

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

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Western Cape municipalities providing far more free basic services than other provinces

The proportion of households receiving free basic services from Western Cape municipalities was significantly higher than the average provided to households nationally in 2009. Some 82%, 69%, and 52% of Western Cape households received free basic water, sanitation, and solid waste management services respectively. The corresponding national figures were 58%, 33%, and 23%.

These figures appear in the latest *South Africa Survey*, published by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg this week.

The Free State came out top in the provision of free basic electricity — 63% of households — against a national average of 35%. Some 46% of Western Cape households received free basic electricity from their municipalities, the second highest proportion out of all nine provinces.

KwaZulu-Natal households received the lowest proportion of free electricity and solid waste management services from municipalities at 15% and 6% respectively, while Mpumalanga registered the lowest figures in the provision of free water and sanitation at 41% and 13% respectively.

Free basic services are funded using local government revenue and internal cross-subsidies from services tariffs. In addition, the rollout of free basic services depends on available infrastructure and on expenditure by municipalities.

The free services are provided to indigent households which are poor households as defined by municipalities. The basis on which municipalities determine if a household is poor, and the criteria used for such determination, can vary.

'Taken together, the information indicates that Western Cape municipalities have sound revenue-collection mechanisms in place, relatively superior infrastructure, and the willingness or capability to spend money on the provision of essential services to indigent households,' said Mr Kerwin Lebone of the Institute's research team.

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