



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



PROVINCIAL PROFILES 2025 NCOP PROVINCIAL WEEK

**NAME OF PROVINCE: KWAZULU
NATAL**

**Building Viable Municipalities for
Enhanced Delivery of Basic
Services to Communities.**

November 2025



PROVINCIAL PROFILE: KWAZULU-NATAL 2025 NCOP PROVINCIAL WEEK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND	3
2. GEOGRAPHY	3
3. DEMOGRAPHY	4
4. GOVERNANCE	5
5. ECONOMIC PROFILE.....	6
6. THE STATE OF MUNICIPALITIES IN THE PROVINCES AND DISTRICT	6
7. HUMAN SETTLEMENT PROJECTS IN THE PROVINCE	8
8. ROADS AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE PROVINCE.....	11
Passenger Rail Infrastructure,	12
9. CURRENT PROJECTS IN THE PROVINCE TO IMPROVE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY	14
9.1 Access to piped water.....	14
9.2 Access to Electricity	16
9.3 Indigent Households.....	16
9.4 Refuse removal	17
10. FINANCING OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE PROVINCE.....	18
10.1 Audit outcomes	18
10.2 Infrastructure.....	18
10.3 Provincial overview.....	19
BIBLIOGRAPHY	22

PROVINCIAL PROFILES: KWAZULU NATAL 2025 NCOP PROVINCIAL WEEK

1. BACKGROUND

KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) features many landmarks, including natural wonders like the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park and iSimangaliso Wetland Park, both by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as World Heritage Sites.¹

Other prominent sites entail the Nelson Mandela Capture Site, the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban. In the terms of crime, the province has high risk areas, however, some towns like Margate and Port Shepstone are considered safer areas with insignificant crime. This brief discusses a number of themes including but not limited to i) demographic information, ii) governance, iii) economic profile, and iv) basic services.

The province's capital city is Pietermaritzburg, and the second largest city is after eThekweni/Durban.^{2,3} Other major cities and towns include Richards Bay, Port Shepstone, Empangeni, Newcastle, Estcourt, Ladysmith and Richmond. Figure 1 below shows the demographics in province in KZN.



2. GEOGRAPHY

The KZN province is located in the south-east of South Africa bordering the Indian Ocean. It also borders on the Eastern Cape, Free State and Mpumalanga provinces, as well as Lesotho, eSwatini and Mozambique. It also stretches from the border with Mozambique near Kosi Bay in the north to the uMthavuna estuary on the border with the Eastern Cape in the south.

The coast covers about 580 kilometres (km), which can be divided into three bio-geographic sections i.e. north, central and south. The province is also home to King Shaka International

¹ G20 South Africa (2025)

² Municipalities.co.za (2025)

³ Statistics South Africa (2022)

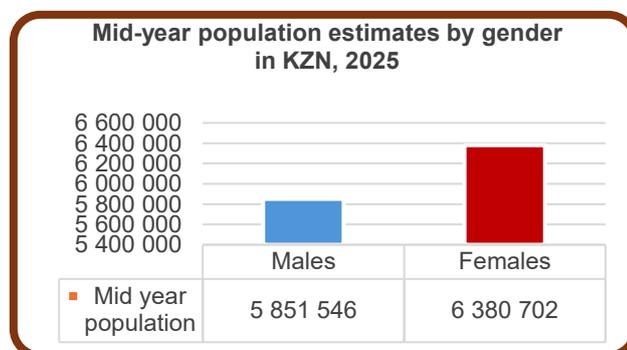
Airport (KSIA) which is the third largest airport in the country. KSIA is directly connected to more than eight (8) international destinations that ease global commuting.

3. DEMOGRAPHY

KZN is the third smallest province in terms of size, yet, it hosts the second highest population of 12.37 million, after Gauteng.

The demographic breakdown in this province is 85% for Africans, 9% for Indians/Asians, and 4% for Whites, including less than 1% for Coloured.

Females comprise 52.4%, while males 47.6% of the total population. Moreover, the province has a median age of 27, and **61.2% of the population is under 35 years of age**, indicating a very young demographic.



Adapted from: Statistics South Africa, P0302 (2025)

IsiZulu is the dominant language, spoken by about 80% of residents. The same language is most prominent nationally above compared to other 11 official languages. The figure to the right depicts the provincial mid-year population estimates for 2025 by gender.

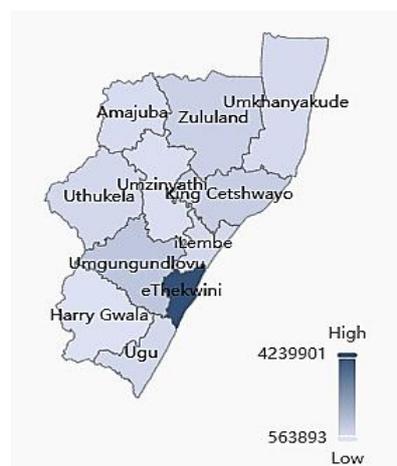
Children aged 0-14 years make up about 27.2% of the province's population. This proportion has decreased from the 31.9% recorded in 2011. About two thirds of the population (66.4%) is of working age (15-64 years), while about 6.4% of persons of retirement age (65+ years) reside within the provincial borders. The proportion of elderly persons increased from 4.9% of the provincial population, as recorded in 2011.

The provincial dependency ration (persons of non-working age as a proportion of the total population) has declined significantly between 2022 and 2011. In 2022, it stood at 50.5% of the population, compared to 58.5% in 2011. The provincial **dependency ration is slightly below the national rate** of 48.4%, but still significantly higher than provinces such as Gauteng (38.9%) and the Western Cape (42.4%).

4. GOVERNANCE

KZN has one metropolitan municipality i.e. eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality and 10 district municipalities, which are further subdivided into 43 local municipalities.⁴

Of the total 53 municipalities in the province, 3 municipalities that have the highest exports in terms of percentage contribution namely eThekweni, King Cetshwayo and uMgungundlovu.⁵ The following figure shows the layout of municipalities of the province:



Source: Census 2022

Table 1: Distribution of population, households and average household size by district municipality,⁶

District Municipality	Census 2022		
	Population	Household	Average Household size
eThekweni	4 239 901	1 122 738	3.8
uMgungundlovu	1 235 715	307 842	4.0
King Cetshwayo	1 021 344	205 739	5.0
Zululand	942 794	165 617	5.7
uThukela	789 092	172 197	4.6
iLembe	782 661	187 182	4.2
Ugu	773 402	172 628	4.5
uMkhanyakude	738 437	129 066	5.7
Amajuba	687 408	150 239	4.6
uMzinyathi	649 261	125 427	5.2
Harry Gwala	563 893	115 068	4.9

Adapted from: Statistics South Africa (2022)

⁴ Municipalities.co.za (2025)

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ Statistics South Africa (2022)

5. ECONOMIC PROFILE

KZN has the largest manufacturing sector in terms of contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) with Richards Bay being the centre of operations for South Africa's aluminium industry. Of the biggest companies, the Richards Bay Coal Terminal is instrumental in securing the country's position as the second-largest exporter of steam coal globally. The province has undergone rapid industrialisation owing to its abundant water supply and labour resources.⁷

The province consists of a highly diversified agricultural sector. It is the country's main producer of timber as it **produces over 50% of all timber used in the country** and accounts for a significant percentage of the country's **wood exports; as well as sugar cane, which equates to 0.84% of South Africa's GDP.**⁸

As such, the province has some of the country's largest sugar processing plants. Moreover, the province has the highest export propensity in the country and has a competitive level of industrialisation given its manufacturing output size.⁹

It also produces the largest proportion of subtropical fruits, while inland farmers concentrate on vegetable, dairy and stock farming. Another source of income is forestry especially in the areas of Vryheid, Eshowe, Richmond, Harding and Ngome.¹⁰ Despite the above mentioned, by 2024, **KZN saw its official unemployment rate decrease to 30.4% in the fourth quarter, down from 33.0% in the third quarter.** This was the second-largest decrease among provinces, with a drop of 2.6%. However, the expanded unemployment rate remained higher, at 41.9% in the fourth quarter.¹¹ Unemployment rate is reported in most municipalities as stubborn challenge to overcome given the economic decline and shutting down of some companies in the province.

6. THE STATE OF MUNICIPALITIES IN THE PROVINCES AND DISTRICT

As of September 2024, there were a total of ten municipalities that were under interventions of Section 139 of the Constitution. Of the 10 municipalities, 8 (eight) are under Section 139(1)(b), namely: Mpozana LM, Umzumbe LM, Mtubatuba LM, Zululand DM, uThukela DM, uMzinyathi DM, uMkhanyakude DM and Inkosi Langalibalele LM.

The following two municipalities in the province namely, uMhlathuze Local Municipality and Msunduzi Local Municipality have directives in terms of Section 139(1)(a)

⁷ Trends, Development and Data (2024)

⁸ Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (*n.d.*)

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Statistics South Africa (2024)

uMzinyathi DM

Noticeably, some of these interventions have been in place for an extended period such as **uMzinyathi District Municipality's** intervention having started in 2016 while **Mpofana Inkosi Langalibalele LM** interventions commenced in December 2017. There is recognition of the relevance of interventions, on other hand, there is concern that the interventions turn to be extensive with minimal impact.

Despite some reservations with interventions in other municipalities, the **Mpofana LM** has appointed senior management to among others drive the implementation of objectives of the municipality and resolve poor audit outcomes. The remaining concern for the municipality has been incurring of Eskom debt that has increased compromising its financial sustainability. To overcome this formidable challenge, the KZN Executive Council was required to consider Section 139 (5) to impose a financial recovery plan on the municipality to ensure that its financial position remains positive.

Uthukela DM

The **Uthukela DM** has battled to resolve its identified challenges i.e. underspending on capital budgets, lack of capacity to undertake water and sanitation function, low collection rates, weak financial management controls and poor state of infrastructure. As such, the concern has been to ensure that its financial management controls are in place. Also concerning is the **inadequate spending on infrastructure maintenance** that has the possibility of further deterioration of public infrastructure, which is critical for driving service delivery and economic development

With respect to **Inkosi Langalibalele LM**, there has been some commendable progress in resolving a substantial number of challenges that led to the intervention. Some of the progress is that the municipality operates with a funded budget and that all senior management positions have been filled. Also noted is that the municipality reviewed its organogram and that a completed staff establishment was submitted for approval by end of September 2024. The concern was for the administrator to resolve with speed all the remaining areas that have been partially achieved.

For **uMzinyathi District Municipality** there were reports that the ministerial representative was refused access to the municipality's primary banking facility in 2024. Despite this issue having been resolved by the appointment of a new ministerial representative, it contributed to the delays of corrective measures.¹² To this end, the administrator was expected to urgently prioritise investigations into allegations of maladministration, fraud and corruption to ensure that they are resolved.

Both **Zululand DM** and **uMhlatuze LM** opted to pursue litigation to challenge the intervention. This is permissible by the Constitution for dispute resolution but also noted is that

¹² Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2024)

the Constitution puts a premium on cooperative governance between all spheres of government. In this regard, it is discouraging that the parties chose to use the court process with instead of using the same resources for service delivery.

For Umzumbe LM, the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Public Administration was to pursue Section 139(1)(b) intervention as mandated by the Constitution. On the same score, a comprehensive report was awaited from the KZN Exco by end of October 2024, which is still pending.

7. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROJECTS IN THE PROVINCE

About 86,8% of households in KZN live in formal dwellings, followed by 8% of traditional structures and 5% in informal dwellings. The districts with the highest proportion of households residing in traditional dwellings of 30.4% and 26.4% respectively are Harry Gwala and uMzinyathi.¹³

Also noted is that eThekweni is home to the highest proportion of informal settlements of 78%, the highest of all urban centres in the province. This anomaly is attributed to pursuit of economic breakthrough by individuals and households in eThekweni.¹⁴

Over one-quarter i.e. 26,7% of households in KZN resided in RDP/ government-subsidised dwellings in 2022. Notably, three districts in the province recorded lowest proportions of households residing in RDP housing. These were King Cetshwayo with 17.8% followed by Zululand with 18.9% and uMzinyathi with 19.5%.¹⁵ Harry Gwala is the only district in the province that recorded 55% of the households who resided in RDP/ government dwellings in 2022.

There were 416 projects in 2024 in KZN, with expenditures incurred for Q1 noted as 228. Issues arose with 39 projects showing no expenditure and some projects performing outside the business plan.

Among the several obstacles affecting performance was **lack of water provision**. For example, many local municipalities were unable to provide water to contractors, who then source their own, sometimes from rivers, causing delays. The **Business Forums** also contributed negatively as they demanded material supply, and a share of project work which led to community unrest and halted projects.¹⁶

Budget cuts are the financial constraints from previous fiscal years that negatively impacted on project implementation and contractor payments. **Infrastructure-related challenges** such

¹³ Statistics South Africa (2022)

¹⁴ KZN Department of Human Settlements (2024)

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ South African Government News Agency (2022).

as lack of budget for essential bulk infrastructure detrimentally affected project progress. Combined with maintenance challenges for existing bulk services compounded the challenges.

In November 2024, the Department reported to Parliament while on oversight that faced significant backlogs in housing delivery as the data from the 30-year housing delivery report indicated a cumulative total of 759,159 housing units delivered, highlighting a consistent effort in addressing housing needs since 1994. The budget for human settlements for the period 2019/20 to 2024/25 showed a total reduction of R1.4 billion. The baseline allocation had experienced fluctuations, with significant decreases noted in certain financial years. For instance, the baseline allocation in 2023/24 was R4.34 billion, indicating the financial constraints faced in housing delivery.

The key developments include various Integrated Residential Development Programmes and informal settlement upgrades. As well as the upgrading of informal settlements and provision of serviced sites for low-income households. Among the identified challenges include non-availability of suitable land for development; financial constraints due to budget cuts; poor performance by contractors and delays caused by socio-political issues and a backlog in rectification of RDP stock pre-1994.

The Department reported ongoing disaster response efforts following significant flooding and storm incidents in the province in April 2022. Notably, 1,766 Temporary Residential Units (TRUs) had been constructed, demonstrating a **98% success rate in addressing emergency housing needs**. The funding allocation for disaster response was noted as R342,1 million achieving 100% expenditure.

The Department concluded by highlighting 43 stalled projects across various districts, primarily due to land issues, poor-performing contractors, and bulk infrastructure.

The 2024 parliamentary oversight raised the following observations and recommendations: made the following observations and recommendations:

Observation: Poor or non-expenditure on the appropriated funds by KZN and the local municipalities. The funds transferred to the province were not utilised appropriately and, in most cases, funds had been transferred to performing provinces or even back to fiscus.

Recommendation: Ensure that provincial department adheres to Supply Chain Management to prevent irregular expenditure.

Observation: Lack of connection between national, province and local governments pertaining to handling of projects.

Recommendation: Instruct the Department of Human Settlements to step in and assist by implementing projects for the benefit of the communities that were meant to benefit.

Observation: Lack of uniformity in terms of the quantum for construction of BNG houses, in some areas it was reported to be R148 000 and in other areas to be R160 000.

Recommendation: Ensure that national, province and local municipalities implement and handle projects effectively. This should be done by improving the planning and collaboration between national, provincial, and local governments to ensure timely delivery of housing projects and provision of essential services. Emphasize on adopting the District Development Model to align plans and budgets effectively.

Observation: Poor workmanship as has been observed in some housing projects such as Qadi Rural Housing project in Maphumulo local municipality.

Recommendation: Ensure that Quality Assurance Inspectors who are tasked to monitor quality and assessment of housing projects in the province and in municipalities are being delivered to beneficiaries as they deserve best quality. Capacity Building for Contractors as local contractors may lack the skills or resources for large-scale projects. Offer training and mentorship programs to local contractors. Pair emerging contractors with seasoned ones to ensure quality and on-time delivery while supporting local empowerment initiatives.

Observation: The delegation was of the view that the beneficiaries deserved the best and what was seen was inappropriate and unacceptable. It was alleged that it was due to lack of monitoring by inspectors. Contended that poor workmanship has a downstream effect of cost escalation as the National Home Builders Registration Council will not deem the structures compliant and corrective measures will have to be implemented.

Recommendation: Institute consequence management against officials in the quality assurance unit as there is clear evidence of dereliction of duty on their part. Leverage technology for monitoring as real-time project tracking can help identify bottlenecks early. Use project management software and Geographical information systems (GIS) mapping to monitor progress, track budgets, and identify delays. This can also improve communication between stakeholders.

Observation: In Banana City, an informal settlement upgrading project, two residents who were refusing to be relocated blocking the implementation of the project. The one resident was represented by the lawyer making it difficult to be reached. The other cited lack of water and toilet facilities in the site where they were to be move citing health hazards for her and the unborn baby.

Recommendation: Ensure that the national Department of Human Settlements and the eThekweni Metro urgently convene an intergovernmental committee within 21 days to deal with the challenges of Banana City Project and to ensure that litigation is avoided at all costs.

8. ROADS AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE PROVINCE

The upgrades of the N2 and N3 in KwaZulu-Natal form part of National Government's key **Strategic Integrated Projects, SIP2**: Durban-Free State-Gauteng Logistics and Industrial Corridor.^{17, 18}

The upgrade of the National Route 2 (N2) focuses on a 55km length, from Lovu River on the South Coast to uMdloti on the North Coast, while the N3 upgrade focuses on a 79.3km section from Durban to Pietermaritzburg, which incorporates upgrading from Mayville (Sherwood) Interchange in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality to Cedara in uMngeni Local Municipality, as well as the N2 from Amanzimtoti to Umdloti.¹⁹

THE N2 PROJECT is divided into 11 phases. The following are the 10 of the 15 N3 related projects in KZN.

- 1) **Lovu and Moss Kolnick** - Addition of lanes and bridge widening.
- 2) **Moss Kolnick to Isipingo (Umlaas Canal)** - Addition of lanes and bridge widenings including upgrading of Isipingo Interchange
- 3) **Adams Road Interchange** - Upgrading of Interchange
- 4) **Isipingo Interchange** - Upgrading of interchange
- 5) **Isipingo to Higginson Interchange** - Addition of lanes, bridge widenings
- 6) **Higginson Interchange to Edwin Swales** - Addition of lanes, bridge widenings,
- 7) **Edwin Swales Interchange (Km 12.3) to South of Eb Cloete Interchange (Km 16.0)** - Addition of lanes, new bridges and bridge widening
- 8) **Umgeni Interchange (Km 20.72) To South of the Mount Edgecombe Interchange (Km 30.45)** - Addition of lanes and bridge widening
- 9) **Viaduct (Km 11.8)** - Addition of lanes, bridge widenings and erection of major steel arch
- 10) **Kwamashu Interchange to Umdloti Interchange** - Addition of lanes and bridge widenings.

THE N3 project consist of 15 phases. The following are the 10 of the 15 N3 related projects.

1. **Westville Viaduct/Paradise Valley** – Featuring the first ever network arch to be constructed in KwaZulu-Natal, which will also create additional lanes.²⁰
2. **Paradise Valley/Mariannhill Toll Plaza** - Additional lanes and upgrading of interchange in Richmond Road.
3. **The Mariannhill Toll Plaza/Key Ridge** - which entails 11km of the N3 to be widened into a 10-lane dual carriageway.

¹⁷ SIP2 aims to strengthen the logistics and transport corridor between South Africa's main industrial hubs, improve access to Durban's export and import facilities and raise efficiency along the corridor.

¹⁸ The South African National Roads Agency (2023)

¹⁹ *Ibid*

²⁰ The South African National Roads Agency (2023)

4. **Hammersdale Interchange** - which is completed and was opened by the Minister of Transport in October 2020, with construction of a new bridge and six new on- and off-ramps to accommodate increased traffic volume.
5. **Hammersdale to Uitkoms** - widening between 8 to 10 lanes and concrete pavement and a quarry.
6. **Uitkoms To Cato Ridge** - widening between 8 to 10 lanes and a concrete pavement and new rail bridge over N3.
7. **Key Ridge/Hammersdale** - new bridges and concrete pavement where the upgrade will allow re-alignment of +/- 1.7km of N3 to reduce steep grades and remove sharp curves.
8. **Cato Ridge/Dardanelles** - two additional lanes to be added to the carriageway as well as improving the horizontal and vertical alignment and new asphalt pavement.
9. **Dardanelles/Lynnfield Park** - two additional lanes to be added to the carriageway.
10. **Bridge Widening** - a new bridge and new asphalt pavement.²¹
11. **Lynnfield Park/Ashburton** - two to three additional lanes per carriageway, bridge widening and concrete pavement.

Passenger Rail Infrastructure,²²

In April 2022, KZN experienced torrential rain that caused extensive damage to properties, businesses, **roads, bridges**, water, electricity, **rail**, and telecommunications infrastructure. While the entire province was impacted, the worse-hit areas were the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, and the districts of iLembe, uGu, King Cetshwayo, and uMgungundlovu.²³ As such, informal settlements close to rivers and waterways were severely affected, with several dwellings swept away and approximately 445 lives lost to date.²⁴ The flooding disrupted fuel and food supplies. The **damages to public and private infrastructure in this province was significant and estimated at around R25 billion.**²⁵

To this end, the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) and the Provincial Government pooled resources to repair roads, bridges and railways that were destroyed. Pursuant to the declaration of the national state of disaster on 18 April 2022, SANRAL and the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) calculated the cost of the disaster in their respective areas of responsibility.

The KZN's initial estimates to the National Government were to the tune of **R5.1 billion** for infrastructure repair.²⁶ This was followed by the confirmation of the **R3.1 billion** allocation to

²¹ The South African National Roads Agency (2023)

²² Ngesi (*Unpublished*)

²³ Infrastructure News (2022a).

²⁴ Chetty (2022).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Subramoney (2022).

SANRAL for infrastructure repair projects, with KZN reprioritising its budget to reroute **R2.6 billion** to make up the balance.²⁷

The Minister of Transport asserted that service recovery for commuter rail would be undertaken in phases due to the severity of the impact of the floods on the rail network. **The first phase** focused on restoring safe train movement in areas where damage was insignificant and cost less to improve. This was followed with the emergency procurement process for diesel service in three corridors namely, Durban to KwaMashu, Durban to Stanger; and Durban to Pinetown.²⁸

The second phase of the recovery were directed at recovering damaged and destroyed infrastructure, and was estimated to take between three to six months from the date of the award of the contract, in the following corridors:²⁹

- Durban to Umlazi,
- Durban to KwaMashu,
- New Main Line to Cato Ridge; and
- Reunion to Kelso, which was to be confirmed upon appointment of structural and geotechnical engineering consultants for Illovo Bridge.

During the floods, PRASA lost about 300 kilometres (km) of its rail infrastructure in the province, with the **recovery costs estimated between R2.8 billion and R3 billion**.³⁰ Restoring services entailed the following:³¹

- Replacement of signalling equipment,
- Repair of the drainage system and Illovo Bridge,
- Rehabilitation and replacement of per way (tracks),
- Repair of electrical infrastructure and substations damaged by the floods, and
- Replacement of damaged fibre cables, as well as Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) equipment.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Subramoney (2022).

²⁹ The South African National Roads Agency (2023).

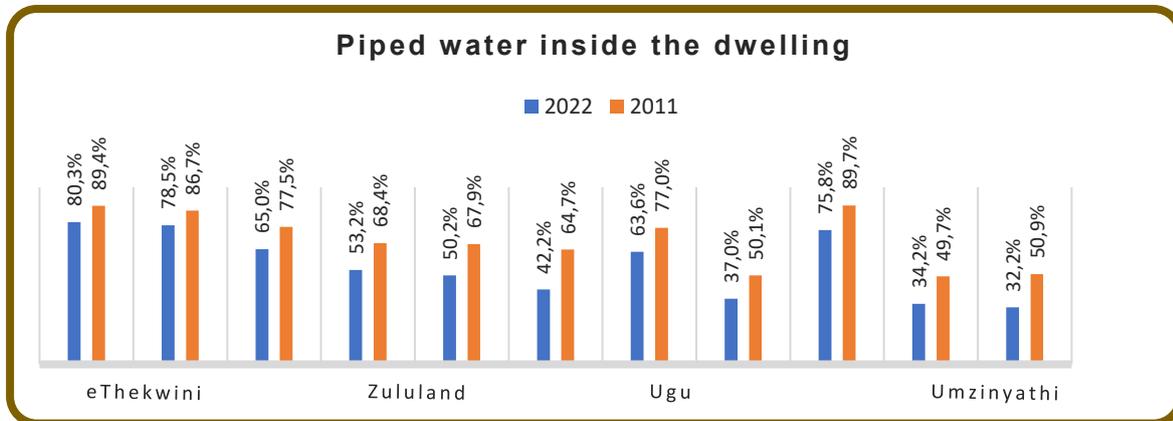
³⁰ Infrastructure News (2022b).

³¹ Mossel Bay Advertiser (2022).

9. CURRENT PROJECTS IN THE PROVINCE TO IMPROVE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY

9.1 Access to piped water

Figure 4: Piped water inside the dwelling,³²



Adapted from: Statistics South Africa, Census (2022)

By 2022, the district municipalities in KZN had increased access to piped water inside households dwelling or in their yard, which is over three-quarters i.e. 77,0%.³³ This is a significant increase from 63,6% in 2011.

Of importance are the districts of:

- Amajuba which rose from 75,8% to 89,7%,
- eThekweni metropolitan municipality from 80,3% to 89,4%
- uMgungundlovu from 78,5% to 86,7%
- King Cetshwayo from 65% to 77,5%.

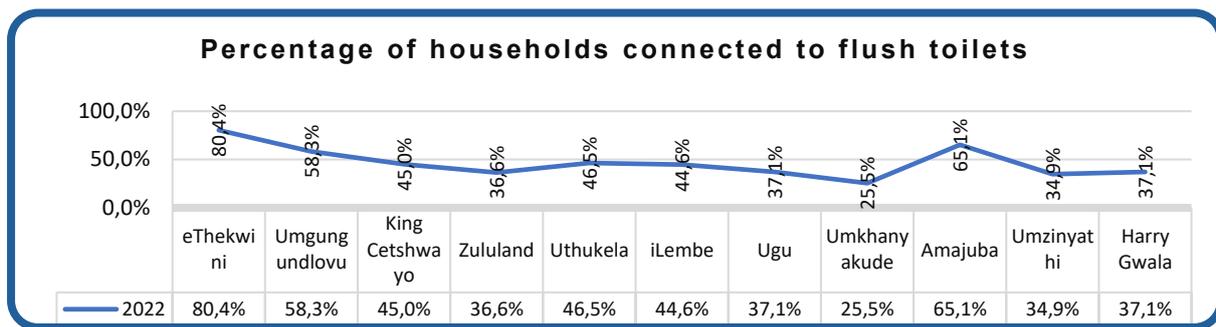
These districts recorded the highest proportions of households with piped water in 2022.³⁴ Despite this increase, the proportion of households that remain without piped water in the yard is concerning. Figure 5 below depicts the percentage of households connected to flush toilets in the province as per districts.

³² Statistics South Africa (2022)

³³ *Ibid*

³⁴ *Ibid*

Figure 5: Percentage of households connected to flush toilets,³⁵



Adapted from: Statistics South Africa, Census (2022)

In 2022, the province saw an increase from 45% in 2011 to 58.9% of households with access to flush toilets. Noticeably, the proportion of households with access to flush toilets in the province was below the national average of 70.8%. The Amajuba DM and eThekweni metropolitan municipality recorded the highest increase of households with flush toilets i.e. 65.1% and 80.4% respectively which was higher than the provincial average of 58.9%.

Also noted is that both uMgungundlovu and uMzinyathi districts had over four-fifths of their households using flush toilets - above 80%.

- **Water interruptions:** Less than three-fifths of the province i.e. 57% reported water interruptions. Most reports were recorded in these districts namely, Ugu at 77.6% followed by Amajuba at 83,2% and Harry Gwala at 43,6%.³⁶

The National State of Water Report for 2023 ranks KZN third for water quality in the country after Gauteng and the Western Cape. In this province, **approximately 14% of water supply systems are in a poor or critical state, with some municipalities reporting very high bacterial contamination.** Notably, three KZN water supply systems achieved a high Blue Drop score in 2023 indicating excellent water quality. However, four municipalities are considered in a poor state with uMzinyathi getting closer to being labelled critical.³⁷

Recent investigations have highlighted a significant problem with sub-standard toilet facilities for peripheral households including rural schools and some public health clinics. Concerns are the emanate from the continued use of hazardous pit latrines, poor maintenance of facilities, and a general lack of adequate sanitation infrastructure which lead to considerable health and safety risks for vulnerable communities.³⁸

The drive by municipalities to provide water for communities to have flush toilet is noticeable with low proportion of households using pit latrines. eThekweni recorded proportion of 4.4%

³⁵ Statistics South Africa (2022)

³⁶ Statistics South Africa (2022)

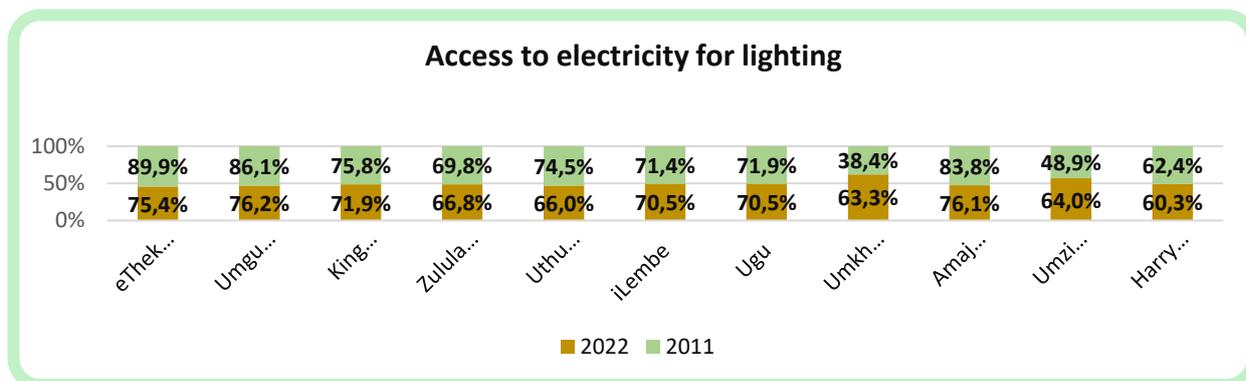
³⁷ Department of Water and Sanitation (2023)

³⁸ Water Research Commission (2015)

followed by iLembe and uMgungundlovu with the second and third lowest proportion of 14,1% and 15,1% respectively.³⁹ Harry Gwala is the only province that reported 27,9% in the entire province.

9.2 Access to Electricity

Figure 6: Access to electricity for lighting



Adapted from: Statistics South Africa, Census (2021 and 2022)

Access to electricity for lighting in KZN is significantly higher than water-related services. Most households in the province i.e. 96.7% used electricity for lighting in 2022.⁴⁰ The districts with the highest proportions than the provincial average included uMgungundlovu with 97.3%, iLembe with 97.7%, King Cetshwayo with 97.8% as well as the eThekweni metropolitan municipality with 98.5%.⁴¹ However, there remains a concern of 2.4% of households in the province that use candles for lighting particularly in uMkhanyakude district where 8.1% of households rely on candles for the referenced purpose.

9.3 Indigent Households

- **Indigent households:** The comprehensive number of indigent households in South Africa by 2022 was 2 6 million. Of this, 739,564 households were from municipalities in KZN.⁴²
- **Free water services (6 kiloLitres per household):** The province has continually benefited its indigent population with water. For example, about 636,873 households were in beneficiaries of water in 2021. This number increased to 640,374 in 2022. Though the increase is moderate, but it signifies a 0.99% increase and a realistic human benefit.⁴³
- **Free electricity services (50 kWh per household):** Similar to the previous item the increase of household beneficiaries for free electricity in the province was moderate

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ Statistics South Africa (2022)

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² Statistics South Africa (2022)

⁴³ *Ibid*

between 2021 and 2022. For example, there were 205,054 households that benefited in 2021, which jumped to 207,506 in 2022.⁴⁴

- **Sewerage and sanitation (Below R50):** In this component, there was a decrease of household beneficiaries in the province's municipalities from 473,722 in 2021 to 471,206 in 2022. Again, the decrease is moderate.
- **Waste management (Below R50):** For both 2021 and 2022 the indigent households continued to benefit from municipalities in the province. In this regard, there is no significant variance of indigent of waste management between 2021 and 2022. Between these calendar years, 184,275 households benefited in 2021, while 184, 619 households benefited in 2022 – showing a slight increase.⁴⁵
- **Access to electricity:** In general, South Africa has done relatively well with electrification of its citizens. As such, KZN is one of the provinces that have done really well with electricity as almost all households i.e. 96,7% are using electricity for lighting. The districts with higher proportion than the provincial average included uMgungundlovu with 97,3%, iLembe with 97,7% and King Cetshwayo with 97,8%. As of 2022, the eThekweni metropolitan had over 98,5% of its households connected to the national electricity grid.⁴⁶
- **Source of energy for cooking:** Similar to other provinces, the primary source of energy for cooking is electricity. Accordingly, the province has the highest proportion i.e. 96,7% of households using electricity for lighting, cooking etc.⁴⁷
- **Loadshedding and/ or unscheduled electricity outages:** uMgungundlovu and eThekweni Municipalities are reported to be having recurrent incidences of power interruptions beyond loadshedding schedules.

9.4 Refuse removal

About 58,1% of the households' refuse is removed on a weekly basis. The refuse removal is largely done in urban communities compared to peripheral areas. In the province's capital city, services have almost collapsed with heaps of waste not removed in the central business district (CBD) and surrounding suburbs.

About 79.2% of households in rural areas discard refuse themselves on their own dump (not designated a communal dump). Rural districts in the province lag behind with respect to refuse removal for their respective peripheral constituencies.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Statistics South Africa (2022)

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

10. FINANCING OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE PROVINCE

The audit outcomes of KZN provincial departments' performance are depicted below. The provincial departments shown are those receiving the biggest allocations from the budget.

10.1 Audit outcomes

Table 1: Audit outcomes- KZN provincial departments

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Education	Qualified	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings
Health	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Qualified	Qualified	Qualified
Social Dev	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings
Human Sett	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with no findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings
Public Works	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings	Unqualified with findings
Transport	Unqualified with findings	Qualified	Qualified	Qualified	Qualified

The KZN Department of Education shows a regression from an unqualified audit with findings to a qualified audit in 2023/24. Department of Health and Transport show an improvement. Social Development has received unqualified with findings over the five years.

10.2 Infrastructure

The Auditor-General of South Africa (AG) 2023/24 Consolidated General Report on National and Provincial Audit Outcomes raises concerns over KZN's key service delivery departments.

The key infrastructure service delivery challenges are as follows⁴⁹:

- Quality defects and project delays.
- Poor coordination among departments, contractors and municipalities due to vacancies.
- Limited accountability for officials and contractors. For instance, the Umbulwane community in Ladysmith is still without proper housing 20 years after the start of an RDP housing project, due to delays in obtaining funding for the acquisition of land, and a lack of coordination between the role players responsible for the completion and connection of bulk infrastructure.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

- Existing infrastructure is not adequately maintained due to insufficient maintenance planning and a lack of prioritisation of budgets for maintenance projects.
- Inspections of schools and hospitals revealed deteriorating infrastructure, such as collapsed ceilings and non-adherence to fire-safety and electrical compliance requirements, which placed learners' and patients' safety at risk.

Additionally, the AG found that the province is not fully ready to manage disasters due to outdated disaster response plans, insufficient funding, poor communication and inadequate infrastructure maintenance.⁵⁰

10.3 Provincial overview

- The AG asserts that mayors, councils and executive authorities **are failing to fulfil their legislated responsibilities**. The AGSA further states that action by the local government had been too slow with little impact on the lived realities of South Africans. For example, the AGSA underscores that actions taken to eradicate disclaimed audit opinions have had little impact in 2023/24 and **more municipalities regressed** into this category.⁵¹
- With respect to municipal finances, the AG underlines that despite them being severely under serious constraints – **municipalities are displaying little fiscal discipline**.
- Despite continued advocacy for **intergovernmental support and collaboration**, the opposite is evident in the lack of partnership among the three spheres of government at most municipalities and in the weak oversight by provincial legislatures and Parliament, particularly at metros.⁵²
- **Audit outcomes improved slightly** between 2022/23 and 2023/24 in the provincial municipalities with 15 municipalities (28%) having improved their audit outcomes.
- The number of **clean audits in the province** increased from 3 in 2020/21 to 7 in 2023/24.
- **Slow progress by greater proportion of municipalities** in the province to improve financial and performance management controls, comply with legislation and meet key service delivery targets.

⁵⁰ AGSA (2024).

⁵¹ Auditor-General of South Africa (2024), p. 4.

⁵² Ibid. p. 4.

- 7 local and 1 district municipalities in the province i.e. uMshwathi, AbaQulusi, Dannhauser, eMadlangeni, Mpofana, uMngeni and eDumbe as well as Ugu **improved from qualified opinions in 2020/21 to unqualified opinions in 2023/24.**⁵³
- Richmond, Msinga and uMvoti local municipalities **achieved clean audits in 2023/24 for the first time since 2020/21**, while uMshwathi continued to obtain the clean audit due to greater financial management disciplines by senior management.
- Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality and uMkhanyakude District Municipality **improved from disclaimed opinions in 2020/21 to qualified opinions in 2023-24**, while Nquthu Local Municipality **improved from a disclaimed opinion in 2020-21 to an unqualified opinion** with findings in 2023/24.
- uKhahlamba Local Municipality lost its clean audit status due to the slow response by management to address supply chain management failures. eNdumeni Local Municipality regressed **to a disclaimed opinion**, mainly because senior management that **did not properly oversee financial statement preparation and reporting**, and the appointed consultants did not properly set up the accounting system to support financial reporting.⁵⁴
- Umzumbe Local Municipality **regressed to an adverse opinion due to political instability and vacancies in key posts**. Amidst these challenges, progress is evident at some municipalities that have received unqualified audit opinions with findings for many years, gradually decreasing the number of findings reported.
- King Cetshwayo District Municipality as well as uMlalazi and City of uMhlathuze Local Municipalities, **sustained their clean audit status** through the support of strong, dedicated and accountable leaders who institutionalised internal controls and ensured stability in key positions.
- Municipalities **decreased the use and cost of consultants from R252,81 million in 2022/23 to R222,63 million in 2023-24**. In some instances, **consultants did not transfer skills to finance officials.**⁵⁵
- The main qualification areas in most municipalities related to **revenue and receivables, as well as disclosures relating to unauthorised, irregular, and fruitless** and wasteful expenditures.
- Compliance with consequence management legislation also improved as councils, supported by the provincial cooperative governance department, investigated and

⁵³ Auditor-General of South Africa (2024), p. 192.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 193.

⁵⁵ Auditor-General of South Africa (2024a), p. 193.

subsequently **reduced the unresolved irregular expenditure amounting to R14,39 billion in 2020-21 to R8,27 billion in 2023-24.**⁵⁶

- Some accounting officers actively investigated root causes, enforced consequence management and resolved **material irregularities (MI)**. As such, the AGSA points out that of the 60 MIs identified, 40 were resolved by the accounting officers. However, the accounting officer of eThekweni Metro **did not timeously address the pollution of water resources** at its Northern wastewater treatment works, resulting in raw sewage continuing to be discharged into the Umhlangane and uMngeni rivers.⁵⁷
- **Performance reports** of 22 municipalities (42%) contained material misstatements. Another 17 municipalities (32%) avoided findings on their performance reports by making material adjustments during the audit process, mainly because of a **lack of reconciliations to supporting documentation, and poor record keeping and reviews**. Three local municipalities, namely AbaQulusi, Impendle and Nquthu **did not include key indicators in their performance reports**. For example, AbaQulusi omitted water quality indicators from its service delivery and budget implementation plan and, in doing so, undermined transparent reporting on the quality of drinking water.
- Municipalities **struggled across all stages of the infrastructural projects' life cycle**, from planning to maintenance, causing delays, poor build quality, cost overruns and service interruptions. This was largely **due to municipal leadership and management being slow to implement audit recommendations** and hold non-performing contractors accountable.⁵⁸ Municipalities often allocated insufficient funding towards repairing and maintaining infrastructure assets. **The poor maintenance of infrastructure was the key contributor to the provincial water losses of R3,47 billion, with eThekweni Metro accounting for R1,99 billion.**⁵⁹
- Water infrastructure revealed **inadequate maintenance, non-compliance with environmental legislation and safety risks especially at the City of uMhlathuze** where mechanical failures at the Empangeni wastewater treatment works caused water pollution. Despite the municipality receiving a clean audit, this does not necessarily guarantee wholesale quality service delivery.
- The **financial health of municipalities remained poor and service delivery and operations were affected by poor cash-flow** and financial management. As such, 5 municipalities expressed going concern uncertainty in 2023/24, compared to 10 in 2022/23 reporting period.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 194.

⁵⁷ Auditor-General of South Africa (2024a), p. 194.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*. p. 194.

⁵⁹ Auditor-General of South Africa (2024a), p. 194.

- **Unauthorised expenditure increased from R3,09 billion in 2022/23 to R3,79 billion in 2023/24.**⁶⁰ As such, the AG recommends that municipalities improve sustainability to strengthen revenue collection, prioritise the collection of outstanding debt and implement proper budgeting processes. The province's outcomes **highlight the need for strong internal controls**, reliable information technology systems, regular reviews and continuous monitoring.

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⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 195.

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