



Chairperson's Report

Period Under Review: 15 October 2024 to 30 June 2025

Dear Overstrand Ratepayers and Citizens

It gives me pleasure to present OCAN's first Annual Report.

About OCAN

The Overstrand Community Action Network is an apolitical data-driven civil society community coalition that exercises oversight and coordinates efforts to drive meaningful change, transparency and accountability within the Overstrand Municipality through a collective and legitimate voice.

A formally registered non-profit company, OCAN aims to be a catalyst for longer-term transformative change, by defending collective interests, demanding increased accountability, promoting comprehensive public participation, influencing decision-making, and monitoring good governance and sound financial management.

Using data, OCAN paints pictures that tell stories. These 'stories' enable Overstrand-citizens to interpret information about the performance of the Overstrand Municipality regarding themes such as financial sustainability, infrastructure development and renewal, cost management, innovation, environmental conservation and civic partnering.

OCAN works closely with special interest groups across the Overstrand and civic organisations along the Garden Route.

OCAN's Origins

OCAN's establishment has its roots in informal civic conversations about the potential impact of in-migration on the financial sustainability of the Overstrand Municipality (OM).

These conversations, which commenced during January 2023, resulted in the formation of a nine-member multi-disciplinary project team, which set out to explore the OM's financial sustainability against the backdrop of several strategic risks.

During October 2023, the independent project team produced a report ([read here](#)) that contained a high-level overview, some uncomfortable findings and recommendations. Preliminary recommendations included a critical review of expenditure, the rapid introduction of cost reduction measures, and the establishment of an Office for Strategy and Innovation.

The project team presented its findings and recommendations to the then Executive Mayor and two of her Mayoral Committee members on 1 November 2023. Shortly afterwards, the Mayor confirmed verbally that her party caucus had rejected the report in its entirety. *The need for civic oversight became increasingly evident.*

Following the release of the report into the public domain during January 2024, members of the project team shifted their attention to the draft audited Annual Report (22|23) and the draft Budget Report (24|25).

Meanwhile, the impetus was building for the establishment of an over-arching civil society organisation (CSO) along the lines of OUTA (Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse).

Overstrand residents were invited to join a virtual roundtable discussion ([read here](#)), the purpose of which was to gauge in principle support for the establishment of a Community Action Network. Approximately 48 people joined the conversation, several questions were asked, and support was pledged.

As a next step, an establishment roadmap was crafted and a constitution drafted. The draft constitution ([read here](#)) was adopted by a sample of founding supporters during a virtual meeting held on 26 September 2024.

With a constitution in hand, OCAN was formally registered as an NPC (not-for-profit company) with CIPC (Companies and Intellectual Property Commission) on 15 October 2024.

Governance

OCAN is led by an Advisory Board. An *interim* Advisory Board was established on 11 October 2024.

The founding directors are Errol van Staden (business psychologist), Anton Hartman (surveyor turned business owner – now retired) and Simon Koch (chartered accountant – now retired). The interim Board will remain in place until the inaugural Annual General Meeting.

Value Proposition

With civic oversight as our foundation, OCAN offers a proactive, solution-driven partnership that enhances the capacity to deliver, builds trust, and accelerates progress. We are committed to working with the OM's senior leadership team and Council, to assist in turning vision into reality.

Purpose and Focus

OCAN's purpose is clear: to exercise oversight and coordinate civic effort to ensure transparency, accountability, and meaningful change in the Overstrand Municipality.

We focus on issues that directly affect the Municipality's ability to deliver affordable, high-quality services. OCAN does not replace ratepayer organisations or community forums. Instead, we represent the collective interests of civil society on matters that cut across ward boundaries — with particular attention paid to financial management, governance, local economic growth, and sustainable development.

Key Actions

During the review period, OCAN:

- Requested an Auditor-General investigation into alleged fraud within the Overstrand Municipality.
- Reviewed the 2023/24 Draft Audited Annual Report ([read more](#)).
- Evaluated the 2025/26 Draft Budget ([read more](#)).
- Launched OCAN's website: www.ocan.co.za.
- Published quarterly newsletters – OCAN Communiqué ([read more](#)).
- Established a growing supporter database.

Looking Ahead

There is an obvious need to renew the social compact between the OM and the constituency it serves.

While there is appreciation for the OM's operational performance, voices are demanding a strategic focus, greater transparency, increased accountability and significantly improved civic engagement. *The power imbalance is under the spotlight.*

OCAN's analyses of the OM's performance spanning several financial years, consistently highlight matters that require debate, a reform agenda and municipal action. This necessitates the establishment of a collaborative platform (or platforms) where key issues can be discussed, solutions agreed, commitments made, and results reviewed.

Examples of collaborative platforms include Advisory Committees (Municipal Systems Act), Section 79 Committees (Municipal Structures Act), Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and JAPAC (Joint Audit and Performance Audit Committee).

We hold the view that the OM is capable of improved performance if there is a will to embrace a civic partnering operating model that will address the challenges of tomorrow in a collaborative manner.

Winning performance requires local government to break free from the shackles of convention. Innovation has become the name of the game. The use of artificial intelligence (AI), to unlock greater efficiencies and cost savings, must be explored.

Rebuilding trust, ensuring accountability, and co-creating solutions must be the foundation of a stronger relationship between the Municipality and the people it serves. In addition, public participation structures such as the Ward Committee system and OMAF (Overstrand Municipal Advisory Forum) should be repurposed to become functional, advisory and effective.

Call for Citizen Support

OCAN's strength lies in its support. A broad base of engaged citizens enables us to speak with legitimacy and authority.

We encourage Overstrand ratepayers and residents 18 years and older to register as OCAN supporters via the OCAN website. Registration is free of charge and open to anyone who shares our commitment to accountability and good governance ([follow this link](#)).

Invitation

Please contact me directly if you would like to share your expertise in finance, sustainable development, environmental conservation, legal counsel or corporate governance in a local government context.

OCAN also requires the support of people who have a flair for research and data-analysis.

Words of Thanks

I would like to express my gratitude to our donors. Your financial support enables us to build a reserve that will fund future initiatives.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Board members for helping to steer the ship during OCAN's start-up phase. We are busy laying the foundation of an institution that will play an important role during the years to come.

Errol van Staden
23 October 2025

Mobile +27 83 637 0700
E-mail: errol@ocan.co.za