



OCAN COMMUNIQUÉ

NOVEMBER 2025

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FROM THE CHAIR

As we approach the end of another calendar year, we would like to reflect on two key issues: local government reform and civic partnering.

It is no secret that the local government sector in South Africa, except for municipalities in the Western Cape, is in serious trouble. There is broad recognition that reform is both necessary and urgent. The challenge is to rid the sector of incompetence and corruption.



Although the Overstrand Municipality is generally regarded as one of South Africa's better-performing municipalities, there remains a clear need for interventions to strengthen performance and reduce escalating costs. At the heart of this aspiration lies strong municipal leadership, both political and administrative.

Strong leaders are the driving force behind effective councils, accountable governance, and thriving communities. They are vision-bearers, ethical guides, and motivators who influence how well a municipality serves its people.

Strong leaders set a clear vision, inspire others to work towards shared goals, anticipate challenges, and plan long-term for growth and financial sustainability. Importantly, they also recognise the wealth of expertise within their constituency and know how to tap into it.

The 2026 local government elections present an opportunity for Overstrand ratepayers and residents to elect leaders who will move our municipality from Good to Great.

Errol

THE ROLE OF OCAN and *Why You Should Join Us*

Local government shapes our communities, but without oversight, financial mismanagement and inefficiencies may go unchecked. The Overstrand Municipality is known for its clean audits and strong service delivery, yet ongoing public oversight, engagement and participation is vital to sustain this performance.

OCAN advocates for responsible financial management, sound development planning, equitable service delivery, and high operational standards by leveraging civil society expertise. OCAN conducts research, engages in dialogue with the municipal leadership, and will hold officials accountable when necessary. For the Overstrand to remain well-run and financially stable, residents must be informed and involved. Supporting OCAN fosters oversight and collaboration, ensuring lasting community benefits.

OCAN wishes to thank our supporters for their ongoing financial contributions.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

The crisis in local government is deepened by councillors and party structures that often wield disproportionate power, overshadowing professional administration and community voices. The line between political oversight and interference has become blurred.

Of particular concern is the marginalisation of citizens and civil society. Ward committees, IDP consultations, and budget review processes are often tokenistic or poorly run. Citizens increasingly complain about the lack of meaningful participation, transparency, accountability, and consequence management.

When citizen voices go unheard, frustration and mistrust grow, leading to an adversarial relationship between municipalities and the communities they serve. Dictatorial leadership and workplace cultures that discourage dissent and external oversight compound the problem.

This power imbalance at municipal level is both a cause and a symptom of governance failure. It manifests in the exclusion of citizens from decision-making and the deliberate weakening of community structures such as Ward Committees.

To reform municipalities, power must be rebalanced from party structures to the people. Inclusive platforms must be created, meaningful engagement must occur, and the restoration of public trust must become a shared goal.

Civic partnering is a collaborative operating model that strengthens accountability, improves service delivery, rebuilds citizen trust, and leverages community assets.

It involves structured collaboration between the municipality, civil society, business, and other stakeholders in planning, decision-making, implementation, and oversight. It is both a strategic response to governance challenges and a pathway to social cohesion and resilient service systems.

This model represents a shift from an autocratic, government-alone approach (current state) to one where power, responsibility, and accountability are shared (desired state).

Implementing a civic partnering model requires a deliberate change in how collaboration is institutionalised, moving beyond symbolic participation to active listening, consultation, and real collaboration. It shifts outcomes.

CIVIC PARTNERING

SELECTION OF WARD COUNCILLORS 2026

Ward councillors are elected representatives who serve as the direct link between communities and the Municipal Council. They must:

- Represent the interests of their ward fairly and honestly
- Report back to the community on Council decisions and developments
- Be transparent about decisions, actions, and use of public resources
- Be accessible to residents and responsive to their needs and complaints

Holding ward councillors accountable lies at the heart of effective governance and community trust.

The Overstrand needs a strong Council capable of managing the complexities of local government, one that understands governance and operates along sound business principles.

With the local government elections looming (November 2026), ratepayers and residents should begin identifying suitable candidates for each ward.

[Click here to read OCAN's official Position Statement.](#)



CURRENT INITIATIVES

MEETING WITH THE MUNICIPALITY'S SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

On 14 October 2025, the OCAN Advisory Board met with the Mayor, Mayoral Committee members, and the Municipal Manager.

The meeting formally introduced OCAN and explored possible areas for collaboration. It led to a productive follow-up session with the Municipal Manager on 5 November 2025.

In both meetings, we sensed a genuine willingness to explore civic partnering as an integral part of the Municipality's future operating model.

FRAUD INVESTIGATION

Since our July 2025 communiqué, there has been limited progress. On 15 August 2025, the OCAN Chair met with Mr Dominic van der Heever, Chief Audit Executive of Overstrand Municipality.

Mr van der Heever confirmed that the HAWKS investigation, which had been closed earlier, has now been re-opened.

In a subsequent email he stated that "the fuel card investigations previously reported to the HAWKS are currently ongoing."

The Auditor-General (letter dated 30 October 2025) confirmed:

"We are maintaining regular communication with the Internal Audit team regarding the status of the HAWKS investigation. Our current understanding remains unchanged; the investigation is still ongoing."

Two written requests to Internal Audit for a status update have, to date, gone unanswered.

FLASH POLL - CONSUMER DEBT WRITE-OFFS

Following Council's decision on 29 October 2025 to write off substantial irrecoverable consumer debt, OCAN conducted a flash poll to gauge ratepayer and resident sentiment.

A summary of the results and key comments is available via the below Web link:

[**Overstrand Municipality – Consumer Debt Write-Offs – November 2025**](#)

When residents assume "someone else" will safeguard the public interest, poor decisions and personal political agendas thrive in bureaucratic shadows. But when citizens question, participate, and hold political representatives and municipal officials accountable, communities become stronger, fairer, and more resilient.

With misguided decisions increasingly affecting our shared spaces and services, active citizenship is no longer optional. It is the force that will protect community wellbeing and ensure local decisions reflect real needs.

A functional Ratepayers Association is the community's strongest defence against poor governance, providing a unified, informed voice on development, service delivery, infrastructure, and overall neighbourhood welfare.

While individuals can raise concerns, a cohesive ratepayer's association carries the mandate and authority to monitor municipal performance, influence public processes, and demand decisions that serve residents. Staying on the sidelines leaves critical choices to others, risking declining services, falling property values, and long-term harm to community wellbeing.

COMMUNITIES THRIVE WHEN CITIZENS ACT - NOW IS THE TIME FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP



RATEPAYERS HAVE A DUTY TO INFLUENCE THEIR WARD STRUCTURES

The Ward Committee, made up of the elected Ward Councillor and supported by a Ward Committee, is the formal, government-mandated structure linking communities to municipal decision-making. The Ward Councillor carries legislative authority, participates in council decisions, and channels community priorities into processes such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the municipal budget. Although ward committees serve in an advisory capacity, an effective ward committee will play a vital role in gathering community concerns, monitoring service delivery, and ensuring that the municipality understands the needs of all residents in the ward. They form the official conduit through which community needs enter the municipal system.

Ratepayers Associations, by contrast, operate outside formal government structures. They are voluntary, independent bodies created by residents and property owners to advocate for accountable governance, transparent municipal spending, reliable service delivery, and responsible development. Without legislative authority, their influence stems from organisation, collective action, documented evidence, and persistent engagement. Because they represent motivated and informed residents, they often become the most effective watchdogs of local government performance, demanding answers where individuals might be ignored.

When these two structures work together, a Ratepayers Association becomes a powerful engine of community representation, supplying knowledgeable expertise, evidence, and organised pressure, while the Ward Council channels these concerns into the formal municipal system. This partnership strengthens oversight, elevates community priorities, and ensures that service delivery failures and administrative shortcomings cannot be hidden behind bureaucracy or political agendas.

Strong communities are built by active citizens. Join your Ratepayers Association, influence your ward structures. Help shape the decisions that will benefit your neighbourhood's future.

OCAN's inaugural Annual General Meeting was held on 23 October 2025 via a virtual platform. The well-attended meeting endorsed several motions and confirmed strong community support.

The AGM presentation, minutes and supporting documents are available via the below Web links:

[**AGM 2025 - Presentation**](#) [**AGM 2025 - Chairperson's Report**](#) [**AGM 2025 - Minutes of Inaugural AGM**](#)

INAUGURAL AGM

THANK YOU

The OCAN Advisory Board extends sincere thanks to:

- The public for their growing support
- Our donors for their generous financial contributions
- The Overstrand Municipality's senior leadership team for engaging in constructive dialogue
- Kerry Hartman and Corli Brits for pro bono back-office support
- Mike Murray for producing the OCAN Communiqué throughout 2025

With the festive season in sight, we wish you and your loved ones a restful and joyful break.

Next year promises to be both busy and exciting, so let's charge the batteries.

CALL TO ACTION

Make a difference by supporting OCAN. Become a Supporter. If you subscribe to OCAN's ideals and purpose, we request you to register at no cost as an OCAN-supporter. Supporters are at liberty to make monthly or once-off financial contributions, but it is not a requirement for subscribing as a supporter.

Go to the following link to register as a supporter: <https://ocan.co.za/supporter-levels/>

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Edited by Mike Murray

