

# **The Independent Ratepayers Association of South Africa (IRASA): A Decade of Independent Representation**

Established in 2011, the Independent Ratepayers Association of South Africa (IRASA) emerged as a registered national political party with a distinctive mission: to shield local councillors from political party interference, thereby fostering direct accountability to the communities they serve.

Rooted in the principles of direct democracy, IRASA champions a model of governance where councillors are employees of the voters, funded by their rates and taxes, and committed to service delivery above partisan politics. This approach is enshrined in commitments made by their candidates, who pledge to engage in regular public consultation and vote in the best interests of their constituents.

Since its inception, IRASA has actively participated in South Africa's municipal elections, notably in 2016 and 2021. The party has successfully gained representation in various municipalities, demonstrating the growing appeal of independent, community-focused governance.

In a political landscape increasingly characterized by hung councils and coalition governments, IRASA's presence has contributed to a shift away from dominant party politics. Through its consistent focus on service delivery and councillor accountability,

IRASA has carved out a significant niche, proving that a community-centric approach can achieve electoral success and challenge the established political order in South African local government.