZARm)	Value 2020 (ZARm)	Value 2021 (ZARm)	Value 2022 (ZARm)	Value 2023 (ZARm)	% share of GVA, 2023
Community, social and personal services	535.64	527.25	547.89	560.16	574.98	19.56%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	393.55	501.85	530.98	538.70	514.39	17.50%
Transport, storage and communication	411.58	334.82	348.78	413.81	433.45	14.74%
Finance, insurance, real estate and business services	396.36	397.61	413.44	424.14	429.44	14.61%
General government	343.52	351.55	347.19	351.63	360.71	12.27%
Wholesale and retail trade, catering and accommodation	373.08	316.91	330.28	344.88	338.69	11.52%
Electricity, gas and water	130.91	121.34	125.40	123.82	118.31	4.02%
Construction	136.34	109.88	106.34	100.26	96.02	3.27%
Manufacturing	74.68	67.27	74.35	73.19	72.79	2.48%
Mining and quarrying	1.04	0.88	0.99	0.85	0.86	0.03%
Total	2 796.69	2 729.36	2 825.63	2 931.44	2 939.63	100.00%

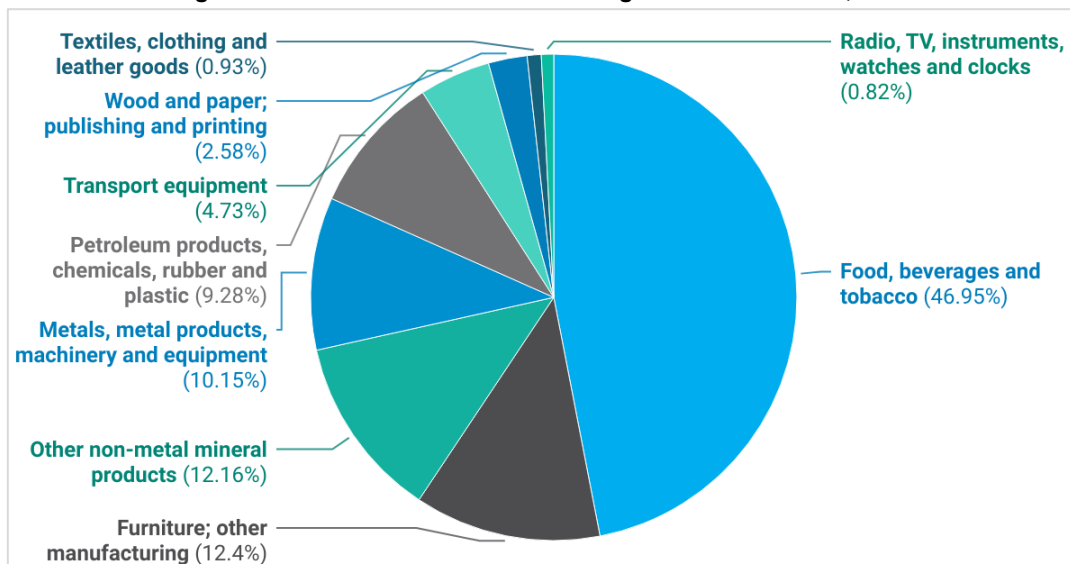
Source: Quantec, 2024

Note: Concept: GVA at basic prices

Unit: ZAR million constant 2015 prices

The graph below shows the contribution share of the Central Karoo district's *manufacturing* sub-sectors to the district's GVA in 2023. The food, beverages and tobacco subsector was the largest contributor to the Central Karoo district's manufacturing sector, accounting for 46.95% of manufacturing output, followed by furniture (12.40%), and other non-metal mineral products (12.16%).

Figure 9: Central Karoo's manufacturing sector breakdown, 2023



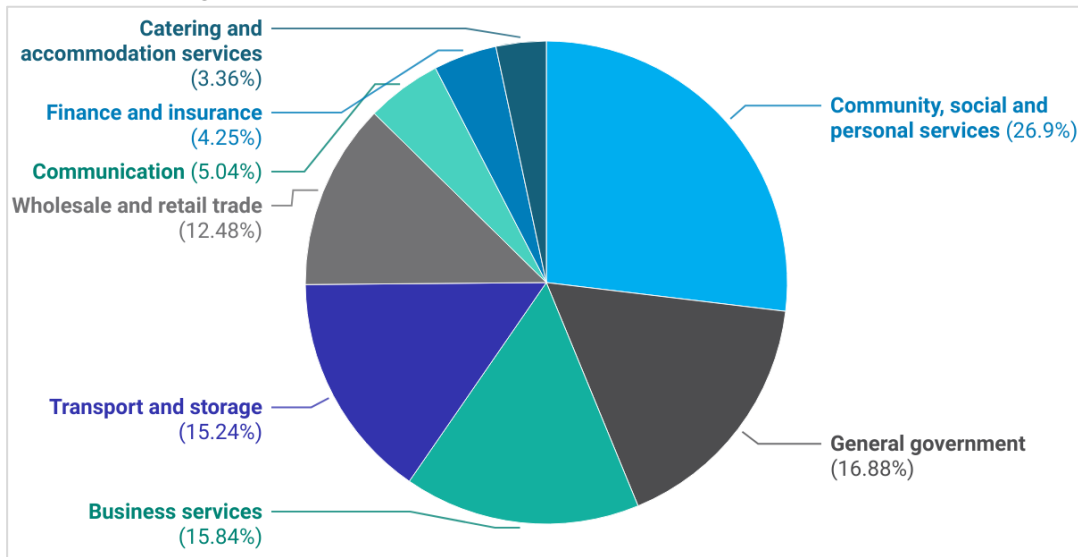
Source: Quantec, 2024

Note: Concept: GVA at basic prices

Unit: ZAR million constant 2015 prices

As reflected in Figure 10, the community, social and personal services sector was the largest contributor to the Central Karoo district's services sector in 2023, which at a value of ZAR574.98m accounted for 26.90% of total services GVA, followed by general government (16.88%), and business services (15.84%).

Figure 10: Central Karoo's services sector breakdown, 2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

Note:

Concept: GVA at basic prices

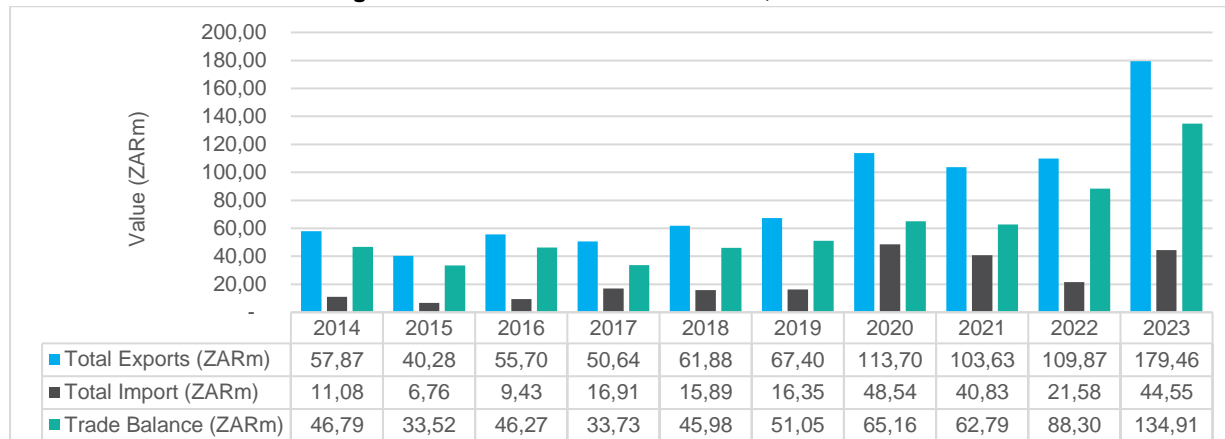
Unit: ZAR million constant 2015 prices

4. Trade

The Central Karoo district exported goods to the value of ZAR179.46m in 2023, an increase of 63% on the ZAR109.87m earned in 2022. This increase was largely underpinned by a significant increase in select dairy and seafood product exports.

Imported goods in turn totalled ZAR44.55m in 2023, an increase of 106.47% on the ZAR21.58m incurred in 2022, due largely to an increase in agricultural and horticulture machinery from the US and Canada, and casein (protein) imports from France and the Netherlands.

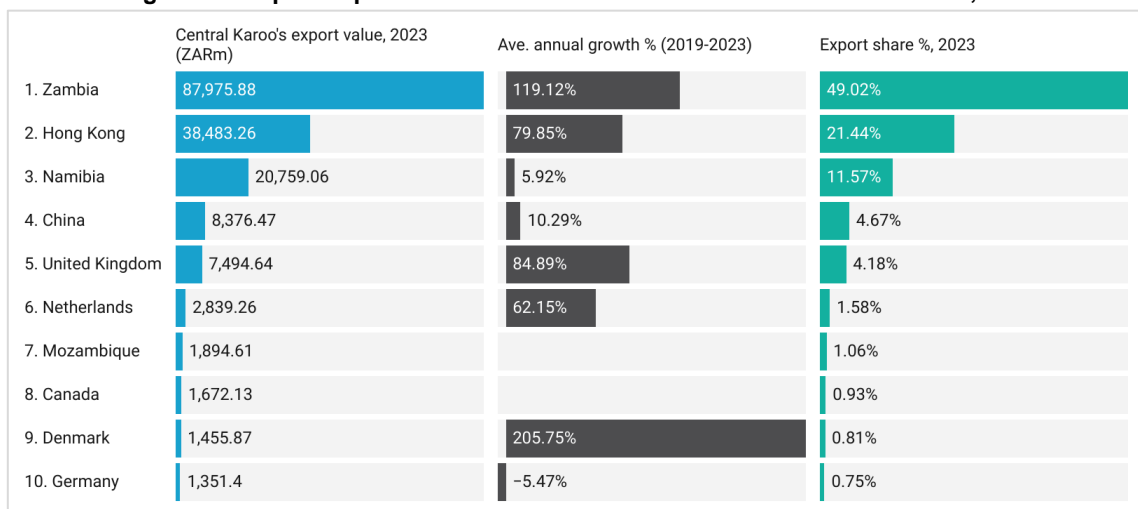
Figure 10: Central Karoo Global Trade, 2014-2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

Zambia was the largest export market destination for Central Karoo district exports in 2023, which with earnings of ZAR87.98m accounted for 49.02% of the district's total exports. Top exported products to the southern African country included dairy derivative products, including milk and cream, whey, buttermilk, cheese, and curd. Hong Kong and Namibia placed as the second and third most important export markets for the district, with earnings of ZAR38.48m and ZAR20.76m, respectively.

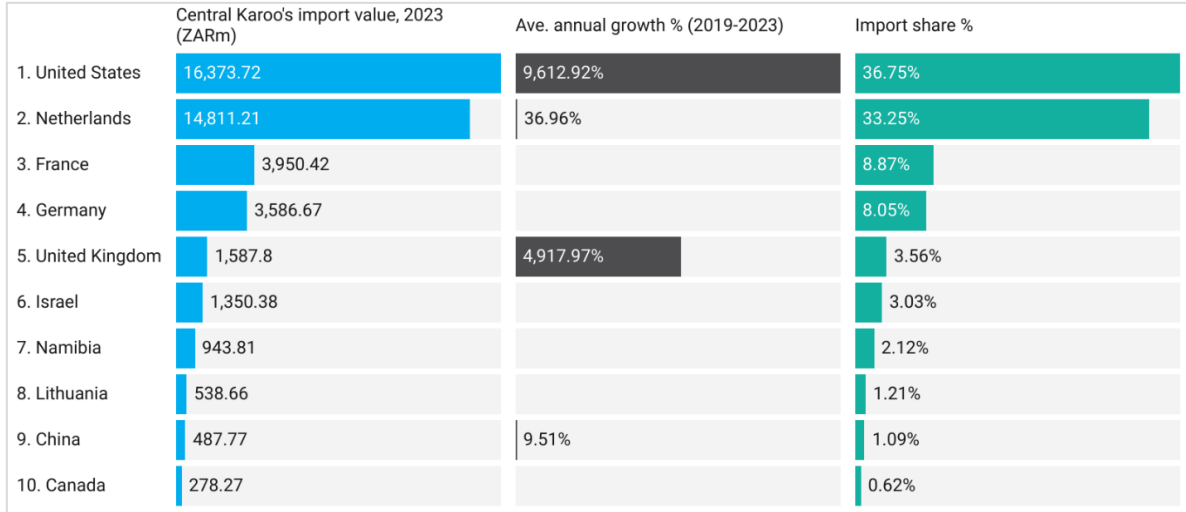
Figure 12: Top 10 export destination markets for the Central Karoo District, 2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

The leading import source market for the Central Karoo district in 2023 was the US with an associated import cost of ZAR16.37m, equivalent to 36.75% of the district's total imports. The Netherlands and France ranked second and third, at a cost of ZAR14.81m and ZAR3.95m, respectively.

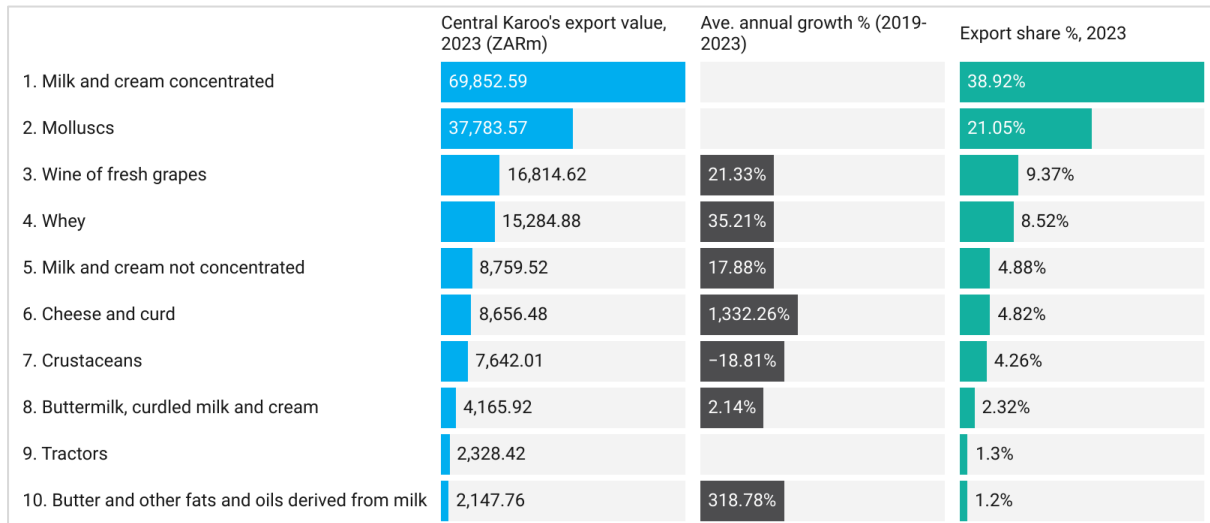
Figure 13: Top 10 import source markets for the Central Karoo District, 2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

At a commodity level, milk and cream products were the district's leading export product category in 2023, which at a value of ZAR69.85m were equivalent to 39% of total export earnings. Molluscs, and wine, ranked second and third, accounting for 21.05% (ZAR37.78m) and 9.37% (ZAR16.81m) of total exports, respectively. Cheese and curd, and butter and related products were the fastest growing export categories over the past five years, recording annual average growth rates of 1 332.26% and 318.78%, respectively.

Figure 14: Central Karoo's top export products, 2023



Source: Quantec, 2024

Harvesting or threshing machinery was the district's leading import product category in 2023, which at a cost of ZAR19.15m accounted for 42.98% of total import costs incurred in 2023. Prepared animal feed, and casein ranked second and third accounting for 27.57% and 12.62% of total imports, respectively.

Figure 15: Central Karoo district's top 10 import products, 2023

	Central Karoo's import value, 2023 (ZAR'000)	Ave. annual growth % (2019-2023)	Import share %, 2023
1. Harvesting or threshing machinery, including straw or fodder balers	19,148.81		42.98%
2. Preparations of a kind used in animal feeding	12,281.75	28%	27.57%
3. Casein, caseinates and other casein derivatives	5,621.57		12.62%
4. Other sugars, including chemically pure lactose, maltose, glucose and fructose, in solid form	1,479.43		3.32%
5. Machinery, for the industrial preparation or manufacture of food or drink	1,348.8		3.03%
6. Other agricultural, horticultural, forestry, poultry-keeping or bee-keeping machinery,	984		2.21%
7. Live sheep and goats	943.5		2.12%
8. Casks, barrels, vats, tubs and other coopers' products	550.03		1.23%
9. Agricultural, horticultural or forestry machinery for soil preparation or cultivation	480.28		1.08%
10. Bulbs, tubers, tuberous roots, corms, crowns and rhizomes	260.29		0.58%

Source: Quantec, 2024

5. Investment Opportunities and Developments

5.1. Central Karoo's economic development and developments³

The Central Karoo District Municipality implemented the Local Economic Development Strategy (LED) for the purpose of maximising the district's economic potential and overall contribution to the Western Cape province. The strategy focuses on areas of community development, attracting private sector investment, and promoting domestic tourism to the region.

Table 5: Local Economic Development Plans for the Central Karoo District

District developments	District opportunities
Tariff modelling for municipal services	Shale gas
FLISP and GAP housing	Alternative Energy Solutions (Solar Plant and Wind Farms)
Private hospital	Uranium mining
Investment/LED/job creation summit	Logistics hub
FET or technical/agriculture school	Land audit and transfer of land to CKDM for catalytic projects
Revise CKDM LED strategy and align with G4J	Investment readiness survey
Small town regeneration project	Matjiesfontein NASA project
Private sector partnership to stimulate job creation (targeting projects in Murraysburg and Prince Albert Kweekvalley)	Tourism development and promotion for tourism routes and linkages to Garden Route, Cape Winelands and Northern Cape
	Encourage the private sector within the district to be business anchors in each town within the district

Source: Central Karoo District - Integrated Development Plan 2024-25

As part of the Joint District and Metro Approach (JDMA), the Central Karoo district municipality outlined the top 10 infrastructure projects for the 2024-2025 financial year listed in Table 6 below.

³ Central Karoo District Municipality IDP 2024-25 (Url: <https://www.skdm.co.za/sites/default/files/documents/IDP%202024-2025%20PART%202.pdf>)

Table 6: Top 10 infrastructure projects/programmes in the Central Karoo District

Department	Project/Programme Name	Name of Investment	Sector
Infrastructure	C1213 re-seal/rehab NC border – N1 - Murraysburg	Rehabilitation, renovations & refurbishment	Transport
Infrastructure	CK DM re-gravel	Rehabilitation, renovations & refurbishment	Transport
Infrastructure	C1183 PRMG Klaarstroom Beaufort West	Rehabilitation, renovations & refurbishment	Transport
Infrastructure	Financial assistance to municipalities for construction of transport infrastructure (CAP)	Infrastructure transfers – capital	Transport
Infrastructure	Financial assistance to municipalities for maintenance of transport (CAP)	Infrastructure transfers – capital	Transport
Infrastructure	C1104 re-seal Meiringspoort to Prince Albert	Rehabilitation, renovations & refurbishment	Transport
Health & Wellness	Beaufort West hospital - rationalisation	Rehabilitation, renovations & refurbishment	Health
Infrastructure	Prince Albert: Klaarstroom: 50 UISP (Phase)	Infrastructure transfers – capital	Human settlements
Infrastructure	Laingsburg: Matjiesfontein: 32 Transnet houses (discretionary funds) (phase)	Infrastructure transfers – capital	Human settlements
Infrastructure	C1183.1 Beaufort West area. Repair and replacement of bridge and large structures	Rehabilitation, renovations & refurbishment	Transport

Source: Central Karoo District - Integrated Development Plan 2024-25

5.2. Central Karoo District's Growth for Jobs (G4J) strategic framework

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The Western Cape Government's G4J strategy (Growth for Jobs), which aims to achieve breakout economic growth is incorporated into the Central Karoo District's strategy plans. The district's priority focus areas (PFA) as outlined in the G4J strategy are tabled below.

Table 7: Central Karoo's G4J strategy for economic development

Priority Focus Area 1: Driving growth opportunities through investment	
Opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public sector investment = government services Investment Summit (IPP investors)
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening municipal capacity and capabilities for investment opportunities (i.e. water and energy sources) and, enforce a conducive policy/process environment.
New project ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics hub, a distribution centre and Wi-Fi fibre.
Priority Focus Area 2: Stimulating market growth through exports and domestic markets	
Opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classifying the three towns by export/trade profile (Beaufort West meat, Laingsburg wool and Prince Alberts olives) leverage on dairy by-products, boost tourism in Prince Albert CKD mining query
Priority Focus Area 3: Energy resilience and transition to net zero carbon	
Opportunities:	<p>Proposed renewable energy projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beaufort West: solar plant, wind farms, storage (battery) facilities, shale-gas and uranium exploration. Laingsburg: solar plant and waste-to-energy landfill Prince Albert: wind farm Central Karoo District Municipality: storage (battery) facilities, shale-gas and uranium exploration. Social and Labour Plan (SLP) and Corporate and Social Investments (CSI) opportunities
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges in retaining and hiring renewable energy professionals Shale-gas water contamination

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of municipal revenue sustainability due to energy • Decayed infrastructure • Energy distribution issues, especially Eskom-supplied customers (debt and loadshedding)
Priority Focus Area 4: Water security and resilience	
Opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water supply connection to the Lesotho Highlands Projects or from Gariep Dam
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decayed infrastructure and plant reclamation
New project ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS)
Priority Focus Area 5: Technology and Innovation	
Opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combining Utilities + Technologies (water, waste, energy) • Creating a space economy collaboration (NASA + Department of Trade Industry and Competition)
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation support, specifically skills • Departmental synergy
Priority Focus Area 6: Infrastructure and connected economy (including mobility and logistics, broadband and digital transformation)	
Opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating windfarms • Matjiesfontein NASA monitoring station; support the community of Matjiesfontein • Regional waste facility and correctional facility • Orchestrate a logistics and distribution base/hub
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a safe, non-contaminated, refurbished water system (no bucket system, removing asbestos pipe underground water system, asbestos contamination, establish a stormwater system) • Water storage • Deteriorating infrastructure (i.e. sewer and wastewater system, electrical infrastructure, roads, housing infrastructure) • Workforce shortage • Minimal provincial departmental engagement with IDP's (Integrated Development Plans)
New projects ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UISP 50 – Housing project in Prince Albert • Prince Albert 24/25, 208 housing project in Prince Albert • Matjiesfontein clinic
Priority Focus Area 7: Improved access to economic opportunities and employability	
Opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill windfarm and NASA project workforce in Laingsburg
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce retainment • Insufficient career guidance based on the lack of encouragement for student to take maths, accounting and physics in school level. • No technical vocational education and training (TVET) institutions are available in the region (Central Karoo District)
New projects ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMME centre (small, medium, micro enterprise hub, specifically for windfarm partnership) • Wind/solar implementation in Beaufort West

Source: Central Karoo District - Integrated Development Plan 2024-25⁴

The G4J framework for the Central Karoo targets economic development in the following industries:

- **Mining and quarrying** – uranium and shale gas exploration
- **Agriculture, forestry and fishing** – agro-processing and the expansion of meat exports, adding value to the districts' agricultural goods and services
- **Electricity, gas and water** – the water supply connected to either the Lesotho Highlands project or from Gariep Dam. With the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, LHWP, largely aimed at supplying water to Gauteng and other parts of South Africa through a tunnelled water delivery system, the Central Karoo district aims to explore other water supply options to secure a reliable water supply and alleviate water scarcity; the rehabilitation and restoration of water infrastructure throughout the district; implementing a tariff modelling for municipal services
- **Construction** – road network rehabilitation and restoration, solar and wind energy projects, building a non-motorist network (pedestrians), government investments towards community, social and personal services (schools, logistics and distribution hubs etc.)
- **Transport, storage and communication** – water storage facilities, the digital transformation of the district

⁴ Central Karoo District Municipality IDP 2024-25 (Url: <https://www.skdm.co.za/sites/default/files/documents/IDP%202024-2025%20PART%202.pdf>)

- **Finance, insurance, real estate and business services** – the transfer of capital for infrastructure in the region, equipping municipalities to be investment ready, land audit and transfer of land to the Central Karoo District Municipality for catalytic projects such as the NASA+DTI collaboration
- **Community, social and personal services** – investment in education, academics and skills development by offering agricultural school and TVET institutions, eliminating the bucket system, possible provision of irrigation methods to encourage small-scale farming through a stormwater system, wi-fi accessibility, job creation summit, private hospital
- **General government** – the active involvement and support from the following national/provincial departments that target all three Central Karoo's towns (Prince Albert, Beaufort West and Laingsburg): Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Environment, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Department of Transport, Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Department of Agriculture and the Department of Police Oversight & Community Safety.

6. Companies

The table below shows some of the companies located in Beaufort West, the economic hub of the Central Karoo.

Table 8: Selected companies in Beaufort West, 2023

COMPANY NAME	MUNICIPALITY	SECTOR	BUSINESS ACTIVITY
Beaufort-Wes Abbattoir (slaghuis)	Beaufort West	Agriculture	Food
Greater Karoo Slaghuis	Beaufort West	Agriculture	Food
Gold Finger Biltong	Beaufort West	Agriculture	Food
Karoo Chickens	Beaufort West	Agriculture	Food
Klein Merino Slaghuis	Beaufort West	Agriculture	Food
Koup Slaghuis	Beaufort West	Agriculture	Food
Prima Vleis	Beaufort West	Agriculture	Food
Midas	Beaufort West	Transport	Motor retail
Faimel auto electric & spares	Beaufort West	Transport	Motor retail
Beaufort West Toyota	Beaufort West	Transport	Motor retail
Olive Grove	Beaufort West	Agriculture	Food
Vonofakidis CA & CO Accounting	Beaufort West	Finance	Finance and insurance
Cubenco 150 (pty) ltd.	Beaufort West	Wholesale and retail trade	Wholesale and retail trade
Groot Karoo Konstruksie	Beaufort West	Wholesale and retail trade	Wholesale and retail trade
Pro Bou	Beaufort West	Wholesale and retail trade	Wholesale and retail trade
Wagon Wheel Country Lodge	Beaufort West	Tourism	Catering and accommodation services
Easy Gas	Beaufort West	Wholesale and retail trade	Retail trade
Hydroponics	Beaufort West	Agriculture	Food
Beaufort West Verspreiders	Beaufort West	Electricity, gas and water	Electricity and gas

Source: Beaufort West Tourism Forum. All Rights Reserved, 2024, <https://beaufortwest.net/information/beaufort-west-business-directory/>

7. Tourism

This snapshot provides insights into the Cape Karoo district's visitor trends and patterns for the period January to December 2023. The snapshot is 3-fold: (a) it shows an overview of regional visitor trends and patterns; (b) the performance of attractions; and (c) Karoo National Park 5-year visitor trends analysis (2019-2023).

The key highlights are provided below:

7.2. Cape Karoo District Mobile Location Data Insights

The statistics discussed in this section are from mobile location data insights.

What is mobile location data?

- This is Geo or spatial data from smartphones. When a user installs an app, they are often asked to share their location data with the company which provides the app, and other companies who are partners with the app publisher.
- Users can “opt in” to location sharing (or choose not to “opt in”). When they opt in, then their phone collects data and shares it with the publisher companies.
- All data collected is anonymised and does not include any personally identifiable information.

Why use mobile location data insights?

- Mobile location-based data offers a more granular lens on visitor behaviour and provides a much larger sample size.
- These insights aim to facilitate a better understanding of visitor movement throughout the Western Cape's six regions.
- Mobile location data serves as a sample. It does not represent 100% of visitors, and it should not be treated as such. Like any sampling method, it can be subject to biases or lack of volume.

Source: ROVE (2023)

Factors influencing the International and Domestic Sample Counts:

The volume of mobile location data capture counts is influenced by several factors including but not limited to:

Data Source Variability

- Changing volume of mobile applications collecting and sharing data
- Data privacy and regulatory changes affecting sharing of data (GDPR, mobile OS policy changes etc.)

Data Collection and Processing Variability

- Mobile network and internet connectivity
- Mobile infrastructure technical issues (hardware failures, solar flare activity)
- Tourist logic to segment tourist from non-tourist mobile devices

Mobile Use Variability

- Tourists disabling data transmission services due to high international data costs
- Tourists not using partnership apps as often.

While all mobile devices are affected by above, International mobile device counts are affected more than Domestic mobile devices when it comes to both mobile use fluctuations and data privacy restrictions. Tourists use their phones differently when travelling internationally – they may want to avoid additional out of country fees and only use their phone through wi-fi service. Tourists may not use the partnership apps they normally do while on extensive holiday. Restricting data privacy laws are also affecting the international landscape affecting data that can be shared which may affect processing that identifies tourists.

Source: ROVE (2023)

The data analysis presented in the table below provides insights into the visitors to the Cape Karoo region, highlighting that the majority of visitors were domestic tourists from the City of Cape Town (27.1%). On average, these visitors stayed for 1.7 days, with just over 25% opting for an overnight stay, and close to 18% were repeat visitors.

This pattern was also observed in municipalities such as Beaufort West, Laingsburg, and Prince Albert. For instance, Beaufort West recorded over 45,000 domestic visitors, with a notable proportion (about 24.2%) coming from Cape Town and staying for an average of 1.4 days. Laingsburg, on the other hand, welcomed over 3,000 tourists from Cape Town, with an average stay duration of 1.5 days, with 24% of guests choosing to stay overnight. Prince Albert recorded 2,792 visitors, with an average stay duration of 2.2 days, with over 50% of guests opting to stay overnight.

In contrast, the data obtained through mobile data insights revealed a smaller sample size of international tourists, attributed to factors such as mobile usage fluctuations and data privacy restrictions. Nevertheless, the Cape Karoo region and Beaufort West municipality recorded over 200 international tourists between January and December 2023, with India being the top international market for the region and Beaufort West, followed by the US market, which was attracted to all three municipalities.

The table below reveals that the sample size of 12–19 international tourists stayed longer than domestic tourists in Prince Albert (5.6 days) and Laingsburg (1.9 days), with close to 69% of international visitors opting for an overnight stay in Prince Albert and 41.7% in Laingsburg. It is worth noting that markets such as Vietnam, Turkey, Mexico, and Namibia present opportunities worth exploring to understand what drives them to the Central Karoo region, be it for trade, investment, or tourism purposes.

Table 9: An overview of district and town visitor trends and patterns, Jan–Dec 2023

Tourism indicator	Cape Karoo	Beaufort West	Laingsburg	Prince Albert
Sample size domestic visitors	50,965	45,454	3,369	2,792
Sample size international visitors	277	214	12	19
Top international markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India (20.2%) US (11.2%) Namibia (8.3%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India (23.7%) US (12.1%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US (16.7%), Vietnam (16.7%) Turkey (16.7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK (21.1%) Mexico (15.8%) US (10.3%)
Top domestic markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Cape Town (27.1%) City of Tshwane (9.2%) City of Johannesburg (8.6%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Cape Town (24.2%) City of Tshwane (9.8%) City of Johannesburg (9.2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Cape Town (33.5%) City of Tshwane (7.2%) City of Ekurhuleni (6.4%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Cape Town (25.7%) George (12.0%) City of Tshwane (8.0%)
The average length of stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (1.7 days) International (1.5 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (1.4 days) International (1.6 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (1.5 days) International (1.9 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (2.2 days) International (5.6 days)
% Share of repeat visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (17.9%) International (16.7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (18.0%) International (19.7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (10.5%) International (20.0%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (9.1%) International (5.6%)
% Share of overnight visitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (25.3%) International (32.5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (18.8%) International (24.2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (24.0%) International (41.7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic (54.8%) International (68.4%)

Data Source: ROVE (2023)

7.3. Performance of Attractions

The Cape Karoo region's four prominent attractions, namely the Karoo National Park, Gamkaberg Nature Reserve, Anysberg Nature Reserve, and Swartberg Nature Reserve, collectively witnessed a total footfall of 32,527 visitors during 2023. This represented a decrease of 0.13% growth in visitor numbers when compared to the same period in 2022.

Table 10: Annual performance of Karoo district attractions (2019-2023)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2022/2023 % Change
Karoo National Park	31 426	18 538	28 543	30 042	30 110	0.23%
Gamkaberg Nature Reserve	192	91	329	512	1 486	41.99%
Anysberg Nature Reserve	2 245	2 554	2 186	1 842	727	-19.33%
Swartberg Nature Reserve	264	276	80	173	204	17.92%

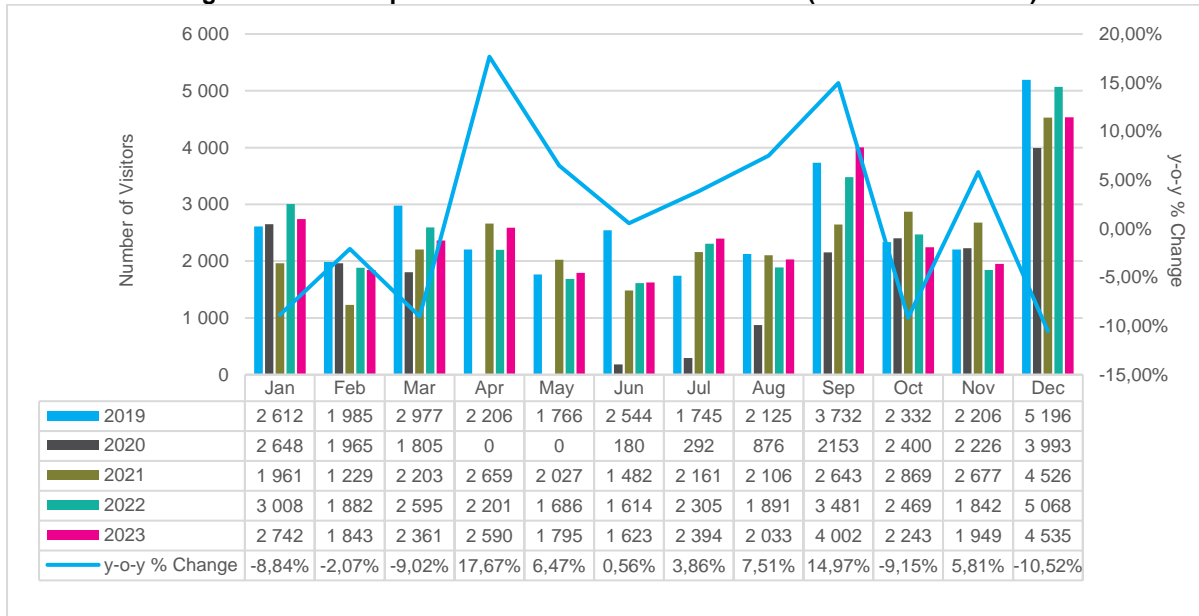
Data Source: SANParks and CapeNature (2019-2023)

7.4. Annual performance of Karoo National Park

The Karoo National Park recorded a total of 30,110 visitors between January and December 2023, which is a positive indication of the park's popularity and appeal among tourists. Interestingly, the Karoo National Park witnessed the highest footfall during the months of September, and December, with visitor numbers of 4,002, and 4,535, respectively. The analysis of the five-year trend shows that the park has consistently registered its highest visitor count during the month of December.

In 2023, the park experienced a positive growth rate in visitor numbers during April (17.67%), May (6.47%), June (0.56%), July (3.86%), August (7.51%), September (14.97%), and November (5.81%). This information is valuable for park management to identify the contributing factors towards the positive growth rate and implement them during the off-season to attract more visitors.

Figure 16: Annual performance of Karoo National Park (Jan-Dec 2019-2023)



Data Source: SANParks (2019-2023)

8. Film



The Cape Karoo District, which is comprised of Beaufort West, Laingsburg, Leeu-Gamka, Matjiesfontein, Merweville, Murraysburg, Prince Albert and Seekoegat, offers far-reaching landscapes and charming architecture. The Swartberg Pass, a World Heritage Site, is said to be one of the most scenic mountains passes in the world. It is untarred, flanked by hand packed stone walls and leads to a summit 1, 583 meter above sea level. The 75, 000-hectare Karoo National Park lies within Beaufort West, adjacent to the N1.

In the Central Karoo you will find houses with peach pip floors, sash windows, mud plaster, sun-baked clay bricks, six panel, lace fretwork and real shutters. Veranda roofs are distinctively curved into shapes that resemble billowing 23 canvas, in styles called bell-cast, bullnose and regency.

The relevant application forms can be sought from the local municipal office.

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Table 11: Film shots on the locations above

FILMS	Saak van Geloof, Liewe Kersvader, Snaaks Genoeg, Ella Bella
TV SERIES	Die Boekklub
COMMERCIALS	Vodacom, Kokkedoor Food, Volkswagen
MUSIC VIDEOS	Coldplay (Paradise)

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