

FreeFACTS

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Data show stark provincial disparities.

Diversity is something that South Africa is known for. However, when people speak of diversity they generally mean diversity in terms of race, religion, or language. Less spoken about is the great regional diversity South Africa.

This edition of *FreeFACTS* looks at statistics from South Africa's nine provinces and reveals some stark differences.

People in Gauteng and the Western Cape are, on average, far richer than people in other provinces. In Gauteng average per capita provincial GDP was over R70 000, in the Western Cape it was just below R65 000. People in the Eastern Cape were the poorest, with average per capita provincial GDP only at R35 000.

In addition, three provinces were responsible for nearly two-thirds of South Africa's economic output. In 2019 Gauteng was responsible for 34.5% of South Africa's economic output, with KwaZulu-Natal second, at 15.9%, and the Western Cape third, with 13.6%.

Unemployment rates show similar disparities. Nearly 43% of people in the Eastern Cape were unemployed in 2022, and only 27.5% in the Western Cape

Provincial population growth also shows how people are moving to provinces where there are more economic opportunities, such as Gauteng and the Western Cape.

Between 1996 and 2022 Gauteng's population more than doubled, reaching 16 million people. The Western Cape also saw its population almost double, while the Eastern Cape saw its population grow by less than 10% over that period. South Africa's population as a whole grew by 50% over that period.

It is clear that policy solutions for each province will differ. What will work to get people into jobs and out of poverty in Gauteng will differ from what needs to be done in Mpumalanga or the Eastern Cape. Each province has different strengths, patterns of settlement, and economic output and policy solutions in each will be different.

South Africa, and in particular the governing ANC, needs to forget its obsession with centralisation.

Not every solution must, or can, be devised in Pretoria.

— Marius Roodt

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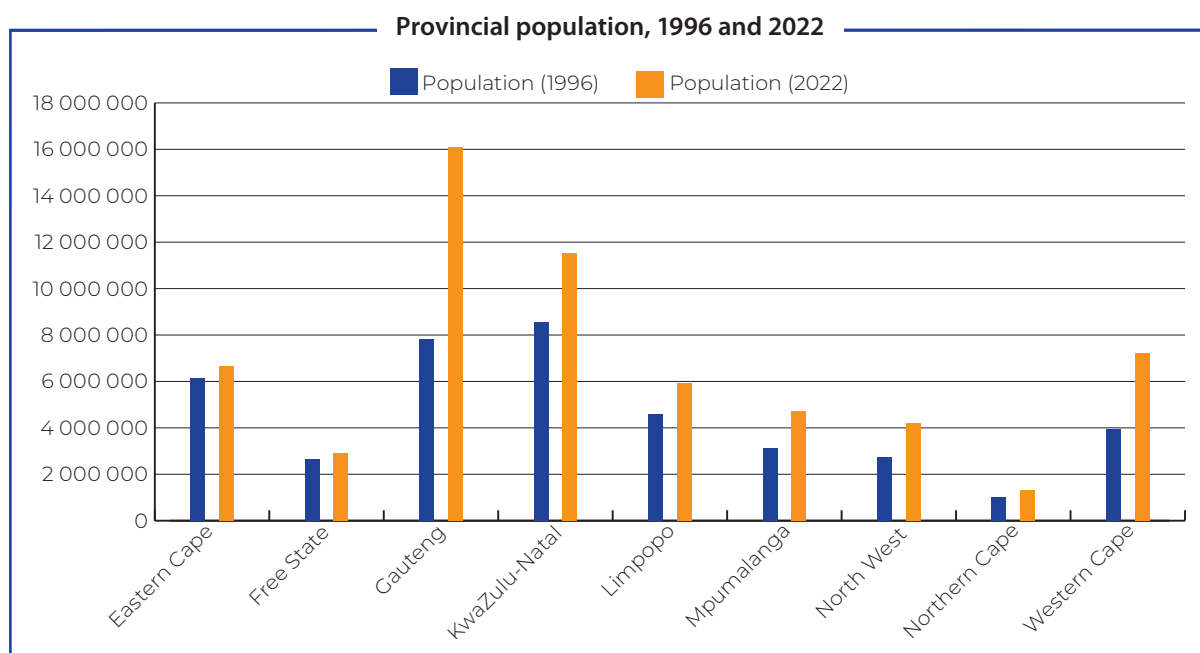
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Provinces

| Population by province, 1996-2022 | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Province | —1996— | | —2001— | | —2022— | | Change (1996 - 2022) | |
| | Population | Proportion of total | Population | Proportion of total | Population | Proportion of total | Population | Proportion of total |
| Eastern Cape | 6 147 244 | 15,1% | 6 278 651 | 14,0% | 6 676 691 | 11,0% | 8,6% | -27,2% |
| Free State | 2 633 504 | 6,6% | 2 706 775 | 6,0% | 2 921 611 | 4,8% | 10,9% | -27,3% |
| Gauteng | 7 834 125 | 19,3% | 9 388 854 | 20,9% | 16 098 571 | 26,6% | 105,5% | 37,8% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 8 572 302 | 21,1% | 9 584 129 | 21,4% | 11 538 325 | 19,0% | 34,6% | -10,0% |
| Limpopo | 4 576 566 | 11,3% | 4 995 462 | 11,1% | 5 941 439 | 9,8% | 29,8% | -13,3% |
| Mpumalanga | 3 123 869 | 7,7% | 3 365 554 | 7,5% | 4 720 497 | 7,8% | 51,1% | 1,3% |
| North West | 2 727 223 | 6,7% | 2 984 098 | 6,7% | 4 186 984 | 6,9% | 53,5% | 3,0% |
| Northern Cape | 1 011 864 | 2,5% | 991 919 | 2,2% | 1 308 734 | 2,2% | 29,3% | -12,0% |
| Western Cape | 3 956 875 | 9,7% | 4 524 335 | 10,1% | 7 212 142 | 11,9% | 82,3% | 22,7% |
| South Africa^a | 40 583 573 | 100,0% | 44 819 778 | 100,0% | 60 604 992 | 100,0% | 49,3% | N/A |

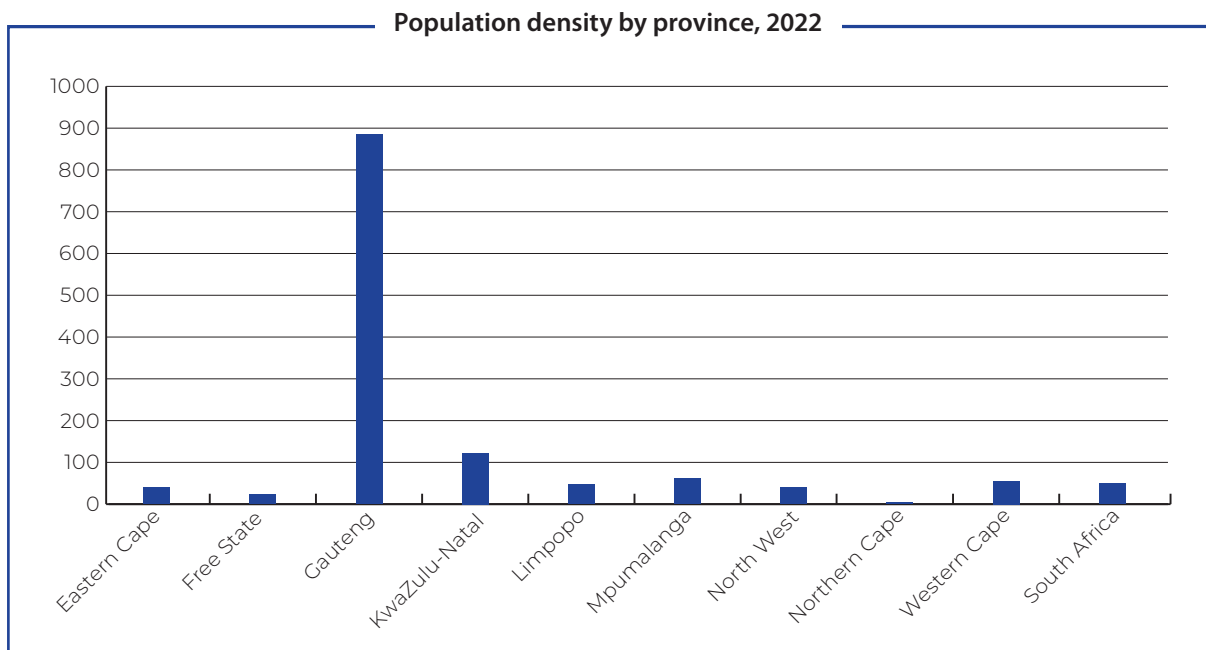
Source: Stats SA, *Census 2011: Census in brief*, Statistical release P03-01-41, Table 2.1, p18;
Mid-year population estimates 2022, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Tables 12a and 12b, pp31-32
 a Figures may not add up vertically, owing to rounding



Provinces

| Population density by province, 2022 | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Province | Provincial population | Area km ² | People per km ^{2a} |
| Eastern Cape | 6 676 691 | 168 966 | 39,5 |
| Free State | 2 921 611 | 129 825 | 22,5 |
| Gauteng | 16 098 571 | 18 178 | 885,6 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 11 538 325 | 94 361 | 122,3 |
| Limpopo | 5 941 439 | 125 754 | 47,2 |
| Mpumalanga | 4 720 497 | 76 495 | 61,7 |
| North West | 4 186 984 | 104 882 | 39,9 |
| Northern Cape | 1 308 734 | 372 889 | 3,5 |
| Western Cape | 7 212 142 | 129 462 | 55,7 |
| South Africa | 60 604 992 | 1 220 813 | 49,6 |

Source: Stats SA, *Census 2011*, Statistical release P0301.4, 30 October 2012, Table 2.1, p9, Table 3.1, p15; *Mid-year population estimates 2022*, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Tables 12a and 12b, pp31-32
^a IRR calculations.



Provinces

| Internal migration ^a by province, 2016-21 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Province | Eastern Cape | Free State | Gauteng | KwaZulu-Natal | Limpopo | Mpumalanga | North West | Northern Cape | Western Cape | Out-migration | In-migration | Net migration |
| Eastern Cape | — | 13 111 | 146 972 | 98 810 | 14 087 | 16 900 | 37 856 | 8 130 | 175 892 | 511 757 | 192 412 | -319 345 |
| Free State | 8 561 | — | 83 352 | 7 981 | 6 653 | 10 948 | 24 137 | 9 215 | 12 390 | 163 237 | 134 719 | -28 517 |
| Gauteng | 52 240 | 40 607 | — | 70 611 | 103 774 | 83 059 | 111 642 | 12 678 | 98 742 | 573 354 | 1 559 881 | 986 527 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 26 145 | 12 657 | 230 144 | — | 9 819 | 37 693 | 12 014 | 8 834 | 34 307 | 371 614 | 288 533 | -83 081 |
| Limpopo | 4 580 | 5 937 | 353 514 | 8 415 | — | 48 472 | 33 017 | 2 649 | 11 564 | 468 149 | 280 793 | -187 356 |
| Mpumalanga | 5 315 | 5 494 | 141 862 | 13 311 | 24 664 | — | 14 130 | 2 446 | 10 308 | 217 531 | 282 740 | 65 208 |
| North West | 5 423 | 12 311 | 113 111 | 6 377 | 20 785 | 12 423 | — | 24 660 | 9 528 | 204 618 | 320 161 | 115 543 |
| Northern Cape | 4 582 | 9 226 | 17 372 | 5 882 | 2 756 | 4 668 | 13 209 | — | 18 936 | 76 632 | 88 320 | 11 688 |
| Western Cape | 53 601 | 8 451 | 65 638 | 13 846 | 6 115 | 7 680 | 8 834 | 13 493 | — | 177 658 | 469 984 | 292 325 |
| Immigrants | 31 965 | 26 925 | 407 915 | 63 299 | 92 140 | 60 896 | 65 320 | 6 214 | 98 317 | — | — | — |
| In-migration^b | 192 412 | 134 719 | 1 559 881 | 288 533 | 280 793 | 282 740 | 320 161 | 88 320 | 469 984 | — | — | — |

Source: Stats SA, Mid-year population estimates 2022, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Table 9, p28

^a The figures in the table show the number of people moving in and out of each province. For example, 13 111 people moved from the Eastern Cape to the Free State, while 134 719 moved in to the Free State from all the other provinces

^b IRR calculations.

| Internal migration ^a by province, 2021-26 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Province | Eastern Cape | Free State | Gauteng | KwaZulu-Natal | Limpopo | Mpumalanga | North West | Northern Cape | Western Cape | Out-migration | In-migration | Net migration |
| Eastern Cape | — | 15 251 | 142 666 | 102 367 | 13 540 | 16 965 | 37 994 | 8 161 | 182 281 | 519 225 | 186 500 | -332 725 |
| Free State | 8 737 | — | 85 178 | 8 145 | 6 791 | 11 180 | 24 641 | 9 417 | 12 650 | 166 739 | 136 291 | -30 448 |
| Gauteng | 54 884 | 45 462 | — | 79 074 | 92 948 | 93 027 | 125 009 | 14 194 | 110 604 | 615 201 | 1 443 978 | 828 777 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 26 466 | 13 297 | 231 901 | — | 10 277 | 39 615 | 12 631 | 9 278 | 36 077 | 379 542 | 282 916 | -96 625 |
| Limpopo | 4 775 | 6 184 | 323 810 | 8 777 | — | 50 482 | 34 372 | 2 764 | 12 028 | 443 192 | 243 267 | -199 925 |
| Mpumalanga | 5 684 | 5 874 | 151 911 | 14 227 | 26 378 | — | 15 117 | 2 619 | 11 021 | 232 830 | 278 544 | 45 714 |
| North West | 5 844 | 13 276 | 122 044 | 6 875 | 22 411 | 13 396 | — | 25 391 | 10 272 | 219 509 | 316 965 | 97 455 |
| Northern Cape | 4 841 | 9 760 | 18 397 | 6 221 | 2 916 | 4 939 | 13 976 | — | 20 015 | 81 065 | 90 675 | 9 609 |
| Western Cape | 54 027 | 9 242 | 71 852 | 15 152 | 6 691 | 8 406 | 9 676 | 14 756 | — | 189 802 | 460 489 | 270 687 |
| Immigrants | 21 242 | 17 946 | 296 218 | 42 078 | 61 316 | 40 532 | 43 549 | 4 096 | 65 542 | — | — | — |
| In-migration^b | 186 500 | 136 291 | 1 443 978 | 282 916 | 243 267 | 278 544 | 316 965 | 90 675 | 460 489 | — | — | — |

Source: Stats SA, Mid-year population estimates 2022, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Table 9, p28

Provinces

| Fertility rate ^a by province, 2001-26 | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Province | 2001-06 | 2006-11 | 2011-16 | 2016-21 | 2021-26 | Change 2001-26 |
| Eastern Cape | 3,14 | 3,22 | 2,97 | 2,91 | 2,87 | -7,2% |
| Free State | 2,69 | 2,84 | 2,48 | 2,33 | 2,27 | -13,3% |
| Gauteng | 2,20 | 2,36 | 2,10 | 1,89 | 1,82 | -14,2% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 2,97 | 2,98 | 2,71 | 2,59 | 2,53 | -12,7% |
| Limpopo | 3,23 | 3,37 | 3,16 | 3,09 | 3,03 | -4,4% |
| Mpumalanga | 2,79 | 2,88 | 2,41 | 2,29 | 2,27 | -17,8% |
| North West | 3,08 | 3,20 | 2,78 | 2,57 | 2,52 | -16,3% |
| Northern Cape | 3,03 | 3,08 | 2,83 | 2,67 | 2,63 | -12,0% |
| Western Cape | 2,31 | 2,42 | 2,16 | 2,04 | 2,01 | -11,7% |

Source: Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2022*, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Figure 9, p23
^a The average number of children born alive to a woman during her child-bearing span (15-49 years) if she were to bear children. For example, girls born in the Eastern Cape between 2016 and 2021 would in future be expected to have an average of 2.91 children each, if they bear children.

| Children ^a by province, 2022 | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|---|
| Province | Number of children | Proportion | Total population | Proportion of population who are children |
| Eastern Cape | 2 582 075 | 12,8% | 6 676 691 | 38,7% |
| Free State | 981 821 | 4,9% | 2 921 611 | 33,6% |
| Gauteng | 4 475 742 | 22,2% | 16 098 571 | 27,8% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 4 244 857 | 21,1% | 11 538 325 | 36,8% |
| Limpopo | 2 359 857 | 11,7% | 5 941 439 | 39,7% |
| Mpumalanga | 1 579 944 | 7,8% | 4 720 497 | 33,5% |
| North West | 1 417 633 | 7,0% | 4 186 984 | 33,9% |
| Northern Cape | 448 092 | 2,2% | 1 308 734 | 34,2% |
| Western Cape | 2 063 330 | 10,2% | 7 212 142 | 28,6% |
| South Africa | 20 153 352 | 100,0% | 60 604 992 | 33,3% |

Source: Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2022*, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Tables 12a and 12b, pp31-32
^a People under the age of 18.

Provinces

| Provincial GDP and GDP growth trends, 1995-2019 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Province | GDP 2019 Rbn ^a | —Provincial GDP contribution to the economy of South Africa— | | | | Real growth rate ^b | | | |
| | | 1995 | 2005 | 2015 | 2019 | 1996 | 2005 | 2015 | 2019 |
| Eastern Cape | 236,2 | 8,2% | 7,7% | 7,8% | 7,6% | 3,5% | 5,0% | 0,8% | 0,0% |
| Free State | 161,1 | 5,6% | 5,2% | 5,0% | 5,0% | 4,6% | 4,2% | -0,3% | -0,4% |
| Gauteng | 1 104,7 | 34,2% | 34,4% | 34,1% | 34,5% | 2,6% | 5,5% | 1,2% | 0,6% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 504,9 | 16,7% | 16,5% | 16,1% | 15,9% | 5,6% | 5,7% | 0,9% | 0,1% |
| Limpopo | 225,4 | 5,6% | 6,6% | 7,1% | 7,4% | 0,8% | 4,0% | 1,8% | -0,2% |
| Mpumalanga | 226,7 | 6,8% | 6,6% | 7,5% | 7,5% | 6,2% | 4,4% | -0,2% | -0,4% |
| North West | 184,3 | 6,2% | 6,5% | 6,5% | 6,5% | 5,2% | 4,5% | 4,4% | -0,5% |
| Northern Cape | 68,4 | 2,3% | 2,1% | 2,1% | 2,0% | 2,9% | 3,3% | 1,1% | -0,6% |
| Western Cape | 437,5 | 14,4% | 14,5% | 13,6% | 13,6% | 3,6% | 6,0% | 1,4% | 0,4% |
| South Africa | 3 149,3 | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 4,3% | 5,3% | 1,2% | 0,2% |

Source: Stats SA, www.statssa.gov.za, GDP annual and regional tables 2019, accessed 20 April 2021

^a At constant 2010 prices.

^b The percentage change from the previous year.

| GDP per head by province, 1996-2019 | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Province | —GDP per head R ^a — | | | | | | Change in GDP per head 2018-19 |
| | 1996 | 2001 | 2008 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | |
| Eastern Cape | 23 762 | 25 637 | 31 634 | 36 126 | 35 140 | 35 195 | 0,2% |
| Free State | 44 372 | 42 465 | 53 257 | 56 536 | 55 777 | 55 783 | 0,0% |
| Gauteng | 73 341 | 70 073 | 81 521 | 76 072 | 74 378 | 72 791 | -2,1% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 32 910 | 33 004 | 42 337 | 45 227 | 44 843 | 44 725 | -0,3% |
| Limpopo | 28 771 | 31 797 | 37 922 | 38 869 | 39 144 | 37 679 | -3,7% |
| Mpumalanga | 46 897 | 47 964 | 51 964 | 58 243 | 50 143 | 49 375 | -1,5% |
| North West | 52 549 | 48 924 | 53 817 | 41 444 | 46 666 | 45 775 | -1,9% |
| Northern Cape | 45 378 | 50 313 | 53 712 | 56 433 | 54 645 | 54 152 | -0,9% |
| Western Cape | 57 748 | 57 921 | 67 286 | 66 427 | 64 587 | 63 922 | -1,0% |
| South Africa^b | 44 193 | 45 075 | 54 322 | 55 930 | 55 595 | 54 906 | -1,2% |

Source: Stats SA, www.statssa.gov.za, GDP annual and regional tables 2019, accessed 20 April 2021; IRR calculations

^a At constant 2010 prices.

^b SARB data.

Provinces

Provincial contribution to GDP, national population, employment and total tax revenue, 2018 and 2019

| Province | Contribution to GDP | | Contribution to national population | | Contribution to employment | | Contribution to individual total tax assessed ^a | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|--|---------------|
| | 2018 | 2019 | 2018 | 2019 | 2018 | 2019 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Eastern Cape | 7,7% | 7,6% | 11,6% | 11,4% | 8,6% | 8,6% | 5,8% | 5,7% |
| Free State | 5,0% | 5,0% | 5,0% | 5,0% | 4,8% | 5,0% | 3,3% | 3,3% |
| Gauteng | 34,3% | 34,5% | 25,5% | 25,7% | 31,0% | 31,5% | 46,1% | 47,2% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 16,0% | 15,9% | 19,4% | 19,4% | 16,1% | 16,4% | 11,4% | 11,3% |
| Limpopo | 7,4% | 7,4% | 10,0% | 9,9% | 8,8% | 9,0% | 3,8% | 3,4% |
| Mpumalanga | 7,5% | 7,5% | 7,8% | 7,8% | 7,4% | 7,7% | 5,0% | 4,8% |
| North West | 6,4% | 6,5% | 6,9% | 6,9% | 6,0% | 5,7% | 3,4% | 3,3% |
| Northern Cape | 2,1% | 2,0% | 2,2% | 2,2% | 1,9% | 1,9% | 1,6% | 1,5% |
| Western Cape | 13,6% | 13,6% | 11,7% | 11,7% | 15,2% | 15,5% | 16,8% | 16,9% |
| South Africa | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% | 100,0% |

Source: Statistics SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2020*, Statistical release P0302; GDP annual and regional tables 2019, accessed 20 April 2021; *Quarterly Labour Force Survey Quarter 2, 2021*, Statistical release P0211; SARS, *Tax Statistics 2020, December 2021*, p49;

a Based on where the taxpayer resides as submitted on income tax returns. The total includes an individual tax data where province data was insufficient.

Unemployment rate^a by province, 2009-22

| Province | —Official definition— | | | —Expanded definition ^b — | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2009 | 2021 | 2022 | 2009 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Eastern Cape | 27,7% | 47,1% | 42,8% | 38,9% | 53,0% | 51,8% |
| Free State | 26,4% | 36,5% | 32,4% | 35,4% | 45,2% | 40,3% |
| Gauteng | 22,8% | 35,4% | 34,4% | 25,8% | 42,7% | 40,8% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 18,9% | 32,5% | 32,7% | 33,9% | 47,1% | 49,4% |
| Limpopo | 24,6% | 30,4% | 36,3% | 41,1% | 49,9% | 47,5% |
| Mpumalanga | 26,2% | 35,2% | 36,1% | 37,4% | 46,5% | 48,1% |
| North West | 27,4% | 35,2% | 32,2% | 37,0% | 46,9% | 49,2% |
| Northern Cape | 25,7% | 28,1% | 23,7% | 35,5% | 50,3% | 46,3% |
| Western Cape | 20,1% | 25,8% | 27,5% | 22,6% | 29,1% | 31,3% |
| South Africa | 23,2% | 34,4% | 33,9% | 31,7% | 44,4% | 44,1% |

Source: Stats SA, *QLFS Trends 2008-2022Q2*, accessed 10 October 2022

a Stats SA's expanded definition of unemployment measures anybody without a job who wanted to work and was available to take up employment during the reference period.

b Figures should add up vertically but may not, owing to rounding, and owing to the fact that Stats SA disregarded sample sizes smaller than 10 000 as unreliable.

Provinces

Unemployment, by province, 2022

