

Establishing a Collective Voice

Exploring the Formation of an Overstrand Ratepayer Association Alliance

June 2026

Backdrop

During conversations with OCAN (Overstrand Community Action Network), several ratepayer associations (RPAs) across the Overstrand expressed interest in exploring collaboration in relation to common challenges, actions and strategies.

At this stage Overstrand RPAs function in isolation.

What We Know

Ratepayer associations (RPAs) play an essential role in representing the interests of property owners and residents. Typically, they engage local municipalities on issues of governance, service delivery, accountability, and local development (IDP specifically).

Why Ratepayer Associations Matter

They:

- Strengthen democratic governance by holding the Municipality accountable
- Bridge the gap between communities and the Municipality, especially where there is mistrust or weak engagement
- Help restore public trust by advocating for transparency, value-for-money services, and ethical leadership
- Push back against unjustified rate and tariff increases.

More specifically, RPAs:

- Exercise oversight (municipal performance, budgets, expenditure, mismanagement of resources, corruption, etc.)
- Promote civic participation (e.g. co-develop local solutions).

Benefits of Collaboration

The strongest argument for collaboration is that many of the Municipality's most important challenges are no longer localised to a single town or Ward.

Issues such as infrastructure capacity, financial sustainability, water security, urban growth, environmental management, and governance affect the entire municipal area. An RPA-alliance would therefore be able to achieve outcomes that individual associations cannot.

Not only does an alliance create an opportunity for the sharing of good practice, but it carries greater credibility and commands more attention by the municipal leadership.

Purpose of an RPA-Alliance

To:

- Strengthen democratic local governance
- Promote accountability and financial sustainability
- Improve service delivery
- Encourage informed civic participation, and
- Collaboratively address regional challenges affecting communities.

Forming an Alliance – Critical Questions RPAs Should Consider

Alliance partners should debate the following questions:

- Why would collaboration be beneficial? In which ways?
- Are we driven by vision or frustration?
- Are there dominant personalities who may destabilise collaboration?
- Is there sufficient trust between the various associations?
- Are expectations realistic?
- Do we have the stamina for long-term civic engagement?
- Will this alliance add value – or merely add meetings?

What a Strong Alliance Eventually Becomes

An RPA-alliance can evolve into a:

- Respected civic think tank
- Municipal oversight platform
- Policy voice
- Strategic partner to the Municipality, and a
- Trusted channel between communities and the Municipality.

Key Relationships

The RPA-alliance should strive to establish and maintain productive relationships with at least the following entities:

- The OM-leadership (both political and administrative)
- Ratepayers and residents within each Ward
- Ward-councillors
- Business chambers
- Environmental groups.

Success Factors

An RPA-alliance will succeed if

- There is clarity on purpose
- It has credible and ethical leadership
- It has a clear value proposition
- There is constructive engagement with the Municipality (and other role players)
- There is respect for constitutional and legal processes
- The alliance is apolitical.

Getting Started

On 17 June 2026 OCAN hosted a think tank in Hermanus, the purpose of which was to establish the appetite for collaboration. Representatives from seven RPAs attended the event. They were:

- Pringle Bay
- Kleinmond
- Onrus
- Stanford
- De Kelders Perlemoenbaai
- Kleinbaai
- Westcliff (on behalf of the Hermanus RPA)

The following RPAs did not respond to invitations to participate:

- Fisherhaven | Vermont | Franskraal | Hermanus Ratepayers Association (HRA)
- Sandbaai

The Betty's Bay RPA indicated that it has no interest in collaboration, while the Rooiels RPA expressed support but was unable to send a representative.

Think Tank Outcomes

The representatives confirmed their desire to collaborate subject to the support of their respective Executive Committees (EXCOs).

The following decisions were taken:

- OCAN will provide a discussion framework (this document)
- The topic will be listed for debate on the agenda of each RPA's next Exco-meeting
- RPA-representatives will re-convene during August 2026 (to provide Exco-feedback and to finalise the way forward)
- OCAN will act as the facilitator until an alliance has been formally established
- OCAN will create a closed RPA WhatsApp group.

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24 June 2026

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