

LIVING WAGE REPORT

CAPE WINELANDS REGION, SOUTH AFRICA

STUDY DATE: August 2025



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ABSTRACT

This report estimates a living wage for the main wine growing regions in the Western Cape province of South Africa using the Anker Methodology[®].⁴ This involves combining secondary data from national surveys with primary data collected in the study region, to estimate how much a worker needs to earn to afford a decent standard of living for themselves and their family, based on the Anker and Anker (2017) approach. Elements that make up a decent standard of living according to this approach include food, water, housing, education, health care, transportation, clothing, footwear, recreation, communication, and provision for unexpected events. The Anker Methodology has been used by the Anker Research Institute to estimate internationally comparable living wages in over 60 countries.

Our estimate of the living wage for a full-time worker in the Cape Winelands in August 2025 is R 7,921 per month (USD 446). This amount is based on the cost of a basic but decent living standard for a typical-size reference family of four people in the study area – two adults and two children – of R 12,704 per month (USD 715). Because most families rely on more than one income earner, this total is shared across 1.62 full-time equivalent workers, resulting in a required take-home pay of R 7,842 (USD 441) per worker per month. After including standard payroll deductions (UIF), the gross living wage is R 7,921 per month (USD 446).

The living wage estimated here is higher than the National Minimum Wage (R 27.58 per hour in 2025), equivalent to approximately R 5,600 per month for a 45-hour work week. This gap highlights the extent to which workers earning the current minimum wage are unable to achieve a basic dignified standard of living. It is important to point out that the living standard used to estimate the living wage is very basic and represents a minimum level of decency.

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4 The Anker Methodology[®] is a registered mark owned by Richard Anker and Martha Anker. In the rest of this document the name is used without its registered trademark symbol.

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Any questions, comments, or observations about this study and the results should be directed to:

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The study was carried out by independent researchers from Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) together with Koen Voorend, senior researcher at ARI. The authors are responsible for the results of the study, and the opinions and conclusions expressed here do not necessarily coincide with any of the aforementioned individuals and institutions.

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SECTION I.

INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

This report estimates a living wage for the main wine grape growing regions in the Western Cape Province of South Africa – hereafter the Cape Winelands region – for August 2025. It provides a comprehensive update to the first Anker Research Institute (ARI) benchmark report for this same area that was published in 2013 (ARI, 2013). Geographically the study covers selected production regions in a relatively concentrated zone of the province where wine farming is dominant. However, the living wage estimate applies broadly to the region under examination and is not exclusive to the wine farming sector.

The living wage calculation uses the Anker Methodology and is based on a detailed examination of living costs in South Africa, specifically the costs faced by workers in the region. It is methodologically consistent with other reports published by the ARI and the Global Living Wage Coalition (GLWC) and thus adds a new point in the constellation of existing studies on living wages around the world. In line with similar global efforts, estimating a new living wage benchmark for the Cape Winelands forms part of a longer-term process of improving the wages and working conditions of farmworkers. This is a particularly important endeavor in South Africa, where farmworkers have historically faced very low pay and limited employment protections. While minimum wages and other progressive labour protections are now in place, many workers remain underpaid and the capacity of the state to effectively enforce existing legislation is limited.

The living wage represents the remuneration that is necessary to cover the costs of a basic, but decent life for a typical reference family in the region as determined using the Anker approach. We are conscious of the fact that the living wage estimate presented here is substantially higher than the current minimum wage. In this regard, it is important to note that the living wage is not designed to replace existing wage determinations or bargaining agreements. It is intended to provide a reliable and transparent calculation of what it costs workers and their families in the Cape Winelands to meet a set of basic needs in line with international measures of decency.

Any move towards living wages in South Africa must account for the fact that wages are a major component of production costs, and that wine producers in South Africa operate in increasingly competitive international markets, with no access to the state support that is available in most other exporting countries.⁵ Within this context the benchmark is a tool for dialogue between workers and employers. To this end, the estimation approach and each component of the living wage are clearly explained, and the calculation of a living wage follows an internationally consistent methodology that is applied to the local context.

⁵ Total state support for the agricultural sector in South Africa is measured at just 0.3% of GDP (2020–22), far below almost every other country (OECD, 2023).

2. LIVING WAGE ESTIMATE

Our estimate of a gross living wage for the wine-growing regions of the Western Cape for August 2025 is R 7,921 (USD 446)⁶ per month. This is the gross monthly pay that an average full-time worker needs to afford a basic but decent standard of living for themselves and their family.⁷ The net living wage (i.e., take-home pay after mandatory deductions) is R 7,842 (USD 441) per month.

This study relies on a number of different sources to estimate the living wage, including: (i) price data from supermarkets and sellers in the study region; (ii) focus group discussions and interviews with farmworkers; (iii) engagements with producers, local government agencies, and agricultural unions; (iv) data from local education and healthcare providers (v) detailed secondary data from national government, provincial, and municipal sources, as well the latest data from nationally representative household, labour market and expenditure surveys; (vi) relevant statistics from international organisations such as the ILO and the World Bank; and (vii) legislative information and policies relating to wage regulation, education, and healthcare. The data we use is described in detail in the report and was subjected to rigorous scrutiny by the ARI team and the authors. A draft of this report was reviewed by producers, worker organisations, as well as selected local and international stakeholders prior to its final publication. The remainder of this report describes the methodology and process used to determine the living wage estimate.

3. CONTEXT

3.1 Background

South Africa occupies the southern tip of the African continent. It has coastlines on both the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, and shares a border with Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), and Lesotho. The country covers about 1.2 million km² and has a population of approximately 62 million, making it the sixth most populous country in Africa (World Bank WDI, 2025). Unlike most of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), South Africa has passed its population peak and population growth is slowing. The total fertility rate is 2.2, which is almost half the sub-Saharan African (SSA) average (4.3), and the population is predominantly urban: nearly 70% of South Africans live in urban areas, compared with 45% across SSA (*ibid.*). Urbanisation is even more pronounced in the Western Cape province, where over 95% of residents live in towns or cities (StatsSA QLFS, 2024).⁸

6 The Rand/USD exchange rate used in this report is R 17.77. This is the average exchange rate for June–August 2025. USD values in this report are provided for expositional purposes only because exchange rates are volatile.

7 The way that this is approached according to the Anker methodology is described in more detail in Section 5.

8 This urban share includes the Cape Town metropolitan area, where close to 66% of the provincial population live, as well as the non-metro urban areas – smaller towns and cities in the province – where roughly 30% of the population live. Only 5% of the Western Cape's population live in areas classified as non-urban, made up entirely of those living on commercial farms (StatsSA QLFS, 2025Q2).

South Africa is classified as an upper-middle-income country, with GDP per capita of USD 6,253 (R 75,312 per year in real Rand value).⁹ However, the country is often described as having a dual economy in which a modern, capital-intensive economy coexists alongside widespread poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment typical of lower-income countries. This duality reflects a long history of resource extraction and colonisation followed by institutionalised apartheid (1948–1994), which entrenched racialised inequality. Although democratic reforms have expanded access to services and social protection since 1994, the legacy of exclusion persists and continues to shape living standards.

3.2 Economic challenges

After two decades of strong post-apartheid economic growth, the South African economy stagnated, with GDP growing by only 1% annually since 2013. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic caused severe economic disruption, employment fell by nearly 15% in early 2020 and has been slow to fully recover (Kohler et al., 2023). Unemployment remains amongst the highest in the world – the official rate is 33%, and this contributes to extreme levels of income inequality¹⁰ and widespread poverty (StatsSA QLFS, 2025Q2; World Bank, 2025). More than 60% of the population lives below the World Bank’s UMIC poverty line, and the latest IES data suggests that 10.7 million people live below the national food poverty line (StatsSA, 2025).

Beneath these national averages there is substantial regional variation in economic conditions, and the Western Cape differs markedly from the national profile on several key metrics. It has the lowest provincial unemployment rate in the country (measured at 20%), and poverty rates are also lower (QLFS, 2024). Roughly 28% of residents in the Western Cape live below the upper-bound poverty line, compared with more than 50% nationally (StatsSA IES, 2022/23). The province also has higher rates of educational attainment, and higher rates of access to basic services.

A central feature of national government policy that underpins individual and household welfare on a grand scale is its social security system, which pays means-tested cash transfers to millions of poor households every month. Both inequality and poverty would be significantly higher if it were not for the grant system, which accounts for 3.6% of GDP – more than double the SSA average. The three main pillars of this grant system are an old-age pension (approximately R 2,330 per month), a child support grant (R560 per month), and a relatively new cash transfer targeting unemployed adults (R 370 per month) (SASSA, 2025). In total there are currently 28 million monthly grant recipients in South Africa, with over 20% of households relying on cash transfers as their main source of income (StatsSA GHS, 2023).

Most of the workers who participated in focus groups and interviews for this study live in households that depend on at least one of these grants, with the old age grant and child

⁹ GDP in USD from the World Bank WDI Database, GDP in Rands from the South African Reserve Bank.

¹⁰ South Africa’s Gini coefficient is around 0.63, compared with a global average of 0.36 (World Bank, World Development Indicator (WDI) database, 2025).

support grant being particularly important.¹¹ We also note that despite the relative socio-economic strengths of the Western Cape it has pockets of very concentrated deprivation, particularly in informal settlements where at least 15% of the provincial population live, and in agricultural districts (DHS, 2021). The province also remains highly unequal, with a Gini coefficient measured at over 0.60 (Western Cape Government, 2025).

3.3 The agricultural sector and minimum wages

The economic structure of the South Africa's economy is unusual for a middle-income country in that the services sector is the largest contributor to both GDP and employment, eclipsing both primary and industrial production. Agriculture remains important but its share of total employment and GDP is low – it accounts for just 5% of total employment and 2.5% of GDP compared to UMIC averages of 21% and 6.7%, respectively (ILO, 2023; World Bank, 2024).¹² Furthermore, unlike almost all economies in Africa, small-scale low-productivity production does not dominate South Africa's rural landscape. Most agricultural activity is large-scale, capital-intensive, and internationally competitive, particularly in the Western Cape. These stylised facts reflect an atypical agrarian development trajectory shaped by colonial dispossession, race-based legal exclusion, and state support for white commercial farming from the 1930s through to the early 1990s. As a result, widespread unemployment coexists with a relatively small but highly productive farming sector in which most workers are wage labourers on large commercial farms that generate over 70% of the country's agricultural income (Sihlobo and Kirsten, 2021).

Farmworkers in South Africa earn low wages compared to other sectors but are formally covered by a national minimum wage, and average wages in the Western Cape tend to be considerably higher than the national average. While many farmworkers earn below the statutory rate according to the latest secondary data, and unionization levels in the sector are below 10%, average earnings have increased substantially as a result of minimum wage policy (Bhorat, Kanbur and Stanwix, 2014; Piek, von Fintel and Kirsten, 2021; Bassier and Ranchhod, 2024). The agricultural minimum wage has increased by 150% in real terms since it was introduced in 2003, and in 2021 farmworkers were fully covered by the national minimum wage (Stanwix, 2024). In 2025, the minimum wage is R28.79 per hour (USD 3.84, PPP), equivalent to approximately R 5,600 per month for a 45-hour work week that is typical of farmworkers in the country. Legislation allows for a maximum of 10% of the wage to be paid as in-kind benefits (National Minimum Wage Act, 2018).

¹¹ The means test for the Child Support Grant (CSG) is an important consideration for this study, since almost all farmworkers with children that we spoke to receive this grant. To be eligible for it the child must be under 18, and both the caregiver and their spouse must pass an income means test, with an income limit of R 5,600 for single caregivers, and R 11,200 for married couples. The R 5,600 amount is close to the current NMW, and earning above this would limit access to the grant.

¹² The structural contribution of South Africa's agricultural sector looks more like that of high-income country aggregates, where agriculture makes up 3% of employment and 1.3% of GDP (ILO, 2023; World Bank, 2024).

3.4 The study area

South Africa is divided into 9 provinces, and the Cape Winelands occupies a large central part of the Western Cape province (see Figure 1). The province is South Africa's primary wine producing region, accounting for over 96% of total wine grape production (SAWIS, 2023). As such, the wine industry is a critical component of the local agricultural economy, attracting significant domestic and foreign tourism, employing several hundred thousand people, and contributing close to 1% of the country's overall GDP according to industry estimates (*ibid.*). Historically, most of the country's wine was produced for the domestic market but export shares have grown over time and current data suggests that around half of all wine produced in South Africa is now exported (SAWIS, 2024).

Within the province this study focuses on two neighboring districts that produce most of the country's wine grapes – the Cape Winelands Municipal District and the Overberg Municipal District, which together account for over 80% of national production (SAWIS, 2023). Within this area we selected five towns and their surrounding economies as the main sites for data collection. In the Cape Winelands District Municipality, which is the epicenter of wine grape production, we included the towns of Stellenbosch, Paarl, Robertson, and Rawsonville, which are key urban nodes in the broader region. In the Overberg District Municipality, which includes an important coastal band known for its white wine, we include the town of Hermanus.¹³

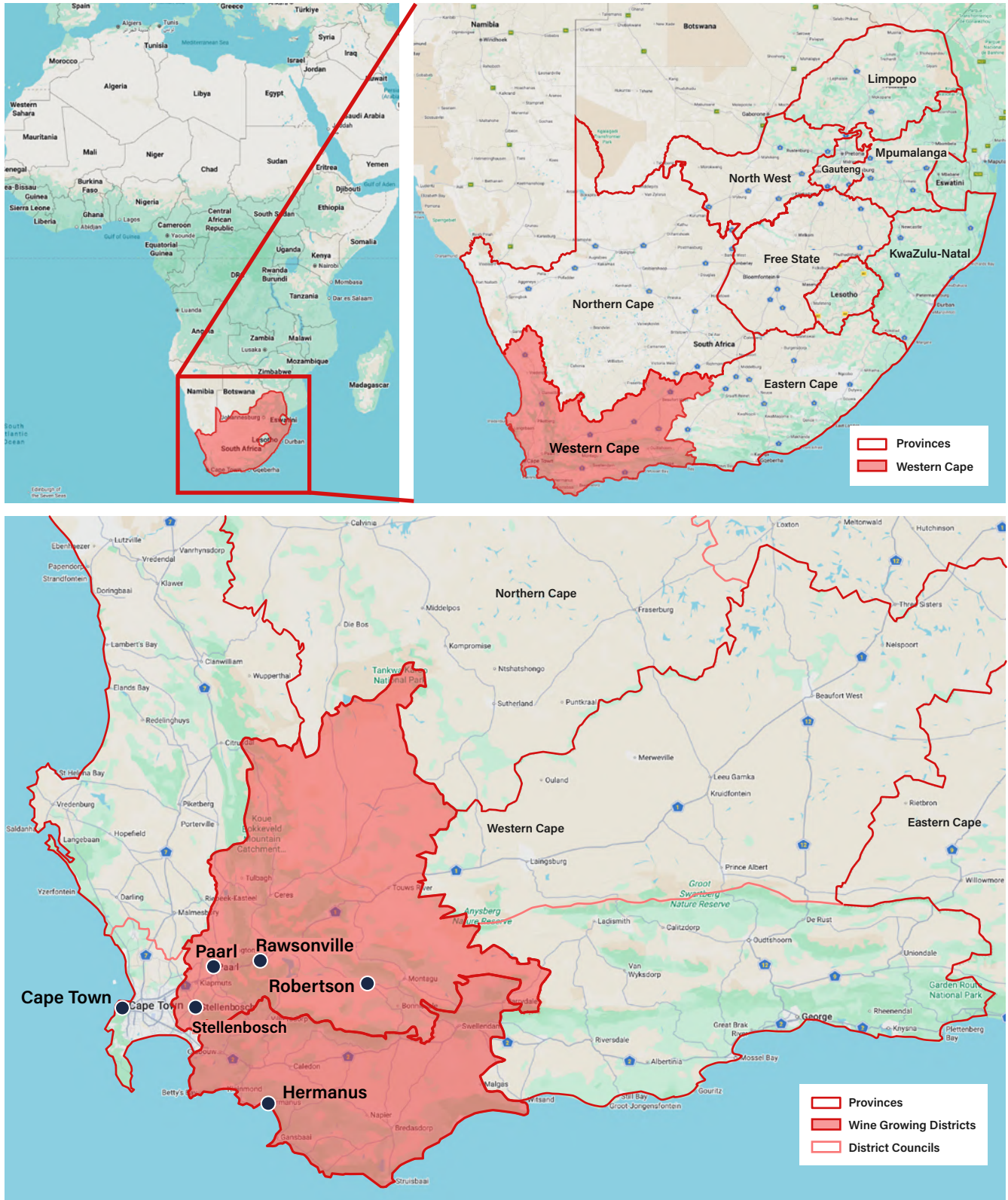
Most farms in the Cape Winelands are relatively close to an urban center or smaller town, and while it is still common for farmworkers to live on the commercial farms where they are employed, many workers live in nearby towns or peripheral urban settlements and commute to work.¹⁴ This is especially the case for seasonal and part-time workers, who make up a growing share of the agricultural labour force. Moreover, regardless of whether workers live on or off the farm, shopping and access to important services (including education and healthcare) take place almost exclusively in the towns that are dotted across the region. As such, this study estimates a living wage for small- and medium-sized towns in the Cape Winelands rather than for areas classified as 'commercial farmland' in the administrative data.¹⁵

13 Taken together, these five towns and their surrounding local economies are located within specific wine producing zones that account for 66% of the country's total production (SAWIS, 2023). This sample of towns was also chosen to include a cross-section of economic environments and account for potential variations in the cost of living in the region. It includes the larger well-established towns of Stellenbosch and Paarl, the medium-sized town of Hermanus – a central residential and shopping area for many farmworkers in the Cape South Coast wine region –, and the smaller towns of Rawsonville and Robertson, which are situated in more distinct agricultural zones dominated by wine farming activity.

14 This is different from most African countries where rural farming areas contain their own distinct local economy. In these cases the local 'rural economy' would be the primary focus of the living wage study but in this case it is the local towns that are the focus since this is where many workers live and all workers access shops and services.

15 All estimates from secondary data in the study exclude the Cape Town metro area.

Figure 1. Zooming in on the study location



Source: South African Municipal Demarcation Board (2022)

3.5 Data

The living wage estimate for the Cape Winelands was determined using the Anker Methodology combining recent secondary data from reliable sources with primary data collected in the study region.¹⁶ We used secondary data from Statistics South Africa's (Stats SA) General Household Survey (GHS, 2024) for information on housing conditions, household amenities and household size, while labour market data came from Stats SA's Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS, 2024Q1-Q4). Population-level data relied primarily on the 2022 national census, with additional indicators were obtained from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank. Supplementary data on health and education were drawn from Stats SA's mid-year population estimates (2024) and the Western Cape Department of Health, and additional data on agriculture for the study region was obtained from Western Cape Department of Agriculture. Information on household expenditure relied on data from Stats SA's most recent Income and Expenditure Surveys (IES 2022/23) to calculate household spending patterns for the study region.¹⁷

Most primary data collection took place in the five towns and surrounding areas shown in Figure 1, between July and August 2025. A team of three researchers, supported by Fairtrade Africa and selected staff members at participating farms, conducted focus group discussions and interviews with farmworkers to document typical living costs, shopping patterns, housing conditions as well as information on healthcare and education. These initial qualitative exercises informed the design of local price surveys, including which food outlets to visit, what types of housing to assess, as well as which education and healthcare providers to collect data from.

To measure food costs, we conducted a detailed local market survey in each town, collecting prices for all items included in a constructed model diet, visiting large low-cost supermarket chains, specialised frozen-food outlets, informal fruit and vegetable sellers, and smaller local grocery shops. For housing, we combined information from worker interviews and house visits with rental listings from local estate agents and online platforms to build a sample of low-cost formal dwellings and commonly rented units in off-farm neighbourhoods. For utilities, health care and education, we drew on a combination of municipal tariff schedules, published price lists, and a small survey of clinics, hospitals, schools, pharmacies, and private healthcare providers. The exact methods and sampling strategies for each component (food prices, housing, utilities, healthcare, education, and NFNH) are described in the relevant sections below.

¹⁶ Anker & Anker (2017).

¹⁷ The microdata for the IES (2022/23) was made publicly available in early 2026. A previous version of this report used a calibrated version of the IES (2014/15) to produce a provisional living wage estimate.

4. CONCEPT, DEFINITION, AND MEASUREMENT OF LIVING WAGE

4.1 Living wage concept and definition

The idea of a living wage is that workers and their families should be able to afford, at minimum, a basic but decent lifestyle considered decent by society at its current level of development. It should be possible to earn without having to work overtime.

This study uses the Global Living Wage Coalition definition of a living wage:

“Remuneration received for a standard work week by a worker in a particular place sufficient to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and her or his family. Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, health care, transport, clothing, and other essential needs including provision for unexpected events”.

The idea of a living wage is neither new, nor radical. For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Constitution (1919) states that “Peace and harmony in the world requires provision of an adequate living wage”, and the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that “Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity”.¹⁸

4.2 Principles of the Anker Methodology for estimating living wage

Some of the main principles of the Anker Methodology are described below. These principles are aligned with – and go beyond – the ILO principles for living wage estimation published in 2024.¹⁹

Transparency: The Anker Methodology sets out the principles and assumptions behind living wage estimates. Full details of data sources and collection methods are provided in a public report (see [www.https://www.ankerresearchinstitute.org/](https://www.ankerresearchinstitute.org/)). This allows stakeholders and others to understand and have the possibility to question the local standards and methods used to estimate the living wage, and interrogate what workers and their families could afford if they earned a living wage.

¹⁸ Anker & Anker (2017).

¹⁹ ILO principles for living wage estimation were agreed at a Tripartite Meeting of Experts in February 2024 and endorsed by the ILO Governing Body in March 2024. Full details of how the Anker Methodology aligns with the ILO principles for living wage estimation are provided on the Anker Research Institute website: <https://www.ankerresearchinstitute.org/ilo-anker-methodology>.

Normative basis for four human rights, relative basis for other needs: The Anker Methodology estimates living wage based on minimum normative standards for nutritious food, healthy housing, adequate health care, and education of children through secondary school. All other needs are estimated using relative needs and costs as observed for households that are not considered poor or wealthy.

Robust, reliable estimates: Anker Methodology living wage estimates are based on a judicious mix of data from reputable national surveys and primary data collected in the study location to arrive at robust estimates at a modest cost. All data are scrutinized for reliability and relevance and all estimates are subject to rigorous technical review by the Anker Research Institute.

Time and place-specific estimates: Since the costs of living and the expected standards of living vary over time and across space within a country, the Anker Methodology calls for time and place-specific living wage estimates. These estimates are updated for inflation on an annual basis to ensure their purchasing power is retained.

Consideration of local context and socio-economic and cultural realities: Living costs are estimated based on local norms and standards for a decent standard of living which also meet minimum international standards on nutrition, housing, health care and children's education, and taking care not to replicate poverty.

International comparability: Anker Methodology living wage estimates are comparable between countries because they are based on the same principles everywhere.

Involvement of local stakeholders: Engagement with workers and employers and other national stakeholders occurs during study initiation and design, primary data collection, analysis of data, and presentation of study findings.

Living wage and living income reports are more than only a number: Anker Methodology living wage and living income reports do not just report a number, but also paint a picture of what it means to live below a basic but decent level, and what the living standards would be for workers and their families with a living wage/income. This facilitates effective stakeholder dialogue around how to improve wages and incomes.

4.3 Calculating a living wage using the Anker Methodology

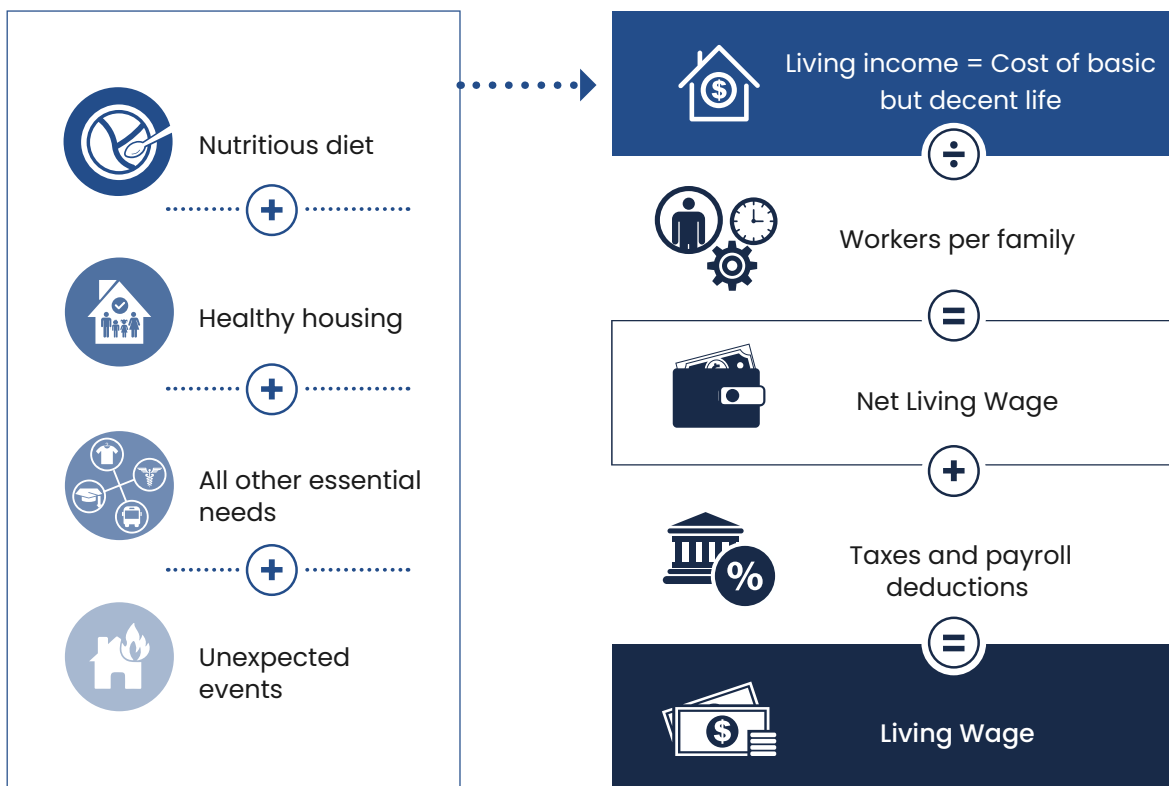
In the Anker Methodology, the living wage calculation incorporates the cost of four essential components necessary for a satisfactory standard of living: (i) the cost of a basic and nutritious diet in keeping with local food preferences; (ii) the cost of housing that meets specified standards of adequacy and healthiness; (iii) expenses related to all other essential items such as health care, education, clothing, etc., referred to in this report as non-food non-housing (NFNH) expenditures; and (iv) an additional buffer to address the vulnerability of workers and their families in the face of unforeseen circumstances.

Living costs are determined for a 'typical' reference family in the study area. The size and composition of the reference family is determined using official information from the latest household surveys and censuses from credible sources (often carried out by the government statistical organization).

The costs associated with nutritious food and healthy housing are derived from primary data collected during fieldwork, which took place between July and August 2025. The determination of NFNH costs primarily relies on secondary data, although two specific expenditure items (health care and education) undergo 'post checks' based on data gathered during the fieldwork to ensure adequate healthcare for all family members and education for children through secondary school level, which are regarded as fundamental human rights in the Anker Methodology. These costs are then combined to provide an estimation of the living expenses necessary to maintain a basic yet decent standard of living (referred to as a living income).

This overall cost is then divided by the number of full-time equivalent workers based on the reference family size, which is obtained from the analysis of labour statistics in the study area, to obtain a net (take-home) living wage. Finally, the gross living wage (a.k.a. the living wage) is the net living wage plus mandatory payroll deductions and income taxes. The components of a living wage and how it is estimated in the Anker Methodology are summarised in the figure below.

Figure 2. Components of the total cost of a basic but decent life and calculation of the living wage



Source: Adapted from Anker & Anker (2017).

SECTION II.

COST OF A BASIC BUT DECENT LIFE FOR A WORKER AND THEIR FAMILY

This section explains how the cost of a basic but decent life in Cape Winelands was determined. Following the Anker Methodology, the overall cost is a combination of separate estimates for food costs, housing costs, and all other costs for a reference size family, which are described below.

5. FAMILY SIZE NEEDING TO BE SUPPORTED

Living wage is a family concept, and therefore a living wage must be enough to support a typical size family in the study location. In this case we use a reference family size of four – two adults and two children – to estimate a living wage for the Cape Winelands. This is a conservative estimate, but is based on the latest fertility rate data (adjusted for child mortality) to get number of surviving children per woman²⁰, as well as the latest survey data on the average size of households in the study region. We recognise inputs during the stakeholder consultation on this report advocating for using a family size of more than 4, noting that lower-income households are often larger. A careful review of all available data for the study region²¹ does not produce compelling evidence for an average household size above 4, even when looking only at lower-income households. However, we recognise that most income earners have responsibilities that go beyond their direct household to include extended family, which implies that 4 persons is a conservative assumption of the family size needing support. For this reason, an additional amount of 5% is added to the overall cost of living estimate to account for costs associated with family responsibility beyond the household.²²

Our main source of data for average household size estimates is the GHS (2024), where we can specifically isolate non-metro urban areas in the Western Cape as well as the Cape Winelands region. This is the most accurate available source to identify a household size proxy for the study region and returns an average household size of 3.69, once we exclude single-person households and households with more than 10 members as is standard in the Anker approach. If we isolate only on lower-income households in the data, the average household size increases to 3.84. Data from the QLFS (2024) and the Census (2022) provide slightly lower household size estimates, but the GHS is the preferred source of household data in this case.

20 Although under 5 mortality is very low for upper-middle and high-income countries, it is substantial in many low-income and lower-middle-income countries when fertility rates and mortality rates are high. And most deaths to children under age 5 occur quite early in life as around half occur in the first year with half of infant mortality occurring during the first month of life.

21 This includes consulting the GHS (2024), the QLFS (2024), and the Census (2022).

22 This allocation is on top of the 5% provision for unexpected events that is standard in the Anker Methodology (see section 10).

To complement the GHS data we also estimated the average number of surviving children per woman, which comes from data on total fertility rates (TFR), and infant mortality rates of children below the age of 5 (U5MR). Since we are unable to estimate the TFR and U5MR for the Cape Winelands specifically, we take a weighted average of the latest provincial and national estimates. According to the most recent mid-year population data then, the average TFR is 2.09²³ and the U5MR rate is 18.4 per 1,000 births (Western Cape Department of Health, 2022; StatsSA, 2024). Together, the data on TFR and U5MR produces an adjusted estimate of 2.05 children per woman, which would indicate an average family size of just over 4.

Taking the above data into account, and noting the necessary family size for population replacement, we settle on a reference family size of four (two adults and two children). We believe this to be a conservative but reasonable approximation for the Cape Winelands, and one that is also in line with almost all other developing countries in comparable ARI benchmark studies.²⁴ As noted above, to account for financial responsibilities beyond the household we include an additional 5% of the total household monthly cost of living.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of households by number of members in non-metro and metro areas of the Western Cape Province, 2024

Number of persons in the household	Non-metro	Metro	All
1	18.20%	20.51%	19.70%
2	22.07%	21.49%	21.69%
3	18.73%	16.08%	17.00%
4	19.85%	20.37%	20.19%
5	10.83%	11.47%	11.25%
6	5.51%	4.87%	5.09%
7	2.41%	2.81%	2.67%
8	1.27%	1.22%	1.24%
9	0.41%	0.44%	0.43%
10+	0.71%	0.75%	0.74%
Average household size (2-8 members)	3.69	3.64	3.67

Source: Authors' calculation based on data from StatsSA General Household Survey (StatsSA, 2024).

²³ Statistics South Africa, 2024.

²⁴ We note that it is lower than 2013 benchmark study (ARI, 2013), which used a reference family size of 4.5 persons (2.5 children and 2 parents). This difference is reasonable given the latest data and clearly declining fertility rates in South Africa since 2013 (see Figure A1 in the Appendix).

6. FOOD COSTS

We estimate the cost of model diet developed for the Cape Winelands using food prices collected in the supermarkets and food outlets where most workers in the study region shop. Our estimate of food costs per person per day is R 27.78 (USD 1.56). This is reduced to R 26.24, after making allowance for school lunch provided through the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), which is explained in more detail below. The daily value of this school lunch for a family of four is calculated at R 1.55. Accounting for this, the net cost of food is calculated to be R 3,192 per month (USD 180) for a reference family of four.

6.1 Model diet

In keeping with the Anker Methodology, the cost of food was estimated using a model diet developed for the study area and following a set of general principles:

- The model diet must be nutritious and contain sufficient calories, macronutrients (proteins, fats, carbohydrates), and micronutrients in accordance with WHO recommendations. It should have limited amounts of sugar and oil.
- Foods in the model diet must be consistent with local food habits and preferences so that it is palatable to the local population.
- Model diet must be relatively low in cost for a nutritious diet by including relatively less expensive meats, cereals, fruits and vegetables, etc. while maintaining nutrition and palatability.
- Model diet should be consistent with the development level of the country and location and reflect local consumption patterns.
- Model diet should be expressed as far as possible in numbers of servings so it is easy to understand.

We note a few stylized facts on dietary habits in South Africa that were largely confirmed during our focus group sessions. First, staple starches dominate local diets, with maize meal (pap), bread, rice, and potatoes making up the bulk of energy intake.²⁵ Second, high sugar consumption is common and many people consume large amounts of sugar, often from sweetened drinks and other confectionery.²⁶ Third, most people eat below the recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables, with affordability being a major barrier.²⁷ Fourth, chicken is the main source of animal protein due to its lower cost, followed by beef and processed meats.²⁸ Overall, diets in South Africa are energy-dense but nutrient-poor, which

25 Stats SA – General Household Survey 2021

26 [WHO Global Sugar Report – South Africa country profile](#)

27 [SANHANES-1 National Health and Nutrition Survey](#)

28 [BFAP Baseline Agricultural Outlook 2023](#)

contributes to a 'double burden' of malnutrition in the country – there are high rates of child stunting (27%) alongside obesity (40% of women, 15% of men).²⁹

The model diet takes account of local preferences but is informed by the principles outlined above. Its composition is very similar to the diet developed in the ARI (2013) benchmark study³⁰, with small adjustments made based on focus group inputs, product availability, as well as reference to recent reports and dietary guidelines in South Africa.³¹ The model diet provides a total of 2,384 calories per person per day, which is based on WHO recommendations and Schofield equations. This considers that in a typical family of four there is one adult doing vigorous physical work activity (for example, a farmworker), one doing moderate activity, and two children who are also assigned a moderate level of activity. Recent health and nutrition guidelines in South Africa have moved away from specific caloric recommendations, but the current food poverty line is based on 2,100 kcal per day (StatsSA, 2024), which is slightly lower than the total calories in our model diet.³²

6.2 Food prices

Food prices for all items in the model diet were collected from outlets in the Cape Winelands based on the shopping habits of workers identified during focus groups and interviews. Researchers visited the full range of venues typically frequented by farmworker households: large supermarkets, informal vegetable markets, street vendors, local grocery shops, and specialised frozen-meat outlets (see Table 2). This ensured that the resulting diet cost reflects the actual opportunities available to workers to purchase food of decent quality at the lowest possible cost. Price collection took place in 15 outlets across the study region, made up of 8 supermarkets, 4 open markets/informal produce vendors, and 3 small local grocery shops. Online prices and supermarket pamphlets were used to supplement price data collected in-store. In total, 4,090 individual prices were collected for typically purchased food items, of which 1,235 corresponded directly to the items included in the model diet.

Table 2. Common shopping patterns for food items consumed in Western Cape, South Africa

Food item	Supermarket	Open market	Local grocery store/kiosk
Cereals and grains			
Rice	✓		✓
Maize meal	✓		✓
Wheat flour	✓		✓

29 <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/africa/southern-africa/south-africa/#overview>

30 Small changes are made due to: a small increase in the total number of calories required to meet international nutritional standards, changes in levels of economic development in the country, and minor updates to the ARI estimation approach.

31 Food preferences were informed by multiple focus groups held with workers in the wine-producing regions of the Western Cape. In addition, work by the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity (PMBEJD) as well as the Living Wage SA Network was consulted.

32 See: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P03101/P031012021.pdf>

Food item	Supermarket	Open market	Local grocery store/kiosk
Prepared cereals (e.g., bread, pasta, noodles)			
Bread	✓		✓
Pasta (Macaroni)	✓		✓
Roots and tubers			
Potato	✓	✓	✓
Pulses, legumes, and beans			
Beans (canned)	✓		✓
Dairy			
Milk (cow)	✓		✓
Eggs			
Chicken egg	✓		✓
Meats and fish			
Chicken (drumstick & thigh packs)	✓		✓
Fish (canned)	✓		✓
Sausage (wors)	✓		✓
Dark green leafy vegetables			
Cabbage	✓	✓	✓
Other vegetables			
Carrot	✓	✓	✓
Pumpkin	✓	✓	✓
Onion	✓	✓	✓
Fruits			
Orange	✓	✓	✓
Apple	✓	✓	✓
Oils and fats			
Other Oil	✓		✓
Sugar			
White sugar	✓		✓
Non-alcoholic beverages			
Coffee (instant)	✓		✓

Source: Authors.

At each outlet, prices were collected for multiple brands and package sizes to derive a reliable cost per kilogram (or per litre) for each food item. For foods typically sold in non-standard units, such as cabbage, pumpkin, and certain fresh vegetables, the research team weighed individual items to calculate an accurate price per kilogram. For all foods, prices were collected for the least-cost options available, while avoiding promotional or one-off special prices when these were unlikely to be consistently available. These choices were also informed by farmworkers who assisted in the price data collection process.

Figure 3. Photographs of selected outlets where prices were collected



Source: Authors.

To ensure that the final cost of the model diet reflects the lowest available prices for each food item, but retains variation across outlet and regions, we took the following approach in calculating the average prices used in our diet: First, for each town we took the mean of the lowest price (per kg) for every item in each outlet; Second, we calculate this mean across all outlets in the same town; and finally, the resulting price is the overall average for the region. This approach follows ARI (2013) and ensures that the model diet reflects affordable yet realistic shopping patterns.³³

The foods included in the model diet were selected to ensure that the diet remains nutritious while keeping costs as low as possible. The selection reflects both local preferences and the foods that workers can obtain at the lowest cost: Durable staples (e.g., maize meal, rice, flour, oil) are purchased mainly from large supermarket chains; Fresh fruit and vegetables are typically bought from informal street vendors and open markets, where workers reported better prices; Frozen chicken and other meats are commonly purchased at specialised low-cost outlets selling bulk packs, with butcheries used for certain cuts or organs; we note that fish consumption is relatively low (canned pilchards are the standard affordable option); and common household dishes usually include chicken during the week and other meats on weekends.

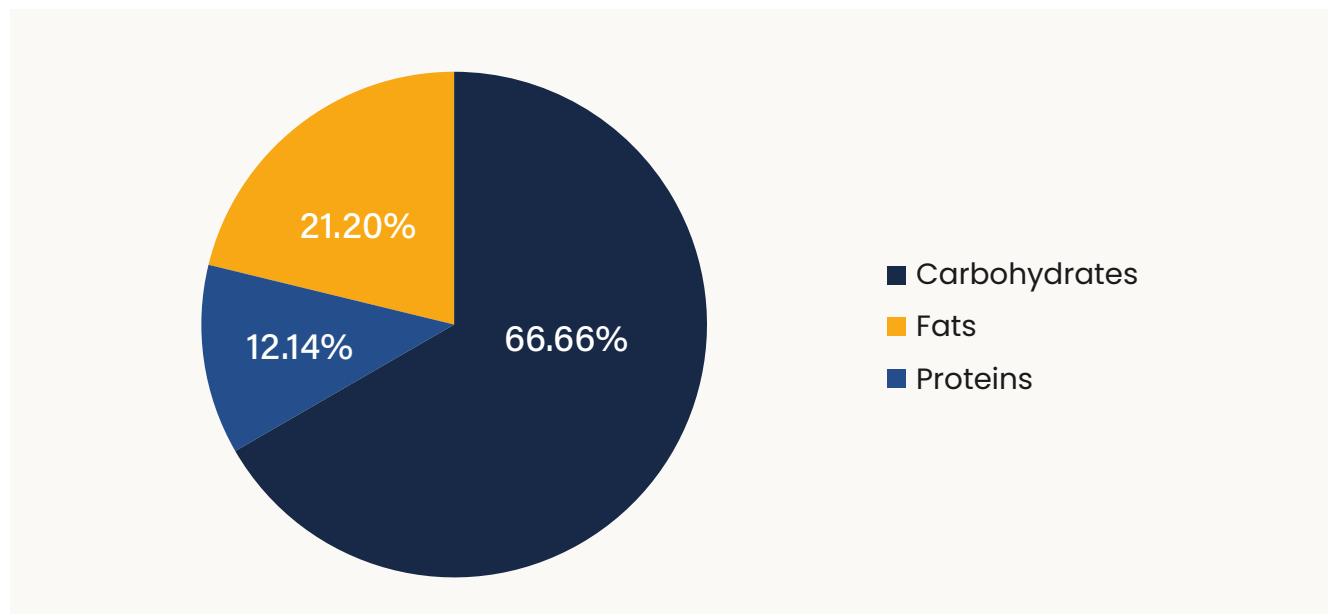
6.3 Cost of model diet

The total cost of the model diet is estimated at R 27.78 per day, before deducting the cost of free school meals, and R 26.24 per day after this deduction. In addition to the costs of each specific food item, the diet includes an added 2% for the purchase of spices and condiments, 4% for food that is spoiled or wasted, and 13% for variety, allowing for the addition of items that may be slightly more expensive than the simplified diet we create. For reference, South Africa's latest Food Poverty Line (FPL) is currently R25.90 per day in May 2023 prices, which equates to approximately R 28.31 in August 2025. The cost of a basic nutritious diet estimated by the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group (PMBEJD) is R 30.47 per day (PMBEJD, 2025).³⁴

The first requirement for the model diet is that it must be nutritious and provide sufficient calories, proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and micronutrients for a healthy life. The Cape Wine-lands model diet provides: 2,384 calories per person per day, with 66.66% of calories from carbohydrates, 21.20% from fats, and 12.14% from proteins. This macronutrient profile complies with WHO/FAO recommendations and is closely aligned with what is typical in upper-middle-income countries, including South Africa.

33 We also consider the impact of prices changing during the year, and food prices in the Cape Winelands do show some seasonal variation, particularly for some fresh produce. To assess seasonality, we compared prices across outlets and reviewed data on food price inflation collected the PMBEJD Household Food Basket as well as Stats SA CPI price data for the Western Cape. While seasonal fluctuations were present, they were relatively modest for the specific items included in the model diet. Because the model diet relies primarily on low-cost staples and commonly available produce, and because all price collection occurred during a typical price period (non-holiday, non-peak), no additional seasonal adjustment was introduced.

34 https://pmbefd.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/October-2025-Household-Affordability-Index-PMBEJD_29102025.pdf

Figure 4. Percentage distribution of macronutrients in model diet for Western Cape, South Africa

Source: Authors.

The full model diet is present in Table 3, and we summarise its main components here:

- Cereals and grains (maize meal, rice, wheat flour, bread, pasta) are the backbone of the diet, providing the majority of calories at low cost. Pasta is added in small quantities reflecting current consumption preferences. Rice is also an important component of the diet, but less so than maize meal.
- Vegetables (potato, cabbage, carrot, pumpkin, onion) are the least-cost options, and are commonly available at supermarkets and street vendors.
- Fruit intake is mainly through apples and oranges which are relatively low-cost options.
- Animal protein is included in modest but adequate quantities. Households consistently reported chicken as the primary meat eaten during the week, with occasional wors (sausage) and tinned pilchards included as additional cost-efficient sources of protein and essential fatty acids.
- Eggs are also an important protein source.
- Milk is included daily, in small quantities for adults and one cup per day for children.
- Beans (tinned) are a low-cost protein and fibre source but not eaten daily.
- Cooking oil, sugar, and coffee are included in quantities consistent with household norms noted in the focus groups and aligned to international benchmarks.

As is standard in the Anker Methodology, additional items beyond those included in the simplified model diet are accommodated through a 13% allowance for variety. In addition to this, the cost of the base model diet is increased by adding a 4% allowance for food waste and spoilage during preparation and storage, and a 2% allowance for salt, spices, condiments, and sauces.

Table 3. Model diet and food costs per person per day for the Cape Winelands

Food item	Edible grams	Purchased grams	Cost per kilo	Cost	Notes
Cereals and grains					
Maize	147	147	10.30	1.51	1 large portion of maize meal (pap) daily
Rice	80	80	14.24	1.14	1/3 cup of rice daily
Wheat flour	69	69	12.00	0.83	Equivalent to 3 slices of home-made bread (or equivalent – vetkoek, etc.)
Prepared cereals					
White bread	120	120	20.46	2.46	4 slices of bread per day
Pasta	38	38	25.98	0.97	1/2 cup every second day
Roots and tubers					
Potato	75	100	8.09	0.81	1 medium potato (150 gr) every other day
Pulses, legumes, and beans					
Beans (tinned)	14	14	4.98	0.35	1 serving of beans every other day
Dairy					
Milk	150	150	14.03	2.10	1 cup per day per child, 1/4 for adults
Chicken egg	38	43	8.03	1.62	6 eggs per week
Meats and fish					
Chicken	73	104	36.53	3.80	6 servings of chicken per week
Fish (tinned pilchards)	12	12	54.48	0.66	1 serving of fish per week
Sausage (wors)	12	12	36.84	0.45	1 serving of sausage per week

Food item	Edible grams	Purchased grams	Cost per kilo	Cost	Notes
Dark green leafy vegetables					
Cabbage	85	106	8.99	0.95	1 portion per day
Other vegetables					
Carrot	30	34	11.99	0.41	$\frac{3}{4}$ serving per day
Pumpkin	81	115	10.24	1.18	1 serving per day
Tomato	30	33	22.99	0.76	$\frac{3}{4}$ serving per day
Onion	30	34	14.25	0.48	$\frac{3}{4}$ serving per day
Fruits					
Orange	40	55	11.49	0.63	1 small orange every second day
Apple	40	45	13.16	0.59	1 apple every second day
Oils					
Oil	25	25	29.07	0.73	1 teaspoon of oil per person per day
Sugar					
White sugar	30	30	20.40	0.61	maximum allowable in WHO standard
Non-alcoholic beverages					
Coffee	2	2	152.98	0.31	1 cup of instant coffee per adult per day
Total cost of model diet excluding additional costs indicated below				23.35	
Percentage added for salt, spices, sauces, and condiments				0.47	2%
Percentage added for spoilage and waste				0.93	4%
Percentage added for variety				3.04	13%
Total cost of model diet including additional costs indicated above				27.78	
Total value of free school lunch				1.55	
Net cost of model diet				26.24	

Source: Authors.

We assume here that a small part of the daily cost of this model diet (5.5%) is covered by the NSNP, which provides one meal per school day to children at public schools in Quintiles 1–3. According to the latest national data, this programme covers over 9 million learners at nearly 20,000 schools across the country (Dept. of Basic Education, 2024). In the Western Cape, a total of 527,234 learners received meals via the programme in 2023/24, which is over 40% of all learners in the Western Cape (WCED, 2023; WCED, 2025a). The NSNP guidelines specify that each child receives one cooked meal per day, designed to supply roughly 30–40% of the daily energy requirement. Meals normally include a protein (e.g., soya mince, eggs, fish, chicken), starch (maize meal, rice, samp, or pasta), and vegetables, with fruit at least twice a week.³⁵ The free school lunch is available on the 200 school days in South Africa. Despite some families reporting supplementing the free school meal, we account for the value of the lunch in the cost of the model diet.

7. HOUSING COSTS

To estimate housing costs, we establish a local healthy housing standard based on (i) international and national minimum standards and principles for healthy housing, and (ii) common housing conditions in the study region. Based on this we estimate the costs of rent and utilities for a dwelling that meets this standard. Our estimate of housing costs for a reference family size in Cape Winelands is R 4,510 per month. This includes R 3,730 per month for rent and R 780 for utilities. The details of how we arrive at this value are described below.

7.1 Local healthy housing standard

In the Anker Methodology, the cost of housing is estimated using a local healthy housing standard developed with reference to both international and national standards and principles for healthy housing, while also considering local housing conditions. Adequate housing is recognized as part of the right to an adequate standard of living in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights of 1966. It is also recognized in ILO Recommendation No. 115 on Workers' Housing (1961), the World Health Organization's (WHO) Healthy Housing Principles (1989), and UN-Habitat guidelines (2009, 2013). Some important aspects of the standards covered by international instruments are presented in the table below. The Anker Methodology also takes local housing conditions into account when developing a local healthy housing standard for each study location. This is based on the findings of national surveys on housing conditions as well as observations from visits to local housing in the study area.

³⁵ WCED Guideline: School Feeding Programme; Department of Basic Education NSNP policy framework; Peninsula School Feeding Association programme outline.

Table 4. Housing standards and principles in international conventions and recommendations

Standard	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	ILO recommendation No. 115 concerning workers' housing	WHO healthy housing principles
Safe water ^b	✓	✓	✓
Sanitation/toilet & sewage disposal ^b	✓	✓	✓
Sufficient living space	✓	Persons per room and/or floor area	Persons per room
Durable structure (protection against elements) ^b	✓	✓	✓
Good condition and state of repair ^b	✓ ^e	✓ ^f	✓
Physical safety	✓		
Adequate ventilation		✓	✓
Adequate lighting	✓	✓	✓
Safe food storage		✓	✓
Washing facilities	✓	✓	✓
Separation from animals		✓	✓
No site hazards ^{b, c}	Drainage, pollution	Earthquake	Many ^d
Refuse/solid waste disposal	✓	✓	✓
Emergency services	✓		✓
Protection from elements	✓ ^e	✓ ^f	✓

Notes: ^a UN-Habitat urban slum housing definition is not included in this table, because it includes only five elements: 'inadequate access to safe water; inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing; overcrowding; insecure residential statuses in addition to security of tenure'.

^b Element included in UN-Habitat definition of urban slum housing.

^c According to UN-Habitat the following locations should be considered as hazardous 'housing in geologically hazardous zones (landslide/earthquake and flood areas); housing on or under garbage mountains; housing around high-industrial pollution areas; housing around other unprotected high-risk zones (e.g., railroads, airports, energy transmission lines).' (UN-Habitat, 2003, p. 12).

^d WHO indicates the following site hazards: earthquakes, hurricanes, wind, noise, pollution, floods, and landslides.

^e Implied by 'protection from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health, structural hazards, and disease vectors' (International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1966).

^f Implied by 'protection against heat, cold, damp' (ILO Recommendation No. 155).

Source: Reproduced from Anker & Anker (2017).

7.1.1 Local housing conditions in the Cape Winelands

In South Africa there is no single reference for decent housing. Minimum expectations for adequate housing are guided by the National Housing Code (2009) and the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act (1977), which set out broad norms and standards for housing. These require that dwellings be structurally sound, weatherproof, and served by essential services including potable water, sanitation, and electricity, and that construction complies with safety and building requirements.³⁶ For low-income housing supplied or subsidised by the government, the Department of Human Settlements' National Housing Code provides important guidelines: the minimum house gross floor area is 40 sq. m., and it must include two bedrooms, a separate bathroom with a toilet, shower and basin, a combined living area and kitchen with wash basin, and electrical installation where electricity supply is available. These national guidelines help to inform a practical definition of a basic but decent house in the study region – one that is a permanent structure, weatherproof, serviced, and provides sufficient space and privacy for a family of four.

The applicable standard also takes existing housing conditions into account (see Table 5). Recent data on housing shows that conditions in the Western Cape, including its non-metro districts such as the Cape Winelands, are generally of higher quality than in many other South African provinces, although important pockets of substandard housing remain. In non-metro urban areas of the province, 79% of households live in permanent structures, while around 20% live in temporary dwellings. 87% of houses have two or more bedrooms, and 80% of households have cement or tiled floors. Wall materials are overwhelmingly formal, with nearly 80% of households living in dwellings made of brick, stone or cement. Roofs are either corrugated iron or tiles/concrete, both acceptable for a basic dwelling, although around a quarter of households are roofed with asbestos, which presents health concerns as it deteriorates. Access to services is high, with 97% of households using electricity for lighting, and having access to flush toilets. Water access is also relatively strong: 77% have piped water inside the dwelling, and a further 11% have piped water within their yard.

Table 5. Housing conditions in the Western Cape Province according to the General Household Survey (2024)

Characteristics	Metro %	Non-metro %	Combined %	Acceptable housing standard
Structure				
Permanent	79.43%	79.58%	79.48%	Permanent structure
Temporary	20.32%	19.23%	19.94%	

³⁶ Notably, these standards are not always enforced, and particularly in informal settlement, where around 15% of the Western Cape population live, they do not apply in practice.

Characteristics	Metro %	Non-metro %	Combined %	Acceptable housing standard
Floor				
Cement or Tile	72.34%	80.63%	75.22%	Cement or Tile, Vinyl/Carpet, and Wood
Vinyl/Carpet	16.17%	14.42%	15.56%	
Wood	10.01%	3.79%	7.84%	
Soil/Earth	0.99%	1.15%	1.05%	
Roof				
Corrugated iron	32.09%	52.07%	39.04%	Corrugated iron, and Concrete/tiles
Concrete/tiles	43.38%	17.09%	34.24%	
Thatched	0.32%	0.69%	0.45%	
Asbestos	23.80%	29.82%	25.89%	
Walls				
Cement/stone/brick	79.37%	79.60%	79.45%	Cement/stone/brick
Wooden planks	2.51%	6.57%	3.92%	
Iron sheets	17.45%	13.62%	16.12%	
Lighting				
Electricity	98.31%	97.67%	98.08%	Electricity
Candles	0.46%	1.67%	0.88%	
Other/Gas	0.95%	0.66%	0.85%	
Water source				
Piped into housing	77.95%	76.93%	77.60%	Piped water
Piped into dwelling or yard	14.28%	11.17%	13.20%	
Public tap	7.12%	9.07%	7.80%	
Toilet and sewage disposal				
Flush toilet	95.99%	97.61%	96.55%	Flush toilet
KVIP/Pit latrine with slab	0.49%	0.75%	0.58%	
Pit latrine without slab	0.06%	0.15%	0.09%	
Other	3.46%	1.49%	2.78%	
Number of bedrooms				
1	14.97%	10.31%	13.35%	Two bedrooms
2+	82.39%	87.53%	84.19%	

Source: StatsSA, General Household Survey (2024), own calculations.

7.1.2 Observations from visits to local housing in the study area

Housing conditions in the Cape Winelands vary widely, particularly for different categories of farmworkers. As in many agricultural areas of South Africa, there is a clear distinction between on-farm housing provided by employers and off-farm housing located in towns, informal settlements, and backyard rental markets. Many long-term and permanent farmworkers in the Cape Winelands continue to reside on farms and our field visits found that on-farm housing was more likely to meet the minimum decency standards, particularly in terms of access to water, sanitation, and electricity.³⁷ Off-farm housing is considerably more heterogeneous, with many low-income households occupying structures that fall well below acceptable standards. A growing share of workers, particularly seasonal and migrant workers, live in overcrowded, informal, and poorly serviced urban areas where housing conditions are very poor, and affordability is a major concern. In general, there is a long-term structural shift toward off-farm accommodation in the region, and an overwhelming lack of decent affordable housing available (Western Cape Department of Agriculture, 2017).

Fieldwork to collect data on housing involved multiple visits to a wide range of dwellings in each area. Photographs taken during these visits (Figure 5) illustrate the diversity of conditions encountered, from acceptable units with separate bedrooms, insulated roofs, and proper kitchen facilities, to informal structures without ceilings, adequate ventilation, or safe electrical wiring. In Wellington, Rawsonville, and Robertson, for example, we visited the homes of permanently employed farmworkers, some of whom had been working for the same employer for over 10 years, but still live in small makeshift shacks, with some having no electricity, internal running water, and no toilet. Generally, we found that workers living in informal settlements and backyard rentals in towns reside in very low-quality houses. These include: single-room structures where parents and children sleep in the same space, poorly insulated dwellings with no ceilings and exposed roofing; kitchens lacking basic facilities such as a safe cooking area, proper storage, or running water; makeshift house materials such as uninsulated corrugated sheets, scrap timber, and plastic sheeting; hazardous electrical connections or no access to electricity, as well as the use of bucket toilet systems.

37 While it does not directly inform the housing costs estimated in this study.

Figure 5. Examples of housing types and conditions in the Cape Winelands



House that meets the standard



House that meets the standard



House that does not meet standard



Kitchen that does not meet the standard



Farmhouse that meets the standard



Children's bedroom that meets the standard

Source: Authors.

7.1.3 Locally adapted standard for healthy housing

Based on international and national norms for healthy and adequate housing, together with the observed distribution of dwelling characteristics in the Western Cape, the following basic local housing standard was used for this study. This standard reflects minimum conditions required for health, safety, dignity, and privacy, and is intentionally modest, falling well within the range of low-income housing across the region.

The acceptable dwelling for a family of four in the Cape Winelands is defined as:

- An overall size of 48 sq. m. interior living space, which aligns with the current size of most low-income subsidised housing in South Africa and provides only the minimum space needed for a family of four to live decently.³⁸
- Permanent structure built of brick, block or cement.
- Weatherproof roof made of corrugated iron or similar.
- Flooring of cement or tile (standard in most households in the province), where no carpet, laminate or decorative flooring is required but is acceptable.
- Two separate bedrooms, one for adults and one for children, or sufficient space to allow for such a division.
- Small living area and basic kitchen space, including a sink, countertop, and safe electrical outlets; no built-in cupboards, appliances, or enhanced finishes are assumed.
- Piped water inside the dwelling.
- A flush toilet inside the dwelling or directly attached.
- Electricity for lighting.
- Secure doors and windows, providing basic safety and ventilation, but without any enhancements such as burglar bars, security gates, or upgraded frames required.

This housing standard is deliberately basic and reflects what a large share of households in the Cape Winelands already have. It represents a minimum acceptable threshold rather than the average standard of comfort and excludes any features that might be considered costly or luxurious. It therefore provides a realistic, modest and regionally appropriate benchmark for estimating the cost of acceptable housing for working households in the Cape Winelands.

³⁸ Where houses were clearly above the acceptable standard in all respects but smaller than 48 sq. m., we included them in the sample and calculated the sq. m. cost to obtain an equivalent cost for the required size. However, no houses smaller than 40 sq. m. were included, in line with national government standards.

7.2 Cost for healthy housing

Initial visits to collect price data on housing revealed three key issues that makes accurately estimating the rental cost of healthy housing challenging: (i) Many workers, and especially those who participated in our focus groups, reside on farms, where housing is typically provided by employers at a highly subsidised rate, and so does not reflect prevailing market costs; (ii) The houses in towns and neighbourhoods in the region that meet our housing standard are usually government-subsidised units that are owner-occupied rather than rented, so we could not obtain reliable rental prices for these houses; (iii) The remaining available rentals are either significantly above our standard, or fall well below the acceptable housing standard (backyard dwellings and shacks).

Having collected a small sample of usable housing data on our initial visits we took the following approach. We collected additional rental price data from online listings across the study area, focusing on the lowest cost formal housing units being advertised that met our minimum standards of decency. We also engaged with local rental agents who provided their insights on typical rental costs, housing availability, and existing constraints in the low-cost rental market. Several agents also shared data on available rental stock with us. Following this, we made detailed follow-up visits to the towns in our study region. We re-interviewed workers, with a particular focus on those renting accommodation off-farm. During these visits, we were able to visit many more farmworker houses, as well as some of those occupied by neighbours.

Our aim was to obtain cost estimates that reflect what workers would need to pay for basic acceptable housing in the Cape Winelands, and this combination of methods allowed us to collect usable information on 83 dwellings in total. After excluding unsuitable houses, including on-farm housing, we were able to use data from 48 houses to estimate rental costs. On-farm housing was visited but is not included in our cost calculations. Table 6 gives an example of the information collected for each dwelling, and the full list is provided in the Appendix. We found several dozen houses that cost between R 1,000–R 2,500 per month, but almost all of these fell below a reasonable standard of decency. Dwellings that largely met the housing standard typically ranged from R 3,000 to R 7,000 per month, depending on size, location, and other amenities. All rental amounts include rates (water, refuse removal, and sewerage) but none include the cost of electricity or gas, and this cost is calculated in the next subsection.

Using the rental data, we calculated the cost of acceptable housing by first establishing a price per sq. m. and then estimating the equivalent cost of a 48 sq. m. house (interior space). Given that our rental estimates range widely, and those collected online were often above the basic standard, we take the rental cost at the 30th percentile. This returns a rental cost of R 3,730 per month, where this is our estimate of what a low-wage household must pay to secure a dwelling that satisfies the basic standards of health and decency in the Cape Winelands, before adding the costs of electricity and gas.

Table 6. Selected examples of housing data collected in Cape Winelands

Dwelling #	Acceptable standard Yes/No	Rent per month	Number and types of rooms	Interior space in square meters	Price per sq. m. in Rand	Comments
1	Yes	R 2,600	2 BR, 1 K	48	54	Small 2-bed; limited lounge space; busy street.
2	Yes	R 3,100	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	52	60	Backyard house; shared entrance; mixed formal/informal area.
3	Yes	R 4,200	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	53	79	Compact cottage; quiet street; basic built-in cupboards.
4	Yes	R 5,100	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	52	98	Good neighbourhood, nice condition house. Some small signs of wear (wall cracks) but nothing substantial. Minor roof leaks reported in winter but landlord to repair.
5	Yes	R 6,350	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	55	115	Good neighbourhood; tidy, well-maintained unit and no major obvious issues.
6	Yes	R 7,000	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	72	97	Small 2-bed house; off-street parking; suburb.

Notes: BR refers to bedroom, K refers to kitchen, LR refers to living room, B refers to bathroom.

Source: Authors.

7.3 Utility costs

Utility costs typically include rates charged by municipalities for services to the dwelling – water, refuse (garbage) removal, and sewerage – as well as the cost of electricity and other fuels (such as gas for cooking and heating). To estimate the cost of utilities, we combine two complementary approaches. First, we use the expenditure share for utilities from the IES data as a starting point and calculate the Rand amount spent by households at the 4th decile. Second, we construct independent estimates based on municipal tariff data for each of the local municipalities within the study region, and usage estimates based on worker interviews as well as secondary data. Importantly, in the house price data collected, all rental amounts include the cost of municipal services (where they are provided) but do not include the cost of electricity or gas. As such we do not estimate the cost of municipal services here since they will not add an additional cost the housing rental amount estimated above.

Our focus groups and worker interviews revealed that many farmworker households use a combination of both electricity and gas in the household. From our first approach, the IES data records spending on electricity and gas for households at the 4th decile to be

approximately R 580 per month. As an alternative approach, we collected the latest published rates for electricity directly from municipal tariff schedules. These were averaged across municipalities in the region to produce a representative estimate for each item.

Gas prices were obtained from Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, and monthly fuel price bulletins, and verified against retail prices from major local suppliers (Afrox, Total, Oryx) (DPRE, 2019; Hughes and Larmour, 2021). To estimate household consumption of electricity and gas we use reported usage from worker interviews and check this against average household consumption data published by Statistics South Africa. According to these sources, a typical worker household consumes 250–350 kWh of electricity (depending on household size and access to appliances) and uses one 9 kg cylinder of gas.³⁹ Given that many households combine electricity with gas for cooking or heating, we use the lower amount for electricity usage. This produces a monthly cost for electricity and gas of R630 and R 150, respectively. Given that these costs were consistently identified by workers as being difficult to manage, we use the higher amounts estimated using tariff schedules.

Our total estimate of housing costs that meet a required standard of decency in the Cape Winelands region is R 4,510, with R 3,730 for rent including municipal rates and R 780 for electricity and gas per month, as summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Estimated total cost of housing for Cape Winelands (Rands)

Item	Cost per month
Rent	R 3,730
Utilities	
Cooking fuel (gas)	R 150
Electricity	R 630
Added Cost of Utilities	R 780
Total housing costs per month	R 4,510

Source: Authors.

8. NON-FOOD NON-HOUSING COSTS

In the Anker Methodology, the third part of estimating living expenses involves estimating the cost of all other essential items considered necessary for a decent standard of living in the study location, beyond food and housing. These non-food non-housing (NFNH) expenses include health care, education, transportation, clothing and footwear, household furnishings and equipment, personal care products, communication, childcare, leisure activities,

³⁹ These benchmarks align with the policy thresholds for providing utility subsidies (6 kL of water and 50 kWh free electricity per month) and provide a realistic basis for estimating utility costs.

and other basic needs, depending on the local context. Estimating NFNH costs relies on household expenditure data from existing national surveys, unlike food and housing where costs are based on normative standards (a nutritious model diet and a local healthy housing standard).

A preliminary estimate of NFNH costs is calculated using secondary data from the latest IES (2022/23) data. We focus on households at the 4th decile of the expenditure distribution, which is above the national poverty line but not affluent – it must avoid replicating deprivation-based spending patterns to be appropriate for a living-wage estimate. The ratio between NFNH expenditures and food expenditures for these households is calculated, and this ratio is multiplied by the cost of the model diet for the reference family to arrive at a preliminary estimate of NFNH costs. The next step involves doing post checks based on primary data collected in the field to ensure that the NFNH estimate includes sufficient funds for health care and education, since these are considered universal human rights in the Anker Methodology.

Table 8 outlines the main components of NFNH expenditures, which includes clothing, footwear, household operation and furnishings, education, communication, recreation, transportation, and other miscellaneous goods and services. Consistent with the Anker Methodology, two main adjustments are made to the expenditure shares in the survey data – tobacco is excluded as it is considered unnecessary for decency, and a portion of meals away from home is reclassified to food to represent the food component of restaurant meals.⁴⁰

Table 8. Percentage distribution of household expenditures for households at the 4th decile of the household expenditure distribution for non-metro urban areas of the Western Cape (2022/23).

Major expenditure group	Sub-major expenditure group	% total expenditure in secondary data	Adjustment explanation	% after adjustment
FOOD	Food and non-alcoholic beverages	27.7		28.2
	Food and non-alcoholic beverages	27.7	No adjustment	27.7
	Restaurants and meals away from home		Added half portion of the catering	0.4
HOUSING		39.9	No adjustment	39.9

⁴⁰ We make no adjustment for private vehicles because low-income households in the region do not commonly own private cars, and vehicle costs are already minimal in the 4th decile. Alcohol is retained in the NFNH calculation, as the spending amounts are small.

Major expenditure group	Sub-major expenditure group	% total expenditure in secondary data	Adjustment explanation	% after adjustment
NON-FOOD NON-HOUSING (NFNH)				
Alcohol and tobacco		1.6	Tobacco excluded	0.8
Clothing & footwear		6.9	No adjustment	6.9
Household furnishings and equipment		1.8	No adjustment	1.8
Education		0.1	No adjustment	0.1
Health care		0.5	No adjustment	0.5
Transportation		6.1	No adjustment	6.1
Communication		3.9	No adjustment	3.9
Recreation and culture		1.2	No adjustment	1.2
Restaurants and food away from home		0.9	Moved half portion of catering to food	0.5
Miscellaneous		8.7	No adjustment	8.7
TOTAL NFNH		32.3		31.1
NFNH/Food ratio		1.17		1.10

Source: Authors based on IES 2022/23.

Using the adjusted expenditure the resulting shares for the 4th decile of households in the urban Western Cape are:

- Food (adjusted): 28.2%
- Housing: 39.9%
- NFNH (adjusted): 31.1%

This yields a preliminary NFNH-to-Food ratio of 1.10, meaning that for every R 1 needed for food according to the model diet, approximately R 1.10 is required for all other essential non-food, non-housing expenditure. This ratio provides the basis for estimating the preliminary NFNH cost for the reference family. Multiplying the monthly cost of the model diet by 1.10 results in a preliminary estimated cost for NFNH of R 3,521 per month. The final NFNH amount is established after post checks for education and healthcare spending, which are described in Section 9. This is to ensure that the NFNH allowance we have estimated is consistent with the real minimum needs of workers according to fieldwork data collected in the study region.

9. POST CHECKS ON HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION COSTS

Basing the cost of health care and education on an uncritical use of NFNH data from the IES runs the risk of underestimating the amounts required for services that are considered human rights. This is because if families have limited income then reported expenditure on these categories may be less than the amounts actually required to ensure adequate health care and education. In the Anker Methodology, a post check for these human rights is therefore carried out to make sure that sufficient funds are available. Table 9 indicates the amounts included in the preliminary estimate of NFNH costs for health care and education. The reported expenditure on education and healthcare, for households at the 4th decile in our study region, is particularly low.

Table 9. Amounts allowed for health care and education in the preliminary NFNH estimate for Cape Winelands

	% all household expenditures	% adjusted NFNH expenditure	Amount in preliminary NFNH estimate (Rands, per month)
Health care	0.53	1.21	R 43
Education	0.15	0.34	R 12

Source: Authors.

The post checks involve a rapid assessment of local costs for health care and education, which is cross checked against the amounts included in the preliminary NFNH estimate. This exercise uses information gathered in the study area from health facilities (clinics, pharmacies, hospitals, dentists, opticians, etc.), schools (pre-primary, primary, secondary), key informants and information from relevant national and provincial reports.

9.1 Health care post check

South Africa's healthcare system operates on a two-tier structure, with a large publicly funded system that serves most of the population and a smaller private system accessed mainly by higher-income earners. Roughly 85% of South Africans rely on public healthcare provision. Nationally there are major challenges in the public system including long waiting times, staff shortages, and medicine stock-outs. However, the Western Cape's public health system has a record of relatively stronger performance than in many other provinces (Gilson et al., 2024). In general, public care is viable for most routine health issues, but it may not meet the full spectrum of health-care needs (such specialist referral or time-sensitive cases) without significant trade-offs in quality or time.

For many agricultural areas of Western Cape, public clinics often rely on an outreach model in addition to facilities located within towns. In this model, local facilities are supported by community health workers and nurse-led teams that travel to farms and more remote

communities.⁴¹ The services offered during these visits include screening for HIV/TB/NCDs, distributing chronic medications, and referring people to the nearest facility if needed.⁴² This mobile system appears to function relatively well according to participants in our focus groups, and available secondary reporting.⁴³ However, it is not without issues, and among workers needing specialist care, elective procedures, or faster service, the public outreach and local public system may not always suffice. Therefore, we account for some access to a private medical service in our post check estimates.

Healthcare costs in the public system are relatively progressive, determined by the Uniform Patient Fee Schedule (UPFS)⁴⁴, which applies income-based subsidies to patients. Individuals who receive social grants or are formally unemployed receive services free of charge, while low-income households⁴⁵ pay a nominal share of 10–25% of the full public tariff. Middle-income households contribute 50–75% of the public tariff, and higher-income or insured patients pay the full public rate. This results in relatively low out-of-pocket costs for public healthcare among low-income households, though patients would still incur transport costs and may face long waiting periods.

For post checks on health expenditure, we gathered information on costs in the following way. We used publicly available fee schedules, as well as data collected from local hospitals, clinics, doctors, and pharmacies in the study region, to estimate average costs. We consider public clinics free of charge, with costs incurred only for hospital admissions or specialist consultations. The applicable costs are income dependent and were categorised based on the sliding-scale structure applied in public facilities. For private healthcare, we collected consultation fees from a sample of general practitioners across the Cape Wine-lands region and used the average of these prices for our estimates.

To capture the cost of diagnostic tests, we use data from two main laboratories in the area, focusing on the tests most frequently requested in public hospitals.⁴⁶ For the cost of dental services we used the average of the basic consultation fee charged by several dentists in each of the selected towns in the region. For pharmaceuticals, we identified the three most purchased medicines – antibiotics, flu medication, and a generic paracetamol (Panado) – based on discussions with workers during focus groups and individual interviews, as well as consultations with local pharmacists. Prices for these medicines were collected from multiple pharmacies and averaged. Finally, for optician services, we collected prices for standard eye tests and a basic glasses package from several opticians in the Winelands, again taking the average across providers.

41 According to workers in our focus groups and interviews, a mobile clinic team typically visited farms every 4–6 weeks.

42 <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/health-wellness/article/nurses-wheels-bring-healthcare-rural-door-steps#:~:text=The%20mobile%20clinic%20is%20staffed,tracking%20and%20general%20health%20screening>
<https://www.westerncape.gov.za/health-wellness/article/63-mobile-clinics-ensuring-access-quality-healthcare-western-cape>

43 <https://www.parliament.gov.za/news/bringing-health-services-farmworkers-remote-areas-western-cape>; <https://www.spotlightnsp.co.za/2024/12/09/how-healthcare-workers-are-being-trained-to-meet-the-needs-of-rural-communities/>

44 <https://www.health.gov.za/uniform-patient-fee-schedule/>

45 Low-income is determined as having annual income below R 70,000 for singles, or R 100,000 for families.

46 These are tests for HIV viral load, full blood count, urea and electrolytes, liver function.

In estimating annual health expenditure, we assumed an average of four health-related visits per person per year, comprising three public-sector visits and one private-sector visit. Within the three public visits, we further assumed a typical pattern of two visits to a clinic and one hospital visit, reflecting the referral structure and service use common among lower-income households. For optical care, we assume that 1 person per household would need to visit an optician and made allowance for the equivalent of one new pair of glasses every three years. For dental care, we assume that 1 person in the household visits the dentist every year. These assumptions were combined with the locally collected cost data to derive an annualised estimate of health expenditure per person, shown in Table 10. The final estimate is that a basic but adequate access to health care for a household in the study region costs R 89 per month. This is R 46 more than the amount in the preliminary NFNH for healthcare (R 43) and for this reason we increase the amount for healthcare by R 50.

Table 10. Estimated health care costs for reference size family in Cape Winelands (in Rands)

Type of provider	Cost per visit per person	No. of visits per year per person	Total cost per year
	(1)	(2)	(3) = (1) x (2)
Public provider			
Clinic Consultation fee	0.00	2.5	0.00
Medicine from Clinic	0.00	2.5	0.00
Hospital Consultation fee (includes medicine, laboratory tests)	47	0.5	23
Dentist	0.00	0.75	0.00
Assistive device (e.g. glasses, hearing aid) @ 10% of full-cost	87	0.083	7
Private provider			
Consultation fee	581	1	581
Laboratory test	484	0.5	242
Pharmacy			
Medicine	112	1	112
Dentist			
Visit and routine care	448	0.25	112
Optician			
Visit	235	0.083	20
Glasses	1,770	0.083	148
Total cost per person per year			267
Total cost per family per month			89

Source: Authors.

9.2 Education post check

The right to a basic education in South Africa is constitutionally guaranteed⁴⁷ and school enrolment rates are high – gross enrolment rates are near 100% for both primary school and secondary school.⁴⁸ In practice, there are three main pillars that support this right to education at the national level: (i) the existence of no-fee schools in lower-income areas; (ii) a comprehensive school nutrition program; (iii) and the provision of scholar transport.

Access to the publicly funded education system depends broadly on household income. All schools are classified into quintiles (1 to 5) based on socio-economic and resource indicators in the surrounding area, where schools in quintiles 1–3 are the most disadvantaged and are designated no-fee schools, while schools in quintiles 4 and 5 are fee-charging schools. Put simply, the Government wholly subsidises schools in quintiles 1 to 3 and partially subsidises schools in quintiles 4 and 5. Many workers in our study area live in relatively low-income areas and no-fee schools are the most affordable schooling option for their children. In 2025, across the Cape Winelands and Overberg district municipalities there were a total of 354 schools, of which 160 were ‘no-fee’ primary schools, 33 were ‘no-fee’ secondary schools, and 16 were combined ‘no-fee’ schools. No-fee schools thus make up around 60% of all schools in the study region and over 137,000 learners attend these schools.⁴⁹ For this study we consider attending a no-fee school to be acceptable.

Regarding transport, a Learner Transport Scheme (LTS) is administered by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and provides free transport for qualifying learners who attend no-fee or low-fee public schools. Learners qualify for free state-funded transport if they attend the closest appropriate public school, live more than 5 km from the school, and there is no suitable public transport available along the route. Priority is given to learners from no-fee schools and to low-income households and parents must apply for the service. According to the latest data from WCED, 67,425 learners use the provincial learner transport programme, which is approximately 15% of all learners at quintile 1–3 schools. Moreover, in the Western Cape over half of all students walk to school (57%).⁵⁰ Given the LTS system, the large share of learners who walk to school, and the fact that school transport expenditure is already included in the NFNH estimate above, we do not include an additional amount for school transport.

Additional schooling costs that may not be adequately accounted for in the NSNH include school uniforms and school bags; stationery, textbooks, and workbooks; as well as contributions to school fundraising activities and extracurriculars: Parents in our focus groups and interviews frequently cited these costs as being burdensome. To cost school supplies we obtained a typical stationery list from primary schools and secondary schools in the region and prices for each item on these lists were then collected from a range of local

47 As per Section 29 of the Constitution of South Africa.

48 World Bank Databank, 2025, School enrolment data for primary and secondary.

49 Department of Basic Education: <https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/2023/WC%20No%20Fee%20Schools%202025%20list.pdf?ver=2024-10-02-093829-247>

50 StatsSA (2020), National Household Travel Survey.

stationery and retail stores, and average costs were calculated separately for primary and secondary levels. For school uniforms, based on focus group discussion we collected price data from clothing and school uniform shops across the region, covering all school-age categories. The prices were then averaged for children below 13 years to represent primary school costs, and for those aged 13+ to represent secondary school costs. Information on the cost of school trips and school fundraising were collected during worker interviews and cross-checked with local primary and secondary schools in each of the towns in the study region. The estimated annual costs based on our post check data are collated in Table 11, with a final monthly amount for schooling costs for a reference family household totalling R 320 per month.

Table 11. Estimated costs for education of children through secondary school for reference size family in the Cape Winelands (in Rands)

Type of expense	Primary School (incl pre-primary)	Secondary School
School supplies (e.g. pens, notebooks, school bag)	412	896
Uniforms	863	900
Transport	0	0
School trips	550	1,770
School fundraising	120	240
Total of above expenses (1)	1,944	3,806
Number of years in each level (2)	8	5
Total cost x number of years in level (3) = (1) x (2)	15,554	19,031
Average cost per child per year (4) = (3) ÷ 18		1,921
Average cost for reference family per year (5) = (4) x number of children in reference family		3,842
Average cost for reference family per month (6) = (5) ÷ 12		320

Source: Authors.

9.3 Post check summary and final non-food non-housing estimate

Table 12 summarizes the results of the above post checks and indicates the adjustments made to the preliminary NFNH estimate to ensure there is sufficient income available for health care and education. Based on the difference between the post check estimates and the original spending allocations in the IES data, we make the following adjustments. We increase the amount allocated to healthcare by R 50, bringing it in line with the post check amount. For education, the R 12 included in our preliminary NFNH estimate is far lower than our post check data analysis suggests and we increase the amount allocated to education by R 250. It is not increased to meet the full post check adjustment value given that school uniform costs are also included in the clothing expenditure category in NFNH expenditure. Indeed, our post check estimate for school uniforms equates to R 73/month, which is within

R 5 of the reported spending on uniforms in the IES data. As such, we do not include this in our post check adjustment. In total, our health and education post check adjustment adds R 300 per month to our NFNH estimate, increasing it from R 3,521 to R 3,821 per month.⁵¹

Table 12. Post check adjustments to preliminary non-food non-housing estimate (Rands)

Post check	Amount in preliminary NFNH estimate (1)	Amount from post check (2)	Difference (3) = (2) - (1)	Post check adjustment
Health care	43	89	46	50
Education	12	320	308	250
Total post check adjustments (1)				300
Preliminary NFNH estimate (2)				R 3,521
Adjusted NFNH estimate (3) = (1) + (2)				R 3,821

Source: Authors.

10. PROVISION FOR UNEXPECTED EVENTS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY

Unforeseen events and expenses can quickly push workers living at a basic standard into poverty and debt, from which it can be difficult to recover. This includes accidents, illnesses, deaths in the family, natural disasters, or any other unexpected event that results in substantial expenses for a family. In the Anker Methodology a small margin is added to the estimate of living costs to cover expenses from unexpected events and ensure sustainability. This margin is usually set at 5% of living costs but can be higher in exceptional circumstances. For this study, we added a margin of 5% of the total cost of living estimate, which amounts to R 576 per month.

In addition to this, we note that high levels of unemployment in the region (especially among young people) as well as cultural norms relating to providing for extended family present additional costs. To account for this, we allocate another 5% of overall living costs to family responsibility. The fact that family remittance payments are important to low-income household is well supported in the existing data, for example, remittances can account for up to 10% of total income for households in the lower deciles. This allocation amounts to R 605 per month.

⁵¹ The ARI (2013) study increased healthcare expenditure by R50 based on the post check assessment, and no change was made to education costs.

SECTION III.

LIVING WAGE FOR THE CAPE WINELANDS

11. NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT WORKERS IN FAMILY PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR A LIVING WAGE

It is reasonable to assume that more than one adult in the reference family contributes to household income through paid work, but that there are fewer than two full-time workers. This reflects three realities in the study area: (i) some adults of prime working age are not in the labour force (for example because of illness, extended job search, or unpaid care work); (ii) unemployment is high even among those who want to work; and (iii) a non-trivial share of employment is part-time. Following the Anker Methodology, we assume that one adult in the reference family is a full-time year-round worker. The expected contribution of the second adult is then calculated as a probability of full-time equivalent work, based on local labour market data for prime-age adults (25–59 years) as follows:

$$\text{Probability of full-time equivalent work per person} = (\text{LFPR}) \times (1.0 - \text{Unemployment rate}) \times (1.0 - (\text{Part-Time employment rate}/2))$$

Intuitively, this multiplies: (i) the chance that an adult is in the labour force, (ii) the chance that they are employed rather than unemployed, and (iii) an adjustment for the fact that part-time workers contribute less than one full-time worker. The part-time adjustment assumes that on average each part-time worker contributes half a full-time job, and so only half of the part-time employment rate is ‘lost’ when converting to full-time equivalents.

Calculating this formula using two representative datasets from Stats SA (QLFS, 2024; GHS, 2024) for non-metro areas of the Western Cape yields an estimated probability of full-time equivalent work of 66.7% for men and 56.4% for women aged 25–59 (Table 13). Taking the simple average of the male and female probabilities:

$$\text{Expected FTE contribution of second adult} \approx \frac{0.667 + 0.564}{2} = 0.62$$

Adding this to the one assumed full-time worker gives an estimated 1.62 full-time equivalent workers per reference family in the study area.⁵²

⁵² This is slightly lower than the ARI (2013) report which found a value of 1.64, based on a LFPR of 77.5% (we used 78.1%), and an unemployment rate of 17% (we used 16.5%).

Table 13. Number of full-time equivalent workers for urban non-metro Western Cape, 2024

Variable	Age group	Men	Women
Labor force participation rate (LFPR) (1)	25-59	83.6%	72.6%
Unemployment rate (2)	25-59	15.5%	17.6%
Part-time employment rate (3)	15+	11.1%	11.5%
Estimated percentage of full-time work (4) = (1)/100 x (1.0 - (2)/100) x (1.0 - (3)/2/100)	25-59	66.7%	56.4%
Number of full-time equivalent workers in the reference family		1.62	

Source: StatsSA (2024), Quarterly Labour Force Survey and General Household Survey, own calculations.

12. TAKE HOME PAY REQUIRED AND TAKING INCOME TAX AND MANDATORY PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS INTO ACCOUNT

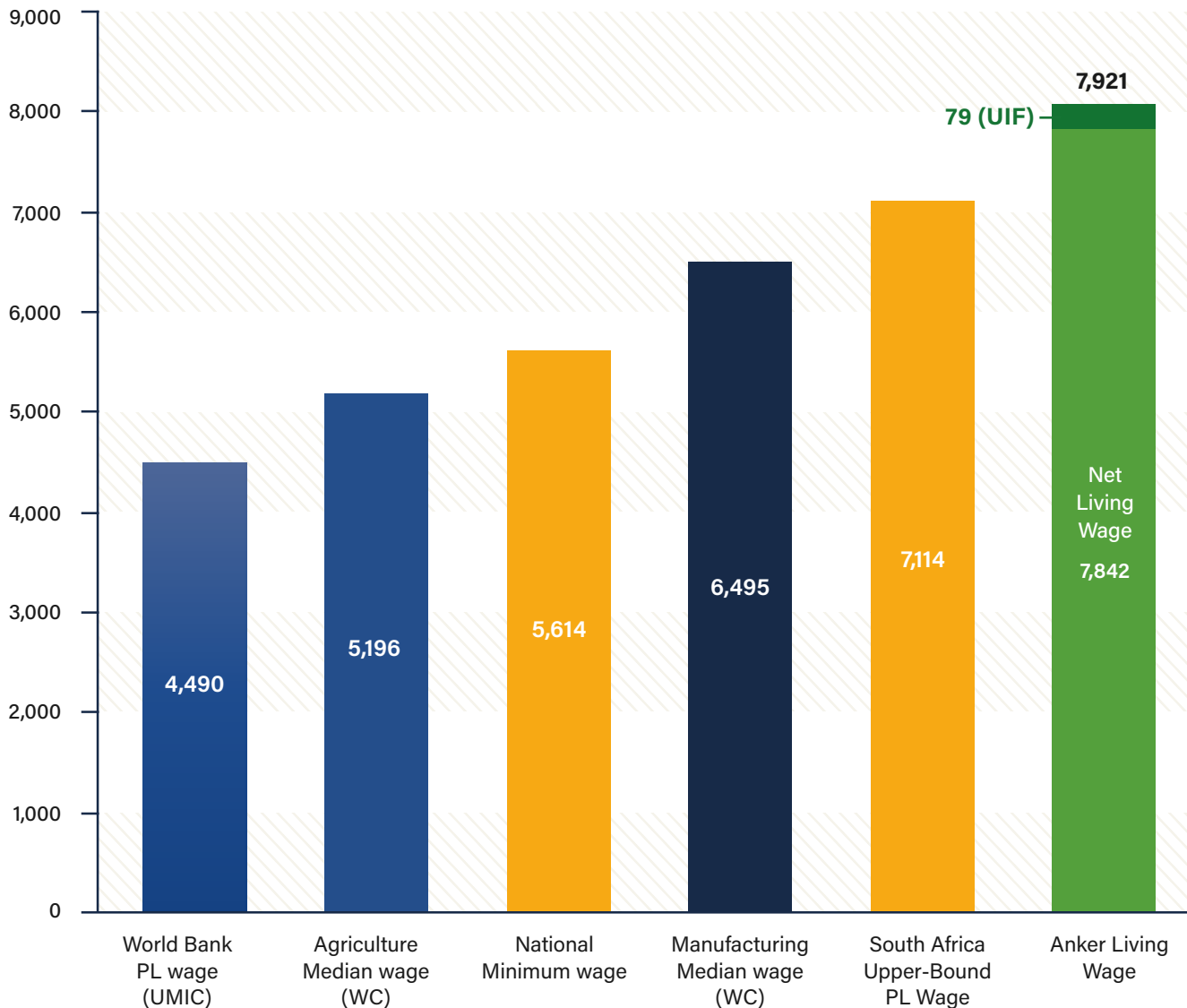
The net living wage is the take home pay required to ensure that there is sufficient income available to support a basic but decent quality lifestyle for a typical size family. The net living wage is determined by dividing total living costs for a typical size family by the number of full-time equivalent workers in the family that are providing support. Our estimate of the net living wage for the Cape Winelands is R 7,842 (USD 441) per month.

Statutory payroll deductions and required income tax needs to be added on to the net living wage to determine the gross living wage required (the living wage). In South Africa, the only relevant payroll deduction for workers in this case is for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), which is 1% of the monthly wage. Regarding income tax, the annual tax threshold for individuals under 65 is R 95,100 (which corresponds to approximately R 7,921 per month), but this is supplemented by a rebate for lower-income earnings.⁵³ The result is that workers earning the estimated living wage would pay no income tax, so this is not considered as a deduction.

13. LIVING WAGE IN CONTEXT: WAGE LADDER

Figure 6 presents a wage ladder that compares the estimated gross living wage for the Cape Winelands to a set of relevant wage benchmarks, including national and international poverty line wages, the national minimum wage, and median wages in the manufacturing sector. Indicators were adjusted for inflation to align with the 2025 reference year of this study, and poverty line wages were calculated by multiplying the per-capita poverty line by the reference family size and then dividing by the number of full-time workers.

⁵³ The annual value of the rebate in 2025 is R 17,235 – far larger than the amount earned above the tax threshold. See <https://www.sars.gov.za/tax-rates/income-tax/rates-of-tax-for-individuals/>

Figure 6. Wage ladder for Cape Winelands (Rands per month)

Notes: PL – Poverty Line; UMIC – Upper-Middle Income Country; WC – Western Cape; UIF – Unemployment Insurance Fund. A poverty line wage is calculated by multiplying the poverty line by the applicable family size (4) and dividing by the number of full-time equivalent workers (1.62). National minimum wage is calculated for a 45 hour work week [$28.79 \times (45 \times 52) / 12$].

Source: Authors.

As the figure shows, the gross living wage of R 7,921 per month exceeds the World Bank international poverty line wage by a large margin and is roughly 1.4 times the current national minimum wage (for a 45-hour week). Looking at agriculture specifically, the estimated living wage is 1.5 times the current sectoral median wage in the Western Cape – meaning that many farmworkers in the region earn significantly less than what is required for a basic but decent standard of living. The comparison with manufacturing median wages in the Western Cape also shows a substantial shortfall: the gross living wage is roughly 1.2 times

the median manufacturing wage in the province. The latest national upper-bound poverty line is approximately R 2,881 per person in August 2025 prices, meaning that a poverty line wage is R 7,114 – or 90% of the estimated gross living wage.

14. CONCLUSIONS

This report estimates a living wage for the Cape Winelands region of South Africa, in August 2025, using the Anker Methodology (Anker and Anker 2017). The living standard used to estimate the living wage is basic and produces an amount that represents a bare minimum level for decency. Our estimate of a living wage for the Cape Winelands is R 7,921 per month (USD 446).⁵⁴ This includes a mandatory payroll deduction for UIF that all workers on a living wage would be required to pay. The net living wage (i.e., take home pay after deductions) is R 7,842 per month (USD 441). Table 14 provides a summary of the details of the living wage estimate, and Table 15 contains the key assumptions on which the living wage was estimated.

This benchmark study combines extensive primary data collection, with detailed analysis of secondary data. Each element of the living wage amount was constructed using replicable methods based on the Anker Research Institute's methodology. The living wage benchmark relies on cautious assumptions applied throughout the estimation process, to ensure that the living wage does not overstate individual and household needs but meets a basic standard of decency. The model diet is grounded in inexpensive, widely consumed foods purchased in low-cost outlets, and includes limited quantities of higher-cost items. Similarly, the housing standard reflects a minimum acceptable threshold of decency: a small dwelling for a family of four with the necessary basic amenities, and utilities costs are estimated using lower end consumption rates. Likewise, post check education and healthcare costs are based on subsidised services where applicable, and marginal adjustments were made to reconcile education costs with the NFNH expenditure shares after our post check assessment.

Our estimated living wage is above the current median wage in the agricultural sector in the province, and approximately 1.5 times the value of the monthly minimum wage. It provides a credible estimate of what it costs for a worker and their family to live with basic decency in the Cape Winelands and is intended as a guide to ensure that economic activity in the region is sustainable and aligned with the dignity and well-being of the workers who underpin it. A commitment to closing the existing wage gap will require concerted effort and shared responsibility across the full value chain.

54 USD values are presented for expositional purposes only because exchange rates are volatile.

Table 14. Summary calculations for living wage estimate for Western Cape Non-Metro, South Africa

PART I: FAMILY EXPENSES		
	ZAR	USD
Food costs per month for reference family (1)	3,192	180
Food cost per person per day	27.78	1.56
Value of free school meal	1.55	0.09
Final food cost per person per day	26.24	1.48
Housing costs per month (2)	4,510	254
Rent per month for acceptable housing	3,730	210
Utility costs per month	780	44
Non-food non-housing (NFNH) costs per month taking into consideration post check adjustments (3)	3,821	215
Preliminary estimate of NFNH costs per month	3,521	198
Health care post check adjustment	50	3
Education post check adjustment	250	14
Additional amount (5%) for sustainability and emergencies (4)	576	32
Additional amount (5%) for family responsibility (5)	605	34
Total living costs per month for basic but decent living standard for reference family (6) [6 = 1+2+3+4+5]	12,704	715
PART II: LIVING WAGE PER MONTH		
NET LIVING WAGE PER MONTH (7) [7 = 6/# full-time workers]	7,842	441
Statutory deductions from pay (8)		
Statutory payroll deductions (UIF)	79	4
Income tax	0	-
GROSS LIVING WAGE PER MONTH (9) [9 = 7+8]	7,921	446

Note: USD exchange rate used to determine USD values are for June to August 2025. They are presented for expositional purposes only, because exchange rates are volatile.

Source: Authors.

Table 15. Key values and assumptions for living wage estimate

Study date	August, 2025
Study location(s)	Cape Winelands, South Africa
Exchange rate of local currency to USD	R 17.77 = USD 1
Reference family size	4
Number of children in reference family	2
Number of full-time equivalent workers in reference family	1.62
Number of regular working hours per work week	45
Number of regular workdays per month	21.67
Preliminary NFNH to food ratio	1.10

Source: Authors.

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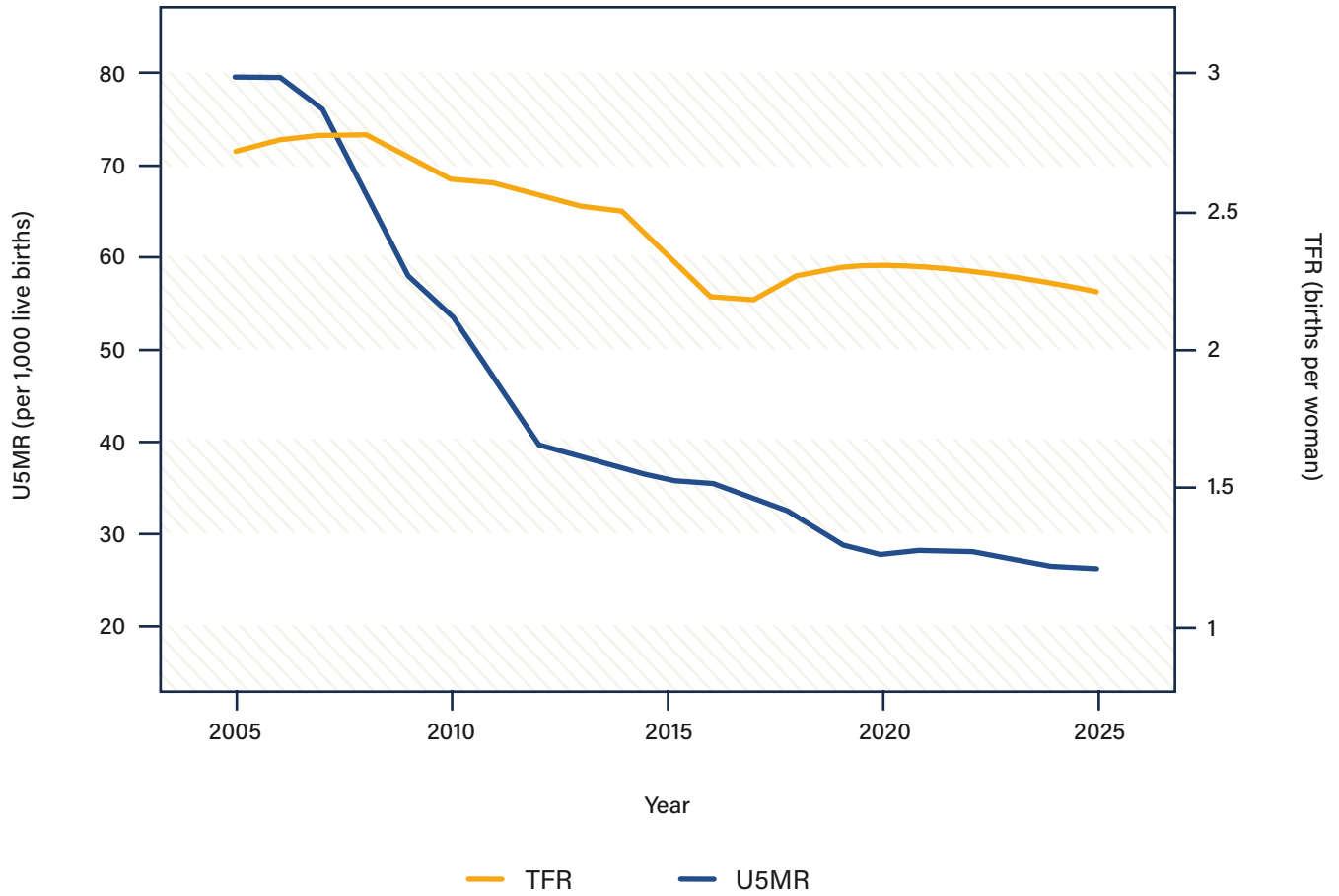
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APPENDICES

Figure A1. Trends in fertility and under-5 mortality: 2005-2025



Source: StatsSA (2025), Mid-year population estimates.

Table A1. Description and cost of rental housing visited in Cape Winelands Region

Dwelling #	Accept-able standard	Rent per month	Number and types of rooms	Interior space in square meters	Price per sq. m.	Comments
	Yes/No					
1	Yes	R 5,100	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	52	R 98	Good neighbourhood, nice condition house. Some small signs of wear (wall cracks etc.) but nothing substantial. And some roof leaks reported
2	Yes	R 5,000	3 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	46	R 109	Good neighbourhood, nice condition house. Not sealed well for weather
3	Yes	R 6,000	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	34	R 176	Good neighbourhood; neat, well-maintained apartment in good condition
4	Yes	R 5,500	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	32	R 172	1 Bedroom Flat to rent in a quiet neighbourhood for a single person. Open plan kitchen and a lounge area. Parking Space under Carport
5	Yes	R 5,500	1 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	32	R 172	Bachelor flat; quiet area; carport; WiFi & water included; prepaid electricity; single person
6	Yes	R 7,000	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	72	R 97	Small 2-bed house; off-street parking only; excl. municipal services; prepaid electricity
7	Yes	R 6,500	1 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	90	R 72	Spacious furnished farm cottage; patio & views; Wi-Fi
8	Yes	R 7,900	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	66	R 120	Spacious 2-bed flat; municipal services included; prepaid power; no pets
9	Yes	R 6,950	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	55	R 126	Two-bedroom cottage on shared property; water & utilities included; excludes prepaid electricity & gas; 1 vehicle limit; max 2 people.
10	Yes	R 8,500	3 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	68	R 125	Freestanding townhouse; cul-de-sac; gas geyser; small garden; 1 parking
11	No	R 3,300	1 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	40	R 83	Secluded farm cottage; gas geyser; solar for 12 V lights; no Eskom power; water included. This is off-grid

Dwelling #	Accept-able standard	Rent per month	Number and types of rooms	Interior space in square meters	Price per sq. m.	Comments
	Yes/No					
12	Yes	R 7,500	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	52	R 144	Good standard semi-detached house. No issues noted, has all amenities
13	Yes	R 5,000	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	29	R 172	
14	Yes	R 6,000	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	40	R 150	Good standard one bedroom flat. No issues noted, has all amenities
15	Yes	R 6,350	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	55	R 115	Good neighbourhood; tidy, well-maintained unit and no major issues noted in the listing
16	Yes	R 4,700	Combined living/sleeping area with kitchenette, 1 B	30	R 157	Bachelor (studio) flat with a kitchenette and a separate bathroom
17	Yes	R 6,900	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	58	R 119	2-bed, 1-bath ground-floor flat in a secure complex with kitchen and a living area opening via patio doors to the communal garden, plus one carport
18	Yes	R 6,750	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	58	R 116	2-bed, 1-bath flat in a secure complex with afdak (carport) parking
19	Yes	R 4,500	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	36	R 125	Flatlet on the property next to the main house
20	Yes	R 5,500	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	40	R 138	1-bed, 1-bath with kitchen (no stove) and a small living area
21	Yes	R 2,000	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	40	R 50	Subsidized farm house in good condition
22	Yes	R 7,500	2 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	50	R 150	Access-controlled complex; prepaid water & electricity
23	Yes	R 5,200	Studio: 1 BR area, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	30	R 173	Semi-furnished bachelor; private entrance; undercover parking; quiet area
24	Yes	R 6,000	2 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	52	R 115	Secure complex; BICs; family bathroom; prepaid electricity
25	Yes	R 3,800	1 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	38	R 100	Large open-plan kitchen/living; 1 garage; separate entrance

Dwelling #	Accept-able standard	Rent per month	Number and types of rooms	Interior space in square meters	Price per sq. m.	Comments
	Yes/No					
26	Yes	R 5,150	1 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	38	R 136	1-bedroom granny flat with a bathroom (with bath) and a kitchen area big enough for a small dining set
27	Yes	R 8,500	2 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	76	R 112	2-bed, 2-bath cottage with an open-plan lounge/diner/kitchen on a working farm
28	Yes	R 3,000	1 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	30	R 100	Bachelor unit in a shared property” with private bedroom/kitchen/bathroom, targeted at a single tenant
29	Yes	R 5,950	0.5 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	30	R 198	bachelor (0.5-bed) studio with an open-plan living/sleeping area, small kitchen (no stove), and a bathroom with shower
30	Yes	R 3,000	2 BR, 1 BT, 1 K	48	R 63	Good condition but needs some maintenance work
31	No	R 1,600	2 BR, 1 K, 1 B,	30	R 53	Roof in bad condition
32	No	R 1,500	1 BR, 1 K, 0 B	25	R 60	Floor not stable, bad condition
33	Yes	R 3,250	1 BR, 1 BT, 1 K	30	R 108	Decent house in the area
34	Yes	R 4,500	2 BR, 1 K, 1 B	40	R 113	House in a decent area
35	Yes	R 6,200	3 BR, 1 B, 1 K	50	R 124	Leaking roof, not good condition. Rates the house condition 6/10
36	Yes	R 1,500	2 BR, 1 LR, 1 K	48	R 31	Renting from a family member, water is included in the rent
37	Yes	R 4,000	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	48	R 83	Decent 2-bedroom house in a quiet area, including water
38	Yes	R 2,500	1 BR, 1 L, 1 K	32	R 78	RDP-style house
39	No	R 2,500	1 BR, 1 K	25	R 100	renting shack/wendy; in a quiet place a bit more - R2,500
40	Yes	R 3,000	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	32	R 94	RDP house
41	No	R 1,000	1 BR, 0 BT, 1 K	25	R 40	Wendy house, in bad condition, no proper ventilation

Dwelling #	Accept-able standard	Rent per month	Number and types of rooms	Interior space in square meters	Price per sq. m.	Comments
	Yes/No					
42	Yes	R 9,500	2 BR, 1 K/LR (open-plan)	74	R 128	Owner listing on Gumtree; water & Wi-Fi included per ad copy
43	Yes	R 10,250	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	52	R 197	2-bed/1-bath house with a separate lounge and kitchen
44	No	R 1,300	1 room	28	R 46	Thin corrugated iron walls; leaks in roof; bucket toilet; no ceiling
45	No	R 1,700	1 BR, 1 K	30	R 57	Very cramped; uninsulated; no electricity connection; dirt floor patches
46	No	R 2,000	2 BR, 1 K	33	R 61	Poor structure; patched metal sheets; bucket system; unsafe wiring
47	No	R 1,500	1 room	26	R 58	Single-room shack; no windows that open; no insulation; roof gaps visible
48	No	R 2,100	2 BR, 1 K	35	R 60	Two small rooms; thin walls; shared standpipe; bucket toilet
49	No	R 1,800	1 BR, 1 K	32	R 56	Corrugated unit; leaks in heavy rain; no ceiling; illegal electricity tap-off
50	No	R 1,900	2 BR	34	R 56	Very unstable wooden supports; no insulation; uses bucket at night
51	No	R 1,600	1 room	24	R 67	Extremely small; overheats in summer; no formal electricity; open drain nearby
52	No	R 1,900	2 BR, 1 K	31	R 61	Cramped 2-room dwelling; broken door; no ceiling; bucket sanitation
53	No	R 1,700	1 BR	25	R 68	Small metal-walled shack; patched roofing; no insulation; mostly uses candles & informal electrical connection
54	No	R 2,200	2 BR, 1 K	32	R 69	Basic 2-bedroom structure in informal settlement; small yard

Dwelling #	Accept-able standard	Rent per month	Number and types of rooms	Interior space in square meters	Price per sq. m.	Comments
	Yes/No					
55	No	R 1,900	1 BR, 1 K	34	R 56	Single-room shack with separate kitchen area; informal services
56	No	R 2,200	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	40	R 55	Simple house with small living room; unpaved road access
57	Yes	R 3,300	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	39	R 85	Backyard flat behind main house; shared yard and gate
58	Yes	R 2,800	1 BR, 1 K	47	R 60	Semi-detached unit; basic finishes; prepaid electricity
59	Yes	R 3,400	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	52	R 65	Two-bedroom backyard house; close to main road
60	Yes	R 4,400	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	49	R 90	Small formal house; walled yard; paved street
61	Yes	R 5,000	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	60	R 83	Neat 2-bed semi; off-street parking; near schools
62	Yes	R 4,600	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	59	R 78	Corner plot house; tiled floors; secure fence
63	Yes	R 4,200	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	53	R 79	Compact cottage; quiet street; basic built-in cupboards
64	No	R 2,000	1 BR, 1 K	41	R 49	One-room shack plus kitchen; pit toilet nearby
65	No	R 2,400	2 BR, 1 K	39	R 62	Two-room structure; shared outside tap; informal road
66	No	R 2,100	2 BR, 1 K	33	R 64	Very small 2-bed unit; basic corrugated structure
67	Yes	R 3,200	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	44	R 73	Backyard house; shared driveway; prepaid meter
68	Yes	R 3,600	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	49	R 73	Semi-detached; small lounge; close to taxi route
69	Yes	R 3,300	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	51	R 65	Granny flat at back; secure gate; mixed housing area
70	Yes	R 4,600	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	63	R 73	Formal RDP-style house; paved street; fenced yard
71	Yes	R 5,200	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	58	R 90	Newer build; open-plan living room; good condition
72	Yes	R 4,000	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	52	R 77	Older house; basic finishes; walking distance to shops

Dwelling #	Accept-able standard	Rent per month	Number and types of rooms	Interior space in square meters	Price per sq. m.	Comments
	Yes/No					
73	Yes	R 4,700	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	61	R 77	Standard 2-bed; enclosed stoep; quiet working-class street
74	No	R 2,100	2 BR, 1 K	43	R 49	Two-room shack; shared standpipe; limited services
75	No	R 2,300	2 BR, 1 K	44	R 52	Informal structure; small yard; close to main gravel road
76	No	R 1,900	1 BR, 1 K	38	R 50	Single-room unit; corrugated iron; communal toilet
77	Yes	R 3,100	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	52	R 60	Backyard house; shared entrance; mixed formal/informal area
78	Yes	R 3,600	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	54	R 67	Flat attached to main house; basic but neat
79	Yes	R 2,600	2 BR, 1 K	40	R 65	Small 2-bed; limited lounge space; busy street
80	Yes	R 4,100	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	55	R 75	Standard 2-bed; paved road; close to clinic
81	Yes	R 4,500	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	57	R 79	Compact house; walled yard; on taxi route
82	Yes	R 4,800	2 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	62	R 77	Freestanding house; carport; solid brick structure
83	Yes	R 4,100	1 BR, 1 K, 1 LR	48	R 85	Small but modern unit; tiled; secure boundary wall

Notes: BR refers to bedroom, K refers to kitchen, LR refers to living room, B refers to bathroom.

Source: Authors.