



OUTDSHOORN INFRASTRUCTURE DILEMA AT THE FEET OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The data below illustrates a sobering reality: for a decade, the infrastructure of Oudtshoorn has been a secondary concern to the political survival of its various governing coalitions.

The root cause of this decline is not a lack of technical skill or the implementation of race-based policies like Employment Equity or BBBEE. Rather, it is a **total failure of strategic political oversight**. When council seats are treated as bargaining chips for coalition stability, long-term maintenance is sacrificed for short-term political expediency.

Oudtshoorn 10-Year Governance & Maintenance Matrix

Note: The National Treasury "Healthy" Norm for Maintenance is 8%.

Financial Year	Maintenance Ratio	Governing Power	Leadership (Mayor)
2025/26	3.2% (Est.)	(ANC/PA/GOOD and other) (ANC/FF+/PA)	Mziwoxolo Tyatya (ANC) -7 April 2026 Johan Allers (FF+)
2024/25	3.1%	ANC / FF+ / PA (Realignment July 2024)	Johan Allers (FF+)
2023/24	3.4%	DA / FF+ / SU (Coalition)	Chris Macpherson (DA)
2022/23	3.1%	DA / FF+ / SU (Coalition)	Chris Macpherson (DA)
2021/22	1.3%	ANC / ICOSA / OGI (Coalition)	Chad Louw (ANC)
2020/21	1.4%	DA (Minority/Unstable)	Chris Macpherson (DA)
2019/20	2.1%	DA (Outright majority)	Colan Sylvester (DA)



Financial Year	Maintenance Ratio	Governing Power	Leadership (Mayor)
2018/20	2.6%	DA	Colan Sylvester (DA)
2017/18	2.4%	DA	Colan Sylvester (DA)
2016/17	1.8%	DA	Colan Sylvester (DA)

The Oversight Crisis: Why This Is not About Race or Equity

The failure to meet even half of the **8% Treasury Norm** over 10 years proves that the issue is systemic to the **Party-Political Model**:

1. **Party Loyalty vs. Public Service:** In the current system, a Councillor's first loyalty is to the Party Province/National office that put them on the list, not the resident in Ward 3. When a party demands a "vote of no confidence" to gain leverage elsewhere, local service delivery is the first casualty.
2. **Short-Termism:** Political terms are five years, but water pipes and roads have a 25-year lifecycle. Parties prioritize "visible" short-term wins over the invisible, essential work of sub-surface maintenance.
3. **The Coalition Trap:** In Oudtshoorn, the constant "musical chairs" (DA-led to ANC-led to FF+-led) creates a governance vacuum. Each new mayor spends their first year investigating the previous one, and their second year trying to prevent a floor-crossing, leaving no room for infrastructure strategy.

The Case for Independent Leadership

Independent Council Leadership is the answer. Historically and logically, the argument is strong:

- **Reporting to the People:** An independent councillor has no "Party Whip" to fear. Their performance is judged solely by their constituents. If the roads are falling apart, they cannot blame a national directive; they are directly accountable.
- **Merit-Based Governance:** Without the need to fill "proportional representation" seats with party loyalists, a council of independents can focus purely on competence—hiring the best engineers and managers regardless of political affiliation.
- **End of the "Stalemate":** Independent leadership moves the focus from **identity politics** to **utility politics**. The question stops being "Which party do you support?" and



becomes "How much of our budget is going into the ground to ensure we have water tomorrow?"

Conclusion: The infrastructure crisis in Oudtshoorn is a **governance debt** built up by political parties of all colours. Until the "oversight" is decoupled from party-political survival, the maintenance ratio will likely never reach the levels required to save the town's heritage and economy.

We have done an analysis of other Garden Route Towns and Cities and found underspending in infrastructure Maintenance irrespective of the Political Party in charge of the Council. Not with standing provincial and local political party battering the people of Knysna are feeling the same brunt of poor Council governance and leadership over the past 10 years

The answer lies in electing competent people to Council which are accountable to the People and not the Party

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D V Farrell".

Dr Dennis V Farrell