

# FreeFACTS

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## Cities key to SA prosperity

**South African cities are, like the most of the rest of the world, the engines of the country's economic growth.**

Unemployment is lower in the country's cities and generally economic output is higher than their relative share of the population. For example, while 10% of South Africa's population lives in Johannesburg the metro accounts for 14% of South Africa's economic output while Tshwane, with 6.4% of the population accounts for 10% of economic output. This pattern holds for all of South Africa's eight biggest urban areas, or metros.

Rates of employment show something similar – you are far more likely to be employed if you live in a metro than in a rural area. For example the rate of unemployment in Nelson Mandela Bay is 33.6%, while in the Eastern Cape – outside of Nelson Mandela Bay and Buffalo City – it is 47.5%. In eThekweni 21.8% of people are unemployed compared to 37.1% in the rest of the province. Again this is a pattern that holds across the country.

Cities are also different in another way from the rest of the country – in their politics. The ANC is far weaker in our cities than it is in rural areas. In the 2021 local government elections it won above 50% of the vote in two metros – Buffalo City and Mangaung – and this decline in its support is unlikely to change any time soon.

The importance of cities is unlikely to decline, people continue to move to South Africa's urban areas for opportunities seeking a better life. Nearly 70% of South Africans live in urban areas today compared to 54% in 1994.

Rural South Africa must not be neglected but we must ensure that South African cities are places that work, with functional infrastructure and where people live close to employment and educational opportunities.

Cities are key to this country's prospects for economic prosperity. It is not an exaggeration to say that if our cities fail then South Africa will fail.

— Marius Roodt

## JOIN US

The IRR is an advocacy group that fights for your right to make decisions about your life, family and business, free from unnecessary government, political, and bureaucratic interference. FreeFACTS publishes evidence that communities are better off when individuals are free to make decisions about how they want to live, be educated, work, access healthcare, think, speak, own property, and protect their communities. If you agree with the issues we stand for, welcome to the team. There are millions of people just like you who are tired of South African politicians, activists, and commentators attempting to rein in your freedom to decide. Take control and make sure your voice is heard by becoming a friend of the IRR.

**SMS YOUR NAME  
TO 32823**  
SMS costs R1.  
Ts and Cs apply.

## Cities

### Proportion of the population in the metros, 2021

Buffalo City	1,3%
Cape Town	7,8%
Ekurhuleni	6,7%
eThekweni	6,7%
Johannesburg	10,0%
Mangaung	1,5%
Nelson Mandela Bay	2,0%
Tshwane	6,4%

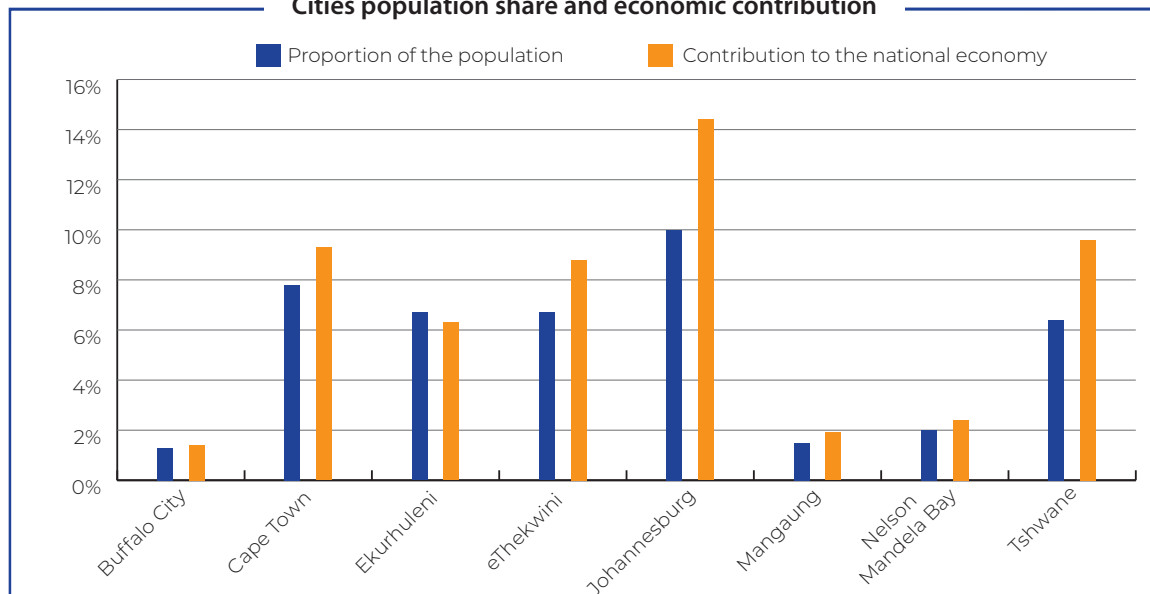
Source: Socio-Economic Survey, Centre for Risk Analysis

### Contribution to the national economy, 2019

Buffalo City	1,4%
Cape Town	9,3%
Ekurhuleni	6,3%
eThekweni	8,8%
Johannesburg	14,4%
Mangaung	1,9%
Nelson Mandela Bay	2,4%
Tshwane	9,6%

Source: South African Cities Network, State of South African Cities 2021

### Cities population share and economic contribution

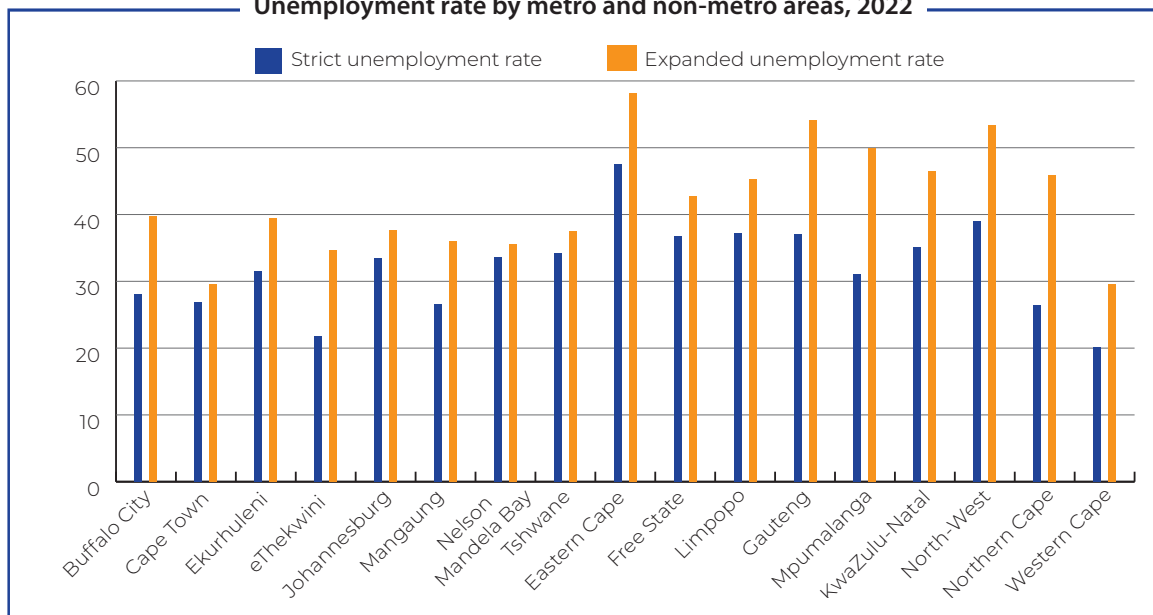


## Cities

	Strict unemployment rate	Expanded unemployment rate
Buffalo City	28,1%	39,8%
Cape Town	26,8%	29,5%
Ekurhuleni	31,5%	39,5%
eThekwini	21,8%	34,7%
Johannesburg	33,5%	37,6%
Mangaung	26,5%	36,0%
Nelson Mandela Bay	33,6%	35,5%
Tshwane	34,2%	37,5%
Eastern Cape (excluding the metros)	47,5%	58,1%
Free State (excluding Mangaung)	36,7%	42,7%
Gauteng (excluding the metros)	37,2%	45,3%
KwaZulu-Natal (excluding eThekwini)	37,1%	54,1%
Limpopo	31,0%	49,9%
Mpumalanga	35,1%	46,5%
North-West	39,0%	53,3%
Northern Cape	26,4%	45,9%
Western Cape (excluding Cape Town)	20,2%	29,5%

Source: Socio-Economic Survey, Centre for Risk Analysis

Unemployment rate by metro and non-metro areas, 2022



## Cities

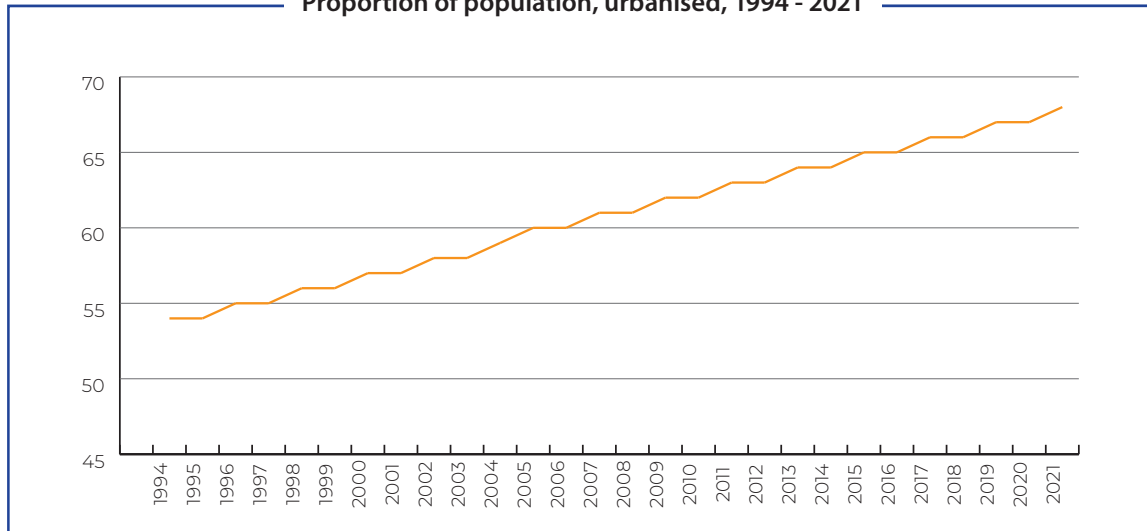
### The political state of play in the metros

	2016			2021		
	ANC	DA	EFF	ANC	DA	EFF
Buffalo City	58,7%	23,4%	8,0%	59,4%	19,5%	12,1%
Cape Town	24,4%	66,6%	3,2%	18,6%	58,3%	4,1%
Ekurhuleni	48,6%	34,1%	11,2%	38,2%	28,7%	13,6%
eThekweni	56,0%	26,9%	3,4%	42,1%	25,9%	10,5%
Johannesburg*	44,5%	38,4%	11,1%	33,6%	26,1%	10,6%
Mangaung	56,5%	26,0%	8,7%	50,6%	25,7%	11,3%
Nelson Mandela Bay	40,9%	46,7%	5,1%	39,4%	39,9%	6,4%
Tshwane	41,3%	43,2%	11,6%	34,6%	32,0%	10,4%

\*In the 2021 local government election in Johannesburg ActionSA won 16,1% of the vote in Johannesburg.

Source: Independent Electoral Commission

### Proportion of population, urbanised, 1994 - 2021



Source: World Bank, World Data Indicators