



Southern Cape Fire Protection Association NPC

Annual General Meeting

Piesang Valley Community Hall, Plettenberg Bay

Wednesday, 29 April 2026, 12:30

Minutes

1. Opening and Welcome

The Chairperson of the SCFPA, Mr Deon van Zyl, formally opened the meeting and welcomed all members present. He thanked members for their attendance and participation.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, which had been circulated to members together with the AGM notice, were taken as read. The minutes were approved as correct, proposed by Mr Len du Plessis and seconded by Mr Nico de Waal.

3. Chairperson's Report

The Chairperson presented his report on the activities and status of the association. He provided a general overview of matters affecting the area over the past period.

He noted that there had been no significant wildfire events during the reporting period. A notable increase in vegetation growth, including invasive species, was highlighted as an ongoing concern, contributing to elevated fire risk in the region, particularly in relation to conditions experienced since the 2017 fires.

The 2025 period was described as largely uneventful, with no major changes to the structure or operations of the organisation. Membership growth remained steady, although expansion in terms of land area covered was limited. A membership trend graph was displayed during the meeting. Members are referred to Annexure 1 for this information.

4. Financial Report – 2024/2025

The financial report for the 2024/2025 period, prepared by Parker & Accountants, was presented to members. The report was displayed and read by the Chairperson during the meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Members were informed that the full set of Annual Financial Statements is available on request. The report by Parker & Accountants is attached as Annexure 2.

5. Fire Protection Officer's Report

The Fire Protection Officer, Mr Deon Stoffels (Garden Route District Municipality), presented his report to the meeting. The report covered the fire season overview, fire incidents, prevention and readiness activities, as well as key challenges, successes, and achievements within the reporting period.

Members are referred to Annexure 3 for the full Fire Protection Officer's report.

6. General Matters

A general discussion on operational matters took place. No resolutions were passed and no formal decisions were taken.

7. Closure

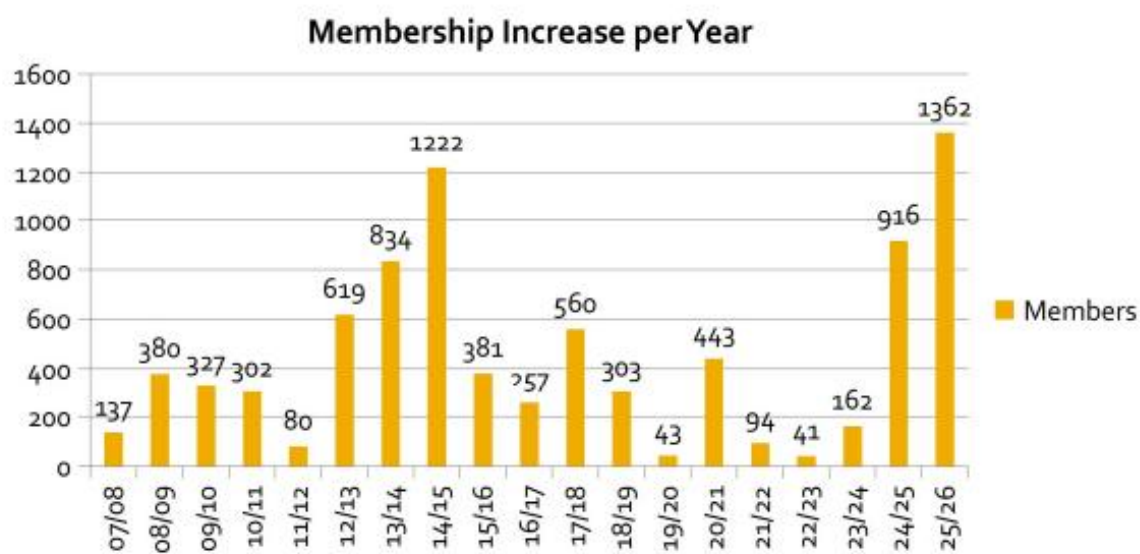
There being no further business, the Chairperson thanked all members for their attendance and continued support. The meeting was formally closed at 14:25.

A handwritten signature in black ink, located at the bottom right of the page. The signature is stylized and appears to be a cursive or semi-cursive script.

Accumulative Membership Growth



Accumulative Membership Growth



23 April 2026

Financial summary - Southern Cape Fire Protection Association NPC for the year ended 31 March 2025**Introduction:**

The directors of the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association NPC (i.e. "SCFPA") have requested Parker and Accountants to provide a financial summary to be presented to the members of the SCFPA at the AGM to be held in Plettenberg Bay on 29 April 2026.

Parker and Accountants compiled the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, based on the accounting records provided by the SCFPA. Note that Parker and Accountants did not perform an external audit on the financial information provided and we therefore do not express an opinion on the completeness and accuracy of the financial information for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The external audit was performed by HLB CBS Group (South Africa) Incorporated. The external auditors issued an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Key financial highlights for the year ended 31 March 2025:

- Total revenue for the year amounted to **R8.74 million, an increase of R569,000** compared to the prior year driven primarily by:
 - An increase of R210,000 in membership fees,
 - An increase of R314,000 in Integrated Fire Management (IFM) revenue, and
 - A further R47,000 increase in Forestry Support Program income.
- Membership has steadily increased and the association had 7,101 members at 31 March 2025, compared to 6,185 at 31 March 2024. It is worth noting that membership at 31 March 2026 had further increased to 8,463 members.
- A **surplus of R361,161** was generated during the year, representing an improvement on the prior year surplus of R270,633. This reflects continued strengthening of the Association's financial position. We note that the surplus represents approximately 4% of total income for the year.

PARKER AND ACCOUNTANTS (PTY) LTD

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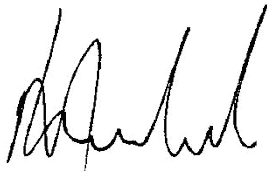
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

- **Operating and administrative expenses** remained well controlled, increasing by approximately 4.7% compared to the prior year. The CPI rate (inflation rate) for the same period approximated 5.5% and therefore costs as a whole were maintained below inflation. Similar to prior years, the entity's major cost items are employee costs (42%), Forest Support Program Costs (32%) and costs of transport, travel and depreciation on vehicles (13%), which together represent 87% of total expenditure. A detailed breakdown of expenditure is available in the audited financial statements on pages 20 to 22.
- The SCFPA held **cash and financial investments of approximately R4.3 million** at the **31 March 2025 year end**. These funds are invested in low-risk instruments with PSG, Investec, and ABSA, and generated approximately **R244,000 in investment returns** during the year, comprising interest, dividends and fair value gains during the year.
- The SCFPA **did not make any significant capital asset additions** during the year, with only minor additions cumulatively amounting to R40,000 recorded. The Association continued to repay its finance lease obligations on vehicles, with the outstanding balance reducing to approximately **R288,000**, of which **R216,000 is payable within the next 12 months after the year end**.

During the performance of our duties as the compilers of the financial statements, we found the SCFPA's books and records to be well maintained.

For more detailed financial information please refer to the audited financial statements.

Kind regards,



Marc Laubscher CA (SA)

Director – Parker and Accountants (Pty) Ltd

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CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Garden Route District Municipality

Fire Protection Association (FPA)

Fire Protection Officer's Report

Prepared in terms of Sections 6 and 12 of the National Veld and Forest Fire Act,
1998 (Act 101 of 1998)

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the information contained in this report is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge and is submitted in accordance with the National Veld and Forest Fire Act (Act 101 of 1998) for audit and statutory purposes.

Deon Stoffels

Name: Fire Protection Officer

Designation: Fire Protection Officer – Garden Route FPA

Date: 29 April 2026

Signature: *Electronic*

1. Introduction

This report outlines the fire-related activities, operational challenges, fire statistics, successes, and key recommendations arising from the 2025/2026 fire season within the Garden Route District Municipality (GRDM).

The report is compiled in accordance with the statutory obligations of the Fire Protection Officer (FPO) as prescribed by the **National Veld and Forest Fire Act (NVFFA)** and reflects coordination efforts within the **Garden Route Fire Protection Association (FPA)**.

The Garden Route remains one of the highest wildfire-risk regions in South Africa due to:

- Complex mountainous and coastal topography

- Climate variability and prolonged dry spells
- Extensive **Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI)** areas
- Dense natural fynbos and invasive alien vegetation

The coastal belt, in particular, continues to pose significant challenges due to rapid fire spread potential and constrained access.

2. Legislative Context

In terms of the **National Veld and Forest Fire Act (Act 101 of 1998)**, Fire Protection Associations are required to:

- Develop and implement a fire management strategy - good
- Organise, train, and equip members for fire readiness - good
- Ensure the maintenance of firebreaks and early warning systems – ongoing
- Compile and submit reports on fire incidents, prevention measures, and compliance activities - ongoing

This report satisfies these reporting obligations for the period under review.

3. Seasonal Overview

Item	Description
Fire Season Period	01 December 2025 – 31 March 2026
Total Fires During Fire Season	66 fires
Total Fires (Annual)	127 fires (July – April)
Declared High-Risk Periods	01 December 2025 – 31 March 2026 and during severe weather alerts
Fire Danger Index	South African Weather Service FDI integrated into FPA and GRDM alert systems

Fire danger conditions escalated rapidly during heatwave events and Berg Wind conditions, necessitating heightened readiness across all municipalities.

4. Fire Incidents Summary

4.1 Overall Impact

Indicator	Value
Total Reported Wildfires	127
Estimated Area Burned	In excess of 30,000 hectares
Human Casualties	3 minor injuries
Structural Losses	Major: Approximately 15 (including houses, storage facilities, a car, caravans and sheds). Mainly in the Mossel Bay and Heidelberg Fires in January 2026
Fatalities	None

Minor damages included fencing, netting, water infrastructure, dekriet, and grazing lands.

4.2 Major Fire Locations

- **Hessequa Municipality**
 - Melkhoutfontein
 - Albertinia
 - Jongensfontein
 - Heidelberg (several) – Tradouw Pass
- **Oudtshoorn Municipality**
 - Lategansvlei
 - Groot Swartberg Mountain
- **Mossel Bay Municipality**
 - Herbertsdale
 - Ruitersbosch
 - Brandwag
 - Alwyndal
- **George Municipality**
 - Garden Route Dam area
- **Knysna & Bitou Municipalities**
 - Multiple WUI fires (early suppression successful)
 - Unfortunate structures lost
 - Large National Park Wildfire crossing borders – San Parks
- **Kannaland Municipality**
 - Minor fires in Voorbaat and Klein Swartberg areas

4.3 Suppression Resources and Costs

Resource	Utilisation
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Estimated Suppression Costs	R 4 700 869, 00
Aerial Resources	R 4 205 764, 00
GRDM Helicopter	TBD
WOF Kishugu	TBD
Kishugu Helicopter	TBD
Ground Teams	Municipal brigades, SANParks, Working on Fire

5. Fire Prevention and Readiness Activities

5.1 Training Conducted

- **Basic Wildland Firefighting**
- Glentana
- **Incident Command & Fireline Safety**
- None
- **Multi-Incident Simulation Exercise**
- Natures Valley, including all strategic integrated fire management partners
- Accredited Wildland Firefighting Training – to San Parks and Cape Nature officials – April 2026

5.2 Firebreak Inspections and Compliance

- Burn Permit inspections among private landowners in Hessequa Municipal Area
- **Urgent intervention required** regarding municipal compliance
- **Notices issued** to several non-compliant properties
- A short coming at current

5.3 Community Awareness Initiatives

- 36 fire safety roadshows and school programmes
- No brochure distribution during period (planned for FY 2025/26)
- Social media communication via **Garden Route DM Facebook page**:
 - 2 posts/month (standard)
 - Increased to 4 posts/month during summer season

5.4 Prescribed Burning and Permitting

- Hessequa Permit Systems WhatsApp group:

- ±200–300 permits in 2025
 - 80 permits in 2026
- No large-scale strategic burns implemented during the season

6. Key Challenges

- Illegal burning and unattended land-clearing fires
- Low compliance in high-risk WUI and rural-urban fringe areas
- Limited collaboration with certain private conservation entities
- Budget constraints affecting:
 - Aerial response capacity
 - Firebreak enforcement
 - District staffing capacity
- Invasive alien vegetation increasing fuel load
- Road infrastructure damage due to heavy rainfall
- Absence of a centralised wildfire data and intelligence hub

7. Successes and Achievements

- Functional **District Veld Fire Working Group**
- Active participation in the **Provincial Veld Fire Working Group**
- Effective use of **Initial Attack principles** across the district
- Strong coordination with:
 - SANParks
 - CapeNature
 - MTO Forestry
 - PG Bison Forestry
 - Coldstream Timbers
 - Municipal Fire Services
 - Working on Fire
 - Southern Cape Fire Protection Association
- Improved early detection and reporting
- Improved fire danger signage supported by local municipalities
- Farmers Meetings in Hessequa Municipality regarding burn permit system, and non-compliant landowners
- Wildfire Debrief with Landowners in Heidelberg

8. Recommendations

- Strengthen enforcement of firebreak and fire permit regulations, once Burn Permit is positioned at the district
- The District Fire Safety By-law to be in affect 01 June 2026
- Expand public–private partnerships to support aerial firefighting
- Extend **FireWise** education to:
 - Smallholdings
 - Informal settlements
 - Agricultural areas
- Legislative review to clarify WUI responsibilities
- Invest in real-time fire mapping, data-sharing, and communication platforms
- Expand cooperation with the **Working on Fire Programme** focusing on prevention

9. Conclusion

The 2025/2026 fire season reaffirmed the Garden Route's inherent wildfire risk. Despite capacity and budget limitations, effective collaboration among key stakeholders — including SANParks, CapeNature, MTO Forestry, PG Bison, SCFPA, Coldstream Timbers, municipalities, and firefighting agencies — successfully limited losses to infrastructure and human life.

The Garden Route District Municipality is finalising a **Veld, Mountain and Chemical Fire Safety By-law**, scheduled for final gazetting in June 2026, which is expected to significantly strengthen inspection, enforcement, and compliance mechanisms, particularly concerning absent landowners.

An amount of **R 500,000** has been earmarked for **accredited Wildland Firefighting training**:

- 15 credits
- 150 notional hours
- Knowledge, practical, and workplace modules
- 3 groups of ±33 learners
- Planned implementation: **April–June 2026**

Continued focus on prevention, training, compliance, and integrated fire intelligence remains essential to safeguarding the Garden Route's people, economy, and natural environment.