Inauguration Speech – Executive Mayor of Overstrand

Inaugural Council Meeting · 19 November 2026 · Municipal Auditorium, Hermanus

1. Opening and acknowledgements

Speaker, [outgoing Executive Mayor], Deputy Mayor, Municipal Manager, councillors of every party, distinguished guests and — most importantly — the residents of Overstrand.

Goeiemôre. Molweni. Good morning.

I stand here humbled. Just over two weeks ago, on the 4th of November, the people of this region went to the polls and placed their trust in us. Today I accept that trust, and with it a responsibility I do not take lightly.

To every voter who stood in a queue — whether you voted for me or not — thank you. You did your part. Now it is our turn to do ours.

I want to thank my predecessors for their years of service to this municipality. Leadership in local government is demanding and often thankless, and I respect the work that was done.

To the officials of Overstrand Municipality: you are the people who keep the water flowing, the lights on and the roads open. Last financial year, Infrastructure Services alone completed **more than 91,000 callouts** with a team of fewer than 300 people. I know what you are capable of. I am proud to lead you.

I also want to welcome the **former members of the Overstrand Junior Town Council** who are with us today. You are proof of what that programme gave this region, and I will be asking for your help as we bring it back for a new generation.

And to my wife, Mary-Anne, and our boys, Hunter and Clinton: thank you for sharing me with fifteen wards and thousands of residents. None of this is possible without you.

> *[Speaker notes — elaborate in your own words:]*
> *Hunter: his class experience of having a dad in politics*
> *Clinton: the political friendships he has made*
> *Mary-Anne: her keen new interest in being involved in elections*

2. Why I serve

I have called Hermanus home for 25 years. I came here as a young man of 25, after selling my business in Bloemfontein, and started my first business in Hermanus with little more than a lot of hope. Over the years, I grew a small adventure operation here into a national company. I ran guest houses, then a hotel. I chaired the business chamber, Hermanus Tourism, Kleinmond Tourism and the Whale Coast Business Forum.

I did not enter politics in 2021 for a salary or a title. I entered it because I believed the skills that build a business — planning, discipline, accountability for every rand — belong in the way we run our towns.

For five years as MMC for Infrastructure Services, I learned what lies beneath our streets: the pipes, the pumps, the reservoirs, the stormwater channels. I learned that the most important work a municipality does is often invisible — until it fails.

That is the lens I bring to this office. **A municipality is not a political stage.** It is a service-delivery organisation, and its customers are you.

3. What you told us

This campaign was not run from an office. It was run from lounges, church halls, farm stoeps and street corners.

I sat with the elderly in Zwelihle over tea and cake. We met the residents of Onrus Manor, who were better informed than many politicians I know. We held house meetings in Voëlklip and Vermont. We walked Stanford's Cove with the people of De Kelders. I drove

every street in many towns and suburbs, such as Fisherhaven. I drove through Gansbaai with residents who wanted to show me, not tell me, what was wrong. We sat with the Pringle Bay Ratepayers for a hard and honest conversation. We stood with the farmers of Baardskeerdersbos and the Strandveld. In the months before this election, I attended **some 240 meetings** with thousands of residents across Overstrand who invited me into their homes, halls and communities. Those conversations prepared me for today. What I learned in them, and what you told me, will stay with me and guide how I govern for the next five years.

And everywhere I went, I heard the same message in different accents: *we love this place, but we need it to work better.*

Many of you were honest enough to admit that we have it good here, compared with much of our country. But you were just as clear about something else: **we cannot afford to go backwards.**

We need water that does not leak away before it reaches our taps. Roads that do not flood when it rains. Homes our children can actually afford. Electricity we can rely on. Jobs that keep our young people here. And a municipality that listens — not once every five years, but every week.

That is the mandate. So let me tell you how we will meet it.

4. The critical matters — and how we will solve them

Let me be honest with you from the start: **there are no quick fixes.** Many of these problems took decades to build up, and they will not disappear in one budget cycle or one term. What I can promise is that we will start now, stay the course, and steadily get on top of them. This is long-term work, and we will do it properly.

Water: fix what we have, secure what we need

Our first priority is water. Let us start with what we do well: in the national Blue Drop assessment, Overstrand was named the **best-**

performing water services authority in South Africa. The quality of our drinking water is not the problem. The pipes that carry it are. Too much of it is lost through ageing pipes — on the way up to our reservoirs and again on the way down to your homes. Every litre that leaks is water we paid to treat and pump, and water we cannot afford to lose in a dry year.

So this administration will **ring-fence budget for a large pipe-replacement plan and reservoir upgrades**, starting with the lines that fail most often. The infrastructure report that comes before Council every year will no longer be noted and filed. It will become our work plan.

For the long term, we have begun the desalination feasibility study for Greater Hermanus. Let me be clear about what that means: **it is step one.** No plant will be built, and no money committed, without a full and transparent decision of this Council — one that weighs the cost to every household.

Stormwater and roads: one bite at a time

At almost every public meeting, stormwater came up. Residents in Fisherhaven, Sandbaai, Gansbaai and elsewhere have watched the same streets flood, year after year. Some of those projects sat on the back burner for far too long.

We have already increased the stormwater budget. Now we will need to **double maintenance capacity at the known flashpoints** and strengthen the cleaning programme, because a cleared drain in October prevents a flooded house in June. As I said in Fisherhaven: **we will eat this elephant one bite at a time.**

(Optional) On our roads, we will **keep pressing the province on the R43**, including safer intersections such as Lynx and the R43 in Vermont. And we will build for people, not only cars, with walkways, cycle routes and accessible pavements for our elderly and residents with disabilities. 7th Street in Voëlklip also needs a lasting solution — it has been a headache for several mayors before me.

Housing: a home for the next generation

Our current approach to housing is not sustainable, and it leaves out a large part of our community. Teachers, nurses, police officers, young professionals and young families **earn too much for a subsidised house and too little for a market-priced home.**

The numbers in our schools tell us Overstrand is far younger than people assume. If we do not plan for those young people, they will leave. This Council will relook at housing — within the law, but with out-of-the-box thinking — including well-located land for first-time buyers, partnerships with developers, and faster planning approvals for the gap market.

Electricity: reliable power for town and farm

When Eskom infrastructure failed in Gansbaai and the rural Overstrand, **nearly 6,000 residents signed our petition**, and we took it to national ministers. Some farms went six weeks without power. That cannot be normal.

We will keep holding Eskom accountable where it supplies our residents directly, and we will invest in our own network so that the areas we supply stay strong.

Economy and jobs: open for business, open to everyone

Tourism is our heartbeat, but it cannot be our only one. Our farmers are the backbone of the rural economy, and I have committed to meeting farming communities every quarter. Our fishing, aquaculture and abalone sectors are the blue economy of this coast. I have requested a meeting with the national Minister responsible for fisheries, and every sector will have a seat at that table.

In our townships, we will roll out **economic corridors and container trading premises**, so that small traders can operate from proper, safe, serviced sites.

We will also prepare for the **growth of short-term rentals**. Guest houses and Airbnb are not the problem. The pressure they put on shared services — water, refuse, roads — is, and our by-laws must catch up.

Safety, the elderly and our young people

A town is only as strong as its most vulnerable residents. **Our elderly need far more attention** than this municipality has given them. Communities like Zwelihle, which have grown enormously, need open spaces and a community facility that restores a sense of belonging — and I intend to carry those recommendations from our communities forward.

We will work hand in hand with **SAPS, neighbourhood watches and the private security sector**, and strengthen our own law enforcement. And with the festive season weeks away, our beaches, tidal pools and open spaces will be ready — clean, safe and cared for. I must admit that the facilities at most of our beaches across Overstrand are not up to scratch. They may not all be fixed this season, but they need urgent attention.

Our environment: the reason people come

The fynbos, the cliffs, the whales and the lagoons are not decoration. They are our economy and our inheritance. We will protect our trees and green belts, work with ratepayer associations on long-term environmental plans, and investigate reducing single-use plastics in a way that is lawful and practical. The Fernkloof Nature Reserve, and the functions and role of the Fernkloof Advisory Board, must also be revisited. Our community should champion the areas where we fall short, whether in manpower or capability. Our communities want to be involved, and we should make that process easier.

5. How we will govern

None of these solutions will work if the way we govern stays the same. So **let me make five promises** about how this office will operate.

First, openness. Council meetings belong to the public, yet too few residents even know when they happen. We will publish meeting dates clearly and well in advance. I will ask the Speaker that every Council and Ward Committee meeting be broadcast, so that you can see for yourself how decisions about your money are made. I will also request that **Council itself travel.** At regular intervals, we will hold Council meetings in the greater Gansbaai area and in the greater Kleinmond and Betty's Bay area, so that governance comes to the people, not only the other way around.

Second, access. I will not lead from behind a desk. **Once a month, we will hold a Public Tuesday** in a different Overstrand town, where any resident can come and raise an issue directly. House meetings, walkabouts and site visits will continue. If you invite me, I will come.

Third, an administration empowered to deliver. Too often, officials carry responsibility without the authority to act. We will review the municipal organogram in full, so that the people closest to the problem can solve it. We will also look at a system to **decentralise the administration**, bringing services and decision-making closer to each town, within the budget we have. And we will keep using the Collaborator system, so that every complaint gets a reference number and every delay can be tracked.

Fourth, integrity. Every rand in this municipality belongs to the residents. I intend to invite business chambers and other organisations to a pre-budget discussion. Yes, the draft budget will be open for public participation, but by the time we reach that stage, we and the public should already understand what the budget aims to achieve.

Fifth, public participation — and this one needs all of us. At every meeting I attended during this campaign, whether there were

five people in the room or five hundred, I asked the same question: who here has taken part in the IDP, the budget process, the Spatial Development Framework, or any of Council's public processes? In a full hall, it was rare to see more than **two or three hands go up.**

That is not a criticism. It is a challenge — to the municipality and to every resident. We will do everything in our power to make participation easier, clearer and more accessible than ever before. Broadcasting our Council and Ward Committee meetings is one such step. My hope is that it brings the work of this Council right into your home, so that being informed no longer depends on being in the room. But **participation is a two-way street.** The notices will not arrive in the comfort of your living room on their own. It means checking the municipal website, reading the local papers, joining your ward committee, and coming to the meetings where decisions are made.

The plans that shape your rates and your town are open for your input. I urge you to use that right. **An informed community is a stronger community** — and a stronger community makes for a better municipality.

I will work with every councillor in this chamber, whatever their party. **The pothole in your street does not have a political colour.** Neither should the solution. Communities who want to help — like those who restored Swallow Park — will find a municipality that says yes, not one that stands in the way.

To my fellow councillors, and especially our ward councillors, **I want to set a challenge for all of us.** Residents must find us approachable and responsive. When someone reaches out to us, they deserve an answer that is respectful, and an answer that comes quickly. I will lead from the front in a new era of servant leadership, and I ask each of you to join me.

But respect must run both ways. Being a servant leader does not mean that abuse comes with the job. We will always listen, even to hard criticism, but we will not tolerate disrespect — not towards

councillors, and not towards the officials who serve you. I also ask residents to remember that behind every title is a human being. **We will make mistakes.** When we do, we will own them and fix them. All we ask in return is the same courtesy we promise to give you.

6. Our first 100 days

Promises are easy on inauguration day. So I want to give you **commitments you can measure me against** by the end of February.

Within the first 100 days, we will:

1. **Hold the first Public Tuesday** and publish the full year's Council meeting calendar.
2. **Table the request to broadcast** all Council, Mayoral Committee and Ward Committee meetings.
3. **Present a water-loss and pipe-replacement plan** to Council, with the worst-affected lines named and prioritised.
4. **Complete the stormwater flashpoint programme** at known problem sites before the winter rains.
5. **Start the organogram review** and clear outstanding delegations that are holding up service delivery.
6. **Begin preparations for a housing indaba** with developers, banks and young residents on the gap market.
7. **Hold the first quarterly farmers' engagement** with our farming communities, as the start of a standing quarterly commitment.
8. **Bring the blue economy sectors together with national government.** To that end, I have also invited Minister David Maynier to come and hear directly from our fishing communities and sectors about the challenges they face across Overstrand.
9. **Open talks with the National Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure on the Hermanus and Gansbaai harbours.** I

will not pretend this one is easy. But our harbours are too important to our fishing communities, our economy and our tourism to be left in limbo. My goal is an agreement under which this municipality can assist the national department in caring for and managing them, and I want to start that conversation as soon as possible.

10. **Start the process of re-establishing the Junior Town Council.** I have spoken with a number of our high school principals, and they are all in favour. Our young people deserve a real voice in how their towns are run, and a place to learn what public service means.
11. **Pursue a Home Affairs office for Hermanus with the Minister of Home Affairs.** This will not be an easy task, and I make no promises about how quickly it can happen. But residents should not have to travel out of town for an ID or a passport, and I believe our community needs this.
12. **Deliver a safe, clean festive season** on our beaches and in our towns.
13. **Establish a local builders list through the Local Economic Development desk.** It will list builders based in Overstrand who hold the right qualifications and registrations to meet building requirements. Everyone who submits new building plans will receive it, so that they can choose or approach local builders for quotes. When we build in Overstrand, let us build with Overstrand businesses.
14. **Ask our legal department to develop a standard co-management agreement for municipal land.** Too often I have seen community groups and organisations wait months, even years, for a co-management agreement on a piece of municipal land. A standard agreement will let those who want to care for our spaces get started far sooner.
15. **Establish an Overstrand Welfare Committee.** It will bring our animal welfare and other welfare organisations together in one structure, for better cohesion among them and a stronger

working relationship with the municipality.

These are but a few of the 100-day goals I have set for myself and for our Council.

In 100 days, **I will stand before you again and report back** on every one of them — what we finished, and what we did not.

7. Closing

Speaker, residents of Overstrand: **change in Overstrand is inevitable.** Our towns are growing, we have more young people and more older residents than ever before, and the pressure on our infrastructure is rising every year. The question is not whether we will change. It is whether that change will be for the better, and whether it will include everyone — the pensioner in Onrus, the fishermen and women of Hawston, the farmer in the Strandveld, the young family in Zwelihle and the graduate who wants to come home.

I believe it can be. I believe a municipality can be run with **the discipline of a business and the heart of a community.** And I believe the people of this region, from Rooi-Els to Baardskeerdersbos, have never lacked the will. What they have lacked is a municipality that moves at their pace.

A vision for Overstrand

So let me tell you what I see.

Five years from now, I see and dream of an Overstrand where the water always comes and remains the best drinking water in South Africa, the lights stay on with far less reliance on Eskom, our sewer networks and pump stations have been upgraded, the streets drain and the roads are safe. Where a fresh look at our housing options means a young teacher can buy her first home in the town she serves. Where one strong, unified tourism body, led by competent people who know this industry, markets our whole region, so that tourism thrives all year round and its benefits reach every

town and every community. Where our once-neglected harbours have been turned into economic powerhouses. Where informal trading across Overstrand has doubled, from our beaches to our townships, with every trader in a proper place to trade. Where safety is a shared win for our community organisations, SAPS and Overstrand Law Enforcement, working as one. Where our nature reserves and our environment receive the care and attention they deserve. Where people trust their municipality, because my fellow councillors and I have done everything we can to earn the trust of our residents.

We may never be the biggest region in the Western Cape. But together, we will be the best-run, the fairest — and still the most beautiful place on earth to call home.

Let us get to work. Stronger together.

Dankie. Enkosi kakhulu. Thank you.