

Western Cape Municipal Brief

20 October 2022



SALGA Western Cape hosts a Municipal Liquor Authority Workshop

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in collaboration with the Western Cape Liquor Authority (WCLA) hosted a municipal workshop on Wednesday, 5 October 2022 in Robertson, Western Cape.

The main objectives of the workshop were to:

- Develop channels for ongoing engagement with local authorities.
- Foster shared understanding of what it means to regulate liquor effectively.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for municipalities in liquor regulation.
- Develop protocols to enable key regulatory outcomes, such as appropriate zoning and trading times.
- Identify opportunities to capacitate communities and their structures to facilitate the determination of public interest.

SALGA's Chairperson of the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC), Alderman Donovan Joubert set the scene by highlighting that alcohol harm is experienced not only by drinkers but by those around them including families, friends, colleagues and strangers. He emphasised that there is a strong relationship between alcohol and domestic abuse, violence and sexual assault. He further asserted that whilst alcohol should not be used as an excuse for those who perpetrate violence and abuse, neither should its influence be ignored.

Alderman Joubert further pointed out that statistics show that more than 60% of the hospital trauma cases and admissions were as a result of drunkenness; 38% of those cases were in the Cape Town metropolitan area and 49% were in the rural areas. Liquor was found to be a contributing factor to these cases.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the WCLA, Mr Simion George highlighted that as the WCLA, they perceive local government as a strategic partner.

“We believe that together we can function in a way that will reduce or eradicate alcohol harms in our communities”, he said.

He stressed that government strategies increasingly promise ‘citizen centric approaches’ to service delivery. All state systems and processes must be accessed and optimised as assets capable of enabling effective regulation, especially at local government level.

The Alcohol Harms Reduction policy introduced by the Western Cape Government is aimed at taking a holistic approach towards the reduction of the harms.

“Each sector or stakeholder needs to look at what we can do or contribute in terms of our mandates”, Mr George said.



He further stated that in order to empower the citizens ways must be sought to have their voice heard. “The constitution requires us to find ways for intergovernmental relations”, he further said. There is a need to facilitate licensing and regulatory processes in the public interest optimising resources allocated for this purpose. Furthermore, promoting a regulatory relationship will enable a greater compliance and responsible trading in the public interest. The introduction of section 64 of the Western Cape Liquor Act in the license renewal cycle is aiming at ultimately ensuring that the license holders want to do the right thing because it makes economic sense. The regulation needs to be strengthened regarding the accessibility of alcohol. There is a huge concern as the service stations are also starting to apply for alcohol licensing.

Mr George encouraged municipalities to understand what drives safety and harms and thus agree on what would constitute a good liquor regulation within their respective municipal areas. These could be achieved by for instance, developing protocols for facilitating key regulatory outcomes such as appropriate zonings and understanding the role of trading hours and days in the interest of the public.

The Western Cape Liquor Licensing Tribunal Presiding Officer Mrs. Anita Arendse explained that the purpose of the liquor licensing tribunal is to adjudicate all liquor licensing applications and enforcement matters subject to the prescripts of the Western Cape Liquor Act in a manner that serves public interest. She emphasised that in the consideration of the application appropriate zoning is essential, as well as municipal comments which form part of the deliberations

of the LLT when considering applications and to some degree enforcement matters unless the local authority is the complainant. The Municipal report provides the Liquor Licensing Tribunal with context and better understanding of the application from a local government public interest perspective.

She decried the Act in that it does not compel the municipality to comment on the application but rather states that ‘the municipality may comment’, which then becomes challenging when the municipality selects not to comment. She urged in particular, the ward councillors to make time to comment as this is one of the critical information that they sought in deciding on the application. In some instances, the challenge is caused by a ward councillor commenting but that comment contradicts that of the clinic and a police station in the area.

She ended off by undertaking that the WCLA aims to eliminate complexity enabling citizen centric regulatory methodologies and practises because a mutually beneficial relationship is one that recognised and respects the public interest, “As a collective we exist to create value for the public and stakeholders. Let us demonstrate our relevance”, said Mrs. Arendse.

The workshop resolved that there is:

- A need to look for greater synergy in as far as liquor is concerned
- A need to liaise and involve the greater community
- A need to go to districts and foster relations

For More Information Contact:

Joyce Moholola | Communications & Marketing Officer

Tel: 021 446-9800

Email: jmoholola@salga.org.za