



City of Johannesburg
Language Policy for the Metropolitan
Municipality of Johannesburg

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Definitions

In this policy, unless otherwise indicated, the following terminologies are used:

“Administration” refers to the administrative arm of the City of Johannesburg,

“City” refers to the Municipality of the City of Johannesburg,

“Committees” refers to the Section 79 and Section 80 and any other Committees established by Council,

“Council” refers to full council meetings of the Municipal Council of the City of Johannesburg,

“Five Official Languages” refers to the five official languages spoken in the area of the City of Johannesburg, namely isiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana, English and Afrikaans in terms of the National Census 1996 to 2011 for the City of Johannesburg.

1. Name of Policy

Language Policy of the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

2. Background and Context

Introduction

A person’s language is in many ways a ‘second skin’, a natural possession of every normal human being, which we use to express our hopes and ideals, to articulate our thoughts and values, to explore our experienced customs, and to construct our society and the laws that govern it. It is through language that we function as human beings in an ever-changing world. The right to use the official language of one’s choice has therefore being recognized in our Bill of Rights and our Constitution acknowledges that the languages of our people are a resource that should be harnessed.

Approximately 25 – 30 different languages are spoken in South Africa, of which 11 have been granted official status in terms of Section 6 of the Constitution on the grounds that their usage covers 98% of the total population.

The 11 official languages are isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and siSwati (referred to as the Nguni language group); Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana (referred to as the Sotho language group); Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English and Afrikaans.

South Africa is therefore a multilingual country. A striking characteristic of multilingualism in South Africa is the fact that several indigenous languages are spoken across provincial borders, shared by different speech communities from different provinces.

There is currently a strong awareness of the need to intensify efforts to develop the previously marginalized indigenous language groups to promote multilingualism in order to liberate South Africa from undue reliance on the utilization of non-indigenous languages as the dominant, official languages of the state.

To date, management of linguistic diversity in post-apartheid South Africa has been recognized as requiring official policies to guide the apportionment of recognition to all the officially recognized languages. Twenty-five years into democracy, significant measures by the state have advanced the recognition and use of each of the official languages in a multicultural and multilinguistic social framework.

Historical Context

Since the first occupation of South Africa by the Dutch in 1652, through successive periods of British rule, the Union of South Africa, and subsequently, the establishment of the Republic of South Africa and the apartheid regime, government policy and the power elite failed to recognize South Africa's linguistic diversity. This situation was reversed only with the advent of democracy in 1994 and the Constitutional provisions on official multilingualism.

- 1) The dominance of English and Afrikaans created an unequal relationship between these languages and the African languages.
- 2) Colonial and apartheid language policies, therefore gave rise to a hierarchy of unequal languages that reflected the structures of racial and class inequality that characterized South African society.
- 3) All these practices engendered the corollary status of the indigenous languages and the varieties of the African people and of other marginalized groups, including the deaf and the blind – enforcing negative stereotypes of the African languages, which are held not only by English and Afrikaans speakers, but even by many of the speakers of the African languages themselves.
- 4) The situation has been compounded by the fact that private institutions have a tendency to take ad hoc language decisions that negate the constitutional provisions and requirements relating to languages due to short-sightedness and bureaucratic attitudes against implementing multilingualism.

Legislative context

- 1) Section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides the principal legal framework for multilingualism, the development of the official languages and the promotion of respect and tolerance for South Africa's linguistic diversity. It determines the language rights of citizens, which must be honoured through national policies.
- 2) The Constitution in Section 6(4) emphasizes that all official languages must 'enjoy parity of esteem' and be treated equitably, thereby enhancing the status and use of indigenous languages, with the national and provincial governments taking 'legislative and other measures' to regulate and monitor the use of disadvantaged indigenous languages.
- 3) The Constitution mandates changes to the language situation throughout the country, giving social and political recognition to hitherto disadvantaged language groups on the basis of 'the expressed needs of communities and interest groups.'
- 4) Section 6(2) of the Constitution requires mechanisms to be put in place by all three levels of government to develop these indigenous languages.
- 5) Section 6(3) and (4) contains language related provisions for national and provincial governments, where government departments must use at least two of the official languages. In terms of section 6(3)(b) municipalities must take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents.
- 6) To further promote linguistic diversity, Section 6(5) provides for the PanSouth African Language Board (PanSALB) to promote multilingualism and to see to the development and use not only of the official languages, but also of the Khoi, Nama and San languages, as well as SA sign Language(s). PanSALB will also cultivate respect for the Heritage languages that are spoken by some sections of our community and for those languages that are used for religious purposes.
- 7) Other relevant provisions pertaining to language matters are made elsewhere in the Constitution. Section 9(3) protects against unfair discrimination on the grounds of language, while section 30 and 31(1) refer to people's rights in terms of culture, religious and linguistic participation and enjoyment. Section 35(3) and (4) refer to language rights of arrested, detained and accused persons, with a particular emphasis on the right to fair trial with proceedings conducted or interpreted into the language of that individual's choice.
- 8) The Department of Education (DoE) introduced a language in education policy (LiEP), which stresses multilingualism as an extension of cultural diversity and an integral part of building a non-racial South Africa. While the underlying principle is to retain the home language for learning and teaching, learners are encouraged to acquire additional languages. This policy deals with such matters as language(s) of learning and teaching in public schools, school curricula, language-related duties of provincial departments of education and school governing bodies.

- 9) The Constitution and other related legislation evidently advocate the promotion of multilingualism in South Africa.
- 10) In the City of Johannesburg's context, the provincial policy framework of the Gauteng Provincial Government references equitable access and sustainable multilingualism. This guides the City's observance of policies set at national and provincial levels to give effect to the Constitution.

3. Purpose/Goals

To give effect to:

- 1) Section 6 and 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
- 2) Section 18.2 and 21.2 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000).
- 3) The Official Languages Act 12 of 2012,
- 4) The Gauteng Provincial Languages Act, Act 3 of 2016.
- 5) Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000.
- 6) The National Language Policy Framework, 2003.
- 7) The principles of Batho Pele as contained in Government Gazette no 18340, 1/10/97.

4. Objectives

- 1) To establish the language usage of the municipality's residents and take into account such language preferences;
- 2) To support impartial service delivery by promoting equal access to municipal services and programmes by removing communication barriers or language barriers;
- 3) To promote multilingualism amongst the councillors, officials and communities within the jurisdiction of the City of Johannesburg;
- 4) To promote and implement the use of the five official languages spoken in the area of the City of Johannesburg, namely isiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana, English and Afrikaans national census (1996 – 2011) and South African sign language in the affairs of the municipality;
- 5) To give effect to the equal status of the five official languages;
- 6) Upon request from people with disabilities and where practical, Council will make provision to address their special needs;
- 7) To support progressive elimination of disparity and lack of equity in respect of the indigenous languages;
- 8) To support progressive elimination of language barriers to participation by its members and clients in political, cultural, social and economic life;

- 9) To confirm the constitutional language obligation as a core obligation of all South Africans that requires careful planning and systematic implementation; Municipalities must take into account the language usage preferences of their residents (6(3)(b)); and
- 10) To respond to the need for minimum standards in respect of the use of official languages within and by the City of Johannesburg.

5) Implementation Strategy

A progressive phasing in of the implementation of the policy over a period of three to five years was the preferred strategy at all levels. The senior management of the City of Johannesburg is responsible for the implementation of the different aspects of the language policy. The Language Unit will monitor, evaluate and revise aspects of the policy.

5.1) Internal Communication

- a) Any of the official languages may be used when communicating intra-departmentally, provided all involved in the line of communication are able to understand the language chosen,
- b) English must be used as the working language in intra- and interdepartmental communication if another official language chosen is not understood by all in the line of communication.
- c) English must be the working language for inter-departmental communication of the Municipality. However, the principles of functional multilingualism should dictate each unique situation.
- d) Any of the official languages of the City of Johannesburg may be used in any debates and all proceedings of the Council.
- e) The Municipality must make provision of interpreting services (consecutive, simultaneous and whispered interpreting) from and into the five official languages at Council meetings and other official committee meetings if an official request to this effect is received.
- f) The Municipality must make provision for interpreting services (consecutive, simultaneous and whispered interpreting) from and into the five official languages for other inter- and intra-departmental communication, if an official request to this effect is received.
- g) The Municipality must provide multilingual liaison interpreters from among its own staff to convey information regarding conditions of service, health policies, and

employee benefits to illiterate municipal staff in an official language of their choice. This should be seen as a support mechanism for written documents.

- h) All programmes and campaigns directed at improving employee wellness must be conducted in at least three of the official languages.
- i) Officials should be encouraged to learn other official languages to ensure a truly multilingual and multicultural workplace.

5.2) External Oral Communication

- a) In communicating with any member of the public, due cognizance must be taken of the languages of choice of the client, and every effort must be made to serve the client in the language of his or her choice.
- b) Multilingual staff must be appointed at public counters such as pay points and clinics according to the language preferences and needs of the customer base.
- c) Where insufficient multilingual staff are available, community liaison interpreters or telephone interpreters must be used to help customers with their queries in their own language.
- d) Professional court interpreters must be appointed on the staff establishment of the municipal courts to assist members of the public who may not understand the language of the court.
- e) The main/general telephone exchange at all administrative buildings of the various municipal departments must be programmed for the five official languages of the City of Johannesburg so that a client can be transferred to a multilingual operator according to the client's language preference.
- f) The municipality must use the Telephone Interpreting Service for South Africa (TISSA) and ensure that sufficient municipal TISSA sites are available to cater for the language needs of customers in remote areas and informal settlements.
- g) A disability desk must be established at a central customer care point to meet the needs of the deaf (through a South African sign language interpreter) and the blind (important municipal information documents must be available in Braille format).

5.3) External Written Communication

- a) All official notices, statements, press releases, tariffs, by-laws, regulations and advertisements published by the Municipality for public information must be made available in isiZulu, Sesotho, English and Afrikaans.

- b) The Municipality must provide multi-lingual community interpreters from among its own staff as a support mechanism for written documents to assist the illiterate.
- c) The Municipality must make every effort to promote multilingualism on its website and through external publications.
- d) When communicating with the Public through the Municipality's external newsletter, all five languages of the City of Johannesburg must be used on a rotational basis, and summaries given in the remaining three languages.
- e) Departments of the Municipality must use a language register to ensure fair and equitable rotational practices.
- f) All external correspondence with the public must be conducted in the official language of their preference or in the language in which the original communication was received.
- g) The letterheads of the City of Johannesburg should contain at least two of the official languages (of which one should be an African language), but the use of all five languages is ideal.
- h) The City of Johannesburg should have its accounts printed in the five official languages of the province.
- i) Although no person may be prevented from using an official language of his or her preference at any given time, all documents must for practical administrative reasons, also be available in English.
- j) English must be the language used for international communication but translation facilities must be made available for ad hoc communication in the preferred language of the country concerned.

6. Public Hearings/Meetings, other public participation events and disciplinary hearings

Public hearings/meetings, other public participation events and disciplinary hearings must be available to be conducted in any official language preference of anyone involved in such meetings/hearings.

7) Identification Signs

- (1) Identification signs and directions of municipal offices or facilities may be in the five official languages.
- (2) Where the law permits, the five official languages must be used equitably on local road signs and direction signs. For street names, due consideration must be given to the community's language usage and preferences.

8) Implementation Strategies

1) Language Services Unit

- (a) The City must maintain a Language Services Unit, which will be responsible for providing a translating/interpreting services to the City.
- (b) Professional and specialized translators and interpreters must be appointed in such a unit.
- (c) The City must make available translating and interpreting services so that all residents can have equal access to municipal services.
- (d) The City's Language Services Unit is to liaise with the City of Johannesburg's Language Committee, PanSALB, Provincial and National Language Bodies, the Gauteng Department of Arts and Culture, the Gauteng Legislature, institutions of higher learning, and the Commission on Cultural, Linguistic Rights, the National language services, lexicographical units and other relevant bodies regarding terminological development and language norms with specific reference to the official languages of the City of Johannesburg and sign language.

The Language Services Unit must be responsible for:

- (a) Establishing, with the support of the City administration, a corollary to the Gauteng Provincial Language Forum which will facilitate the review of the language policy in future,
- (b) Providing formal training and in translation and interpreting (either by the unit or by an external institution or person) to employees who regularly perform translation and interpreting duties. This will allow them to render a professional service,
- (c) Developing guidelines (provisioning arrangements) for the use of internal and external professional translators and interpreters when required,
- (d) Developing a database of internal and external language service providers that can be used by the Municipality; and
- (e) Providing a mechanism through which staff can provide feedback on the implementation of the language policy of the Municipality so that this feedback could be forwarded to the Language Committee who will consider the feedback as part of the monitoring and revision process relating to the language policy.

9) Language Code of Conduct

- a) The City must continuously ensure that councillors and staff are sensitized to the value of multilingualism as a tool for building social cohesion, promoting economic development and consolidating democratic government through respect for cultural diversity,
- b) The City must ensure that notices are placed in all of its offices/buildings informing the public that it promotes multilingualism and that councillors and officials will make every effort to use the language(s) of the clients.
- c) The City must ensure that all councillors and officials accommodate the language use and preferences of other councillors and officials with courtesy.

10) Development and Education

- a. Councillors and Officials must be encouraged to learn the four official languages and training programmes must be organized to assist in the development of their language skills.
- b. Services/Directorates/Branches/Sections must play an active role in promoting multilingualism in an equitable manner and also to identify the language skills required in order to render an effective and efficient service to its communities,
- c. When filling vacant posts, Services/Directorates/Branches/Sections must take cognizance of the City's language policy when advertising, recruiting, selecting and appointing staff.

11) Translating and Interpreting Services

The City must make available translating and interpreting services when considered necessary.

12) Language Audits

- a. In terms of Section 6(3)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, municipalities must take into account the language use and

preferences of its residents within the area of jurisdiction of the City must be determined by means of a language audit to be done every four to five years.

- b. The City must conduct regular language proficiency audits within its Services/Directorates/Branches/Sections to determine the linguistic needs as well as the linguistic capabilities of the Councillors and officials in the organisations and identify other appropriate methods to improve the language skills in the City.

Glossary of Terms

Bilingualism	The practice of using two languages (not necessarily with equal competence in both).
Development of a language	The promotion of a language by graphisation, standardization and elaboration of functions so that the language can be used in the media, education, legal and administrative systems, etc. and by generally providing scope for the publication of literary works in that language.
Editing	The act of effecting corrections to language, or style, in written texts.
Equity	The quality of fairness, impartiality, even-handed dealing; what is fair and right.
Functional multilingualism	Refers to the choice of a particular language(s) in a particular situation, determined by the context in which that language is used, i.e. the function, the audience and the message for which it is employed.
Heritage languages	Languages not indigenous to a country but brought by immigrants.
Historically disadvantaged languages	In the South African context, these are the languages that were assigned low status by former powerful groups and which were as a result not used or developed for use in the media, education or in public or economically significant domains. Little support was given to the development of verbal art forms in these languages. They include indigenous languages, heritage languages and SASL.
Human language technologies	The application of knowledge of language to the development of computer systems that can recognize, understand, interpret, and generate human language in all its forms; i.e. the development of applications that make it possible for human beings to interact with computers.
Indigenous language	A language native to a country.
Interpreting	The act of transposing an utterance from a source language into a target language in spoken form.
Language awareness	Sensitivity to how language is used in society, whether the users are accorded their language rights, and how language is used to empower or disempower.
Language equality	In terms of dignity, all languages are said to be equal. The equal treatment of two or more languages, especially with regard to official domains of society, such as legislation, justice, public administration and instruction.
Language equity	The fairness or language provision and/or treatment of two or more languages. Matters such as the number of speakers and the status of a language may influence policy to determine the domains of use of a particular language. This

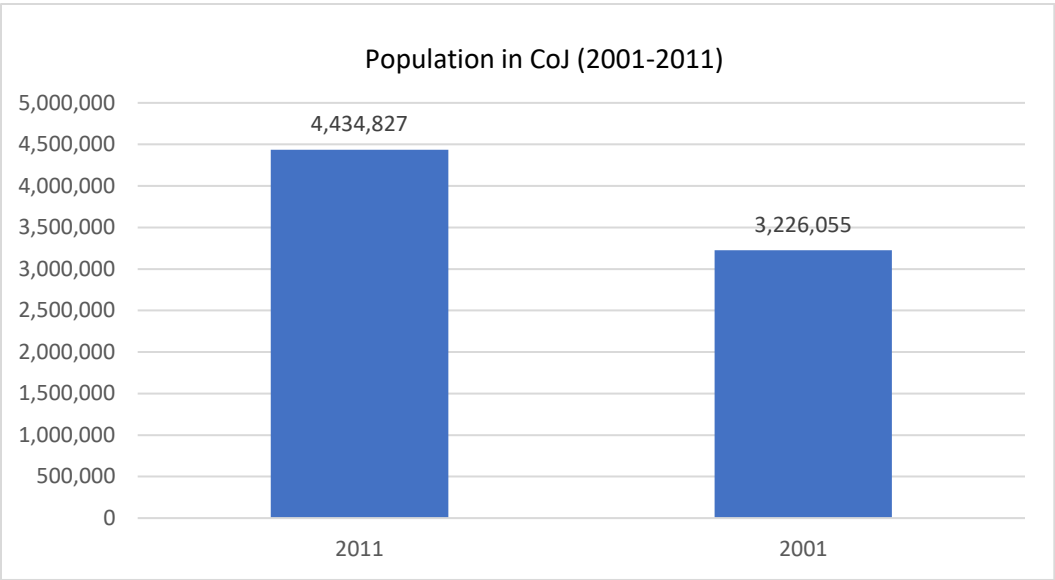
	may not necessarily be equal. <i>“A state cannot usefully employ the languages of all its citizens and may consequently strictly limit itself to practicing only its languages that is/are official or certain languages, in one way or the other.”</i>
Language planning	Language planning focusses on solutions to language problems by formulating alternative goals, means and outcomes. It involves processes of regulating and improving languages through language development.
Language policy	An official decision/decreed on the status of various languages spoken in heterogenous or multilingual communities, for example, which language will be the national or official language, which languages will be used as regional languages and what their status will be.
Language rights	Laws determining the situations in which citizens can make their language choices.
Language units	Government’s agencies in departments and provinces to deal with specific language issues of that department and/or province arising from the National Language Policy and to liaise with other departments on language matters.
Lexicography	The activity or profession of compiling dictionaries.
Machine translation systems	Computer systems that translates electronic texts from one language to another.
Marginalised language	Any official language that is excluded from official use or of which use is discouraged in formal settings (e.g. education or healthcare). Marginalized usually implies low status of the language and possibly the speakers.
Medium of instruction	The language of classroom instruction as indicated by language and curriculum policy. Language of learning implies a slight shift to include the concept that more than one language may be used and learners may be accessing one rather than the official medium.
Multilingualism	The use of three or more languages by an individual or by a group of speakers such as the inhabitants of a particular region of a nation.
Official language	A language used in government, courts of law or education, business, the media and for overall transactions.
South African Sign Language	A system of non-verbal hand sign communication developed and adapted for use by the hearing impaired in South Africa.
Translation	The act of transposing a text from a source language to another target language in written form.
Terminology	Standardized technical terms established for a specific subject field.

Annexure A

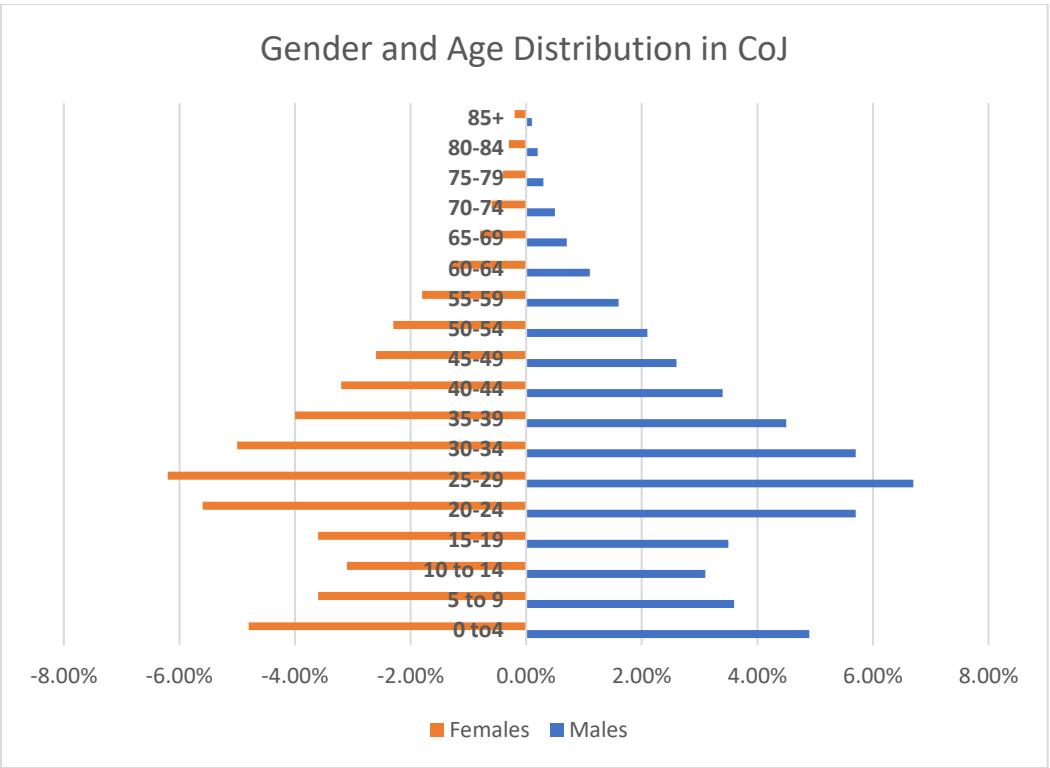
Key Indicators for the City of Johannesburg, 2001 vs 2011:

	2001	2011
Total population	3,226,055	4,434,827
Young (0-14)	22.70%	23.20%
Working Age (15-64)	72.70%	72.70%
Elderly (65+)	4,1%	4,1%
Dependency ratio	36.60%	37.6
Sex ratio	99.3	100.7
Growth rate	4.02% (2001-2011)	3.18% (2001-2011)
Unemployment rate	37.40%	25%
Youth unemployment rate	45.50%	31.50%
No schooling aged 20+	7.30%	2.90%
Higher education aged 20+	13.90%	19.20%
Matric aged 20+	29%	34.70%
Number of households	1,006,910	1,434,856
Average household size	3	2.8
Female headed households	38.30%	36.20%
Formal dwellings	77.40%	81.40%
Housing owned/paying off	47.20%	40.20%
Flush toilet connected to sewerage	82.30%	87.10%
Weekly refuse removal	90.90%	95.30%
Piped water inside dwelling	50.10%	64.70%
Electricity for lighting	85%	90.80%

Source: Statistics SA (2011)

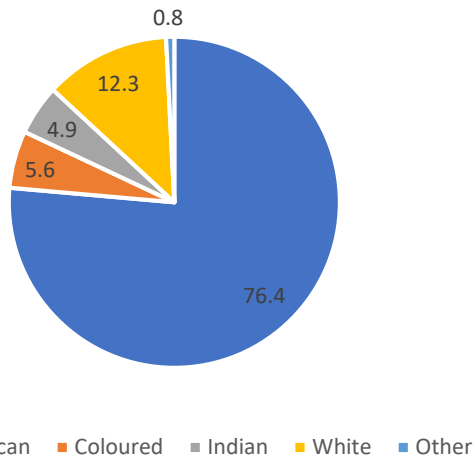


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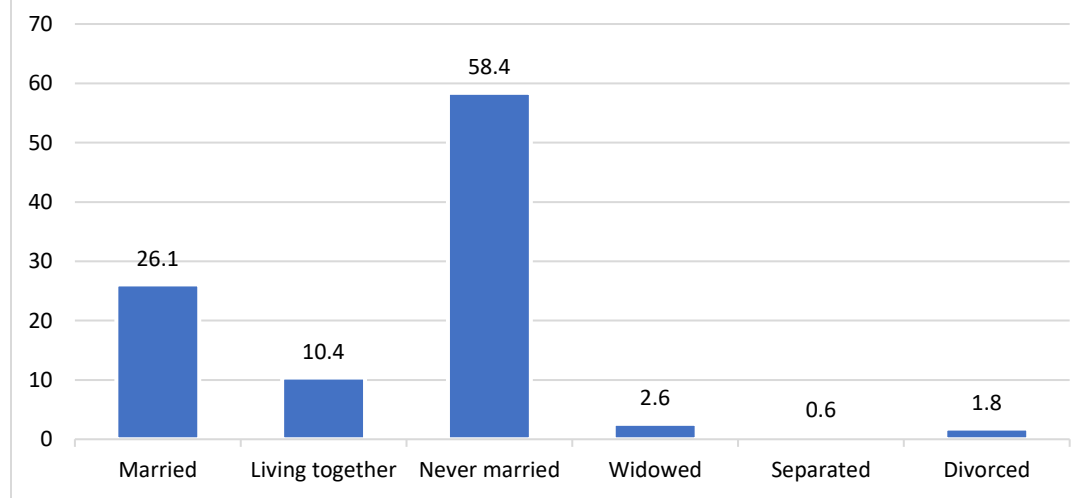
Source: Statistics SA (2011)

Racial Categories as % of Total Population (2011)

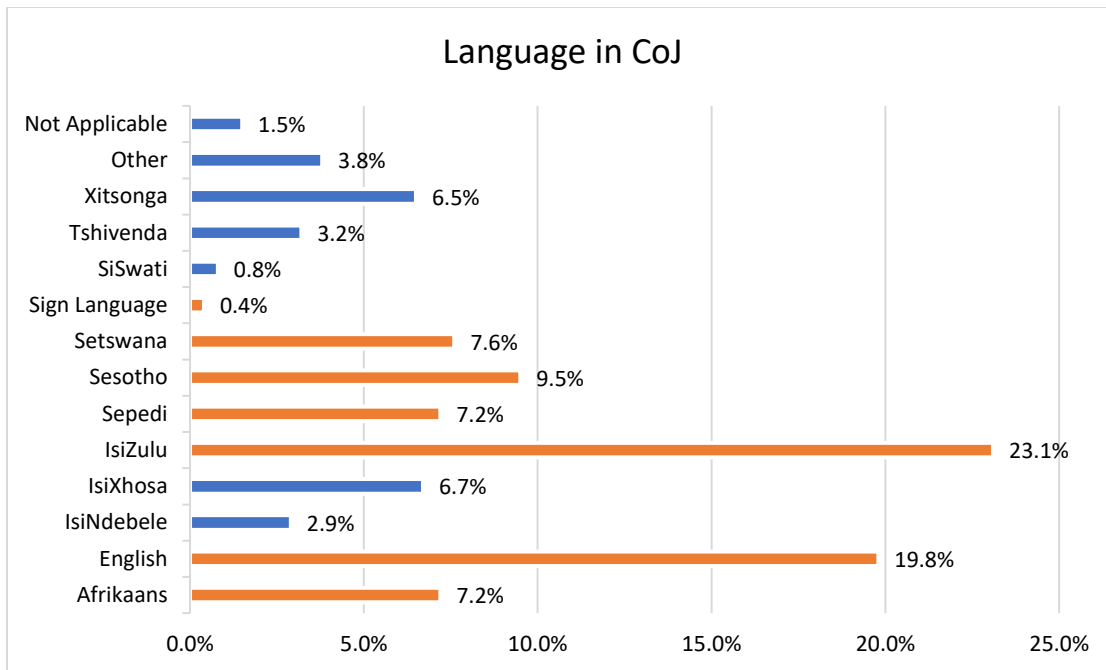


Source: Statistics SA (2011)

Marital Status as a % of Total Population (2011)

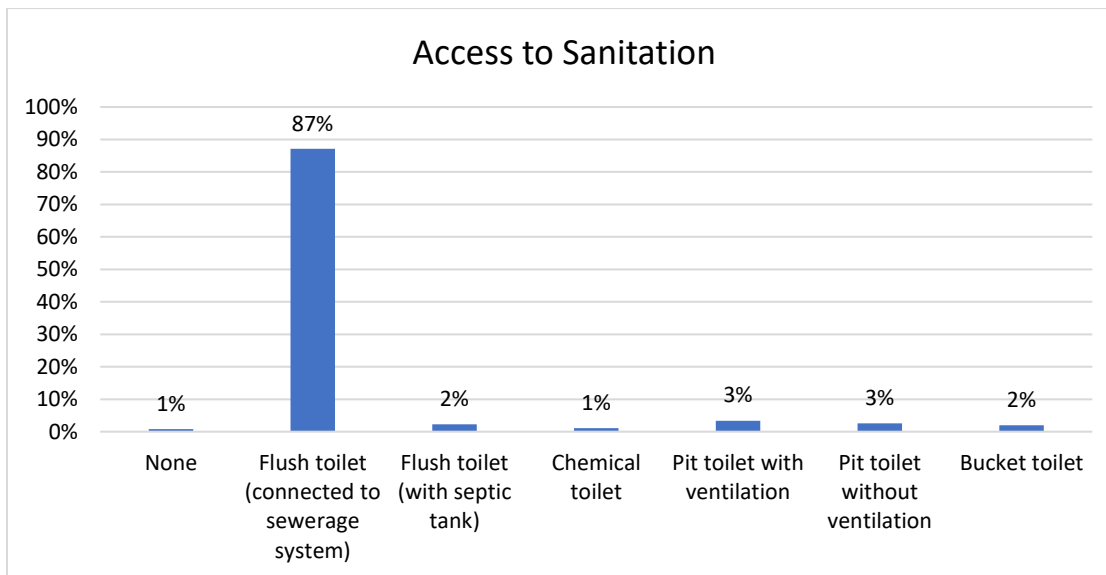


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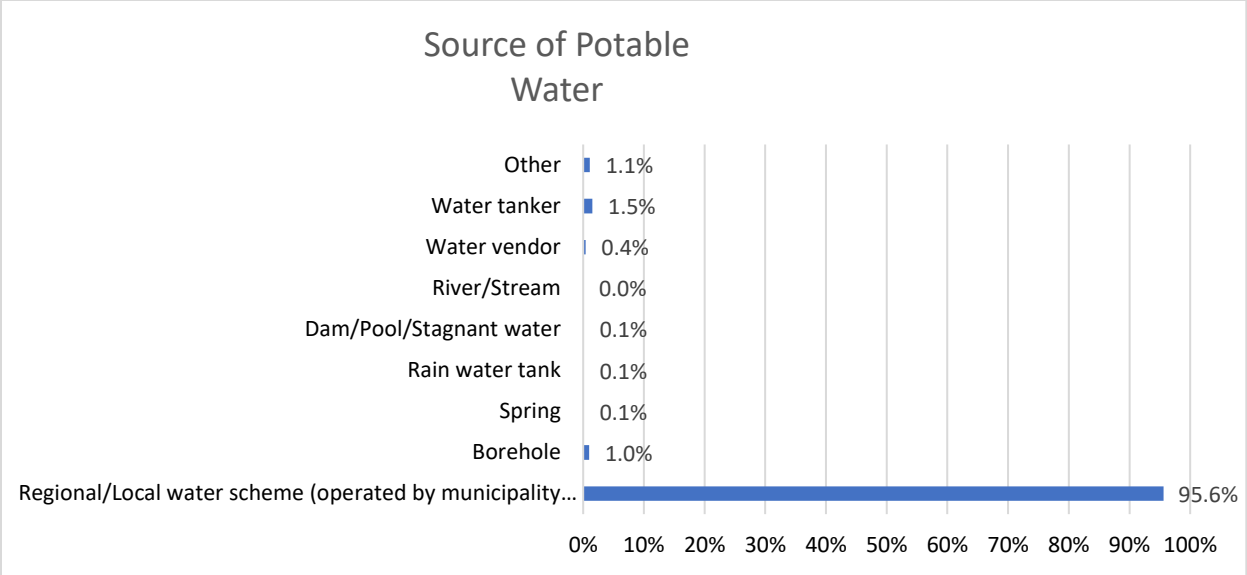


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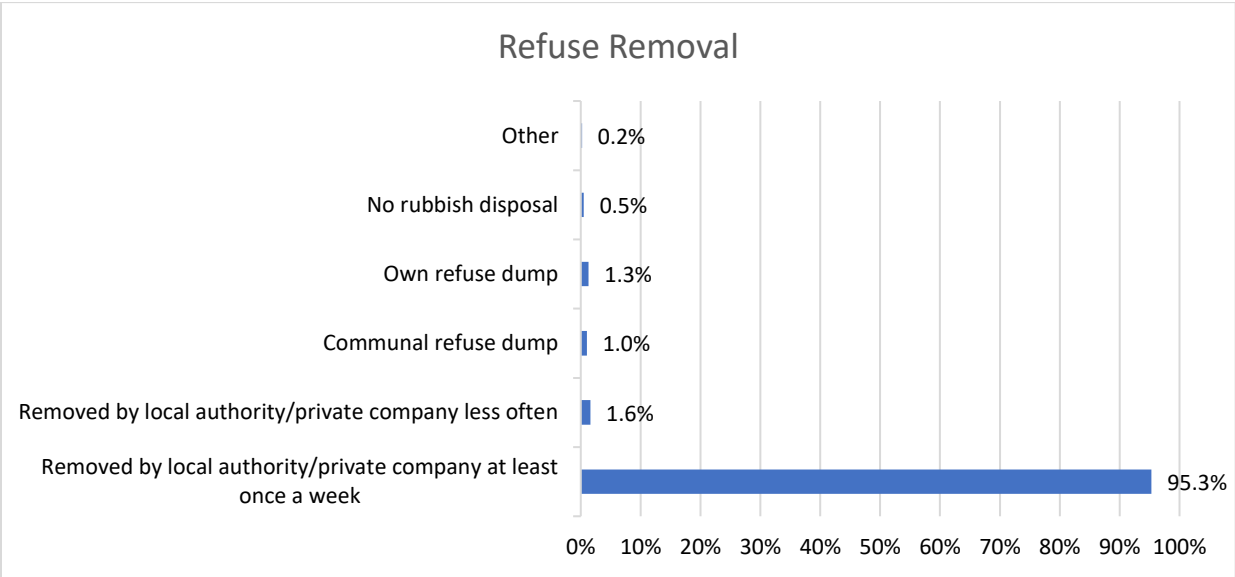
Household Information



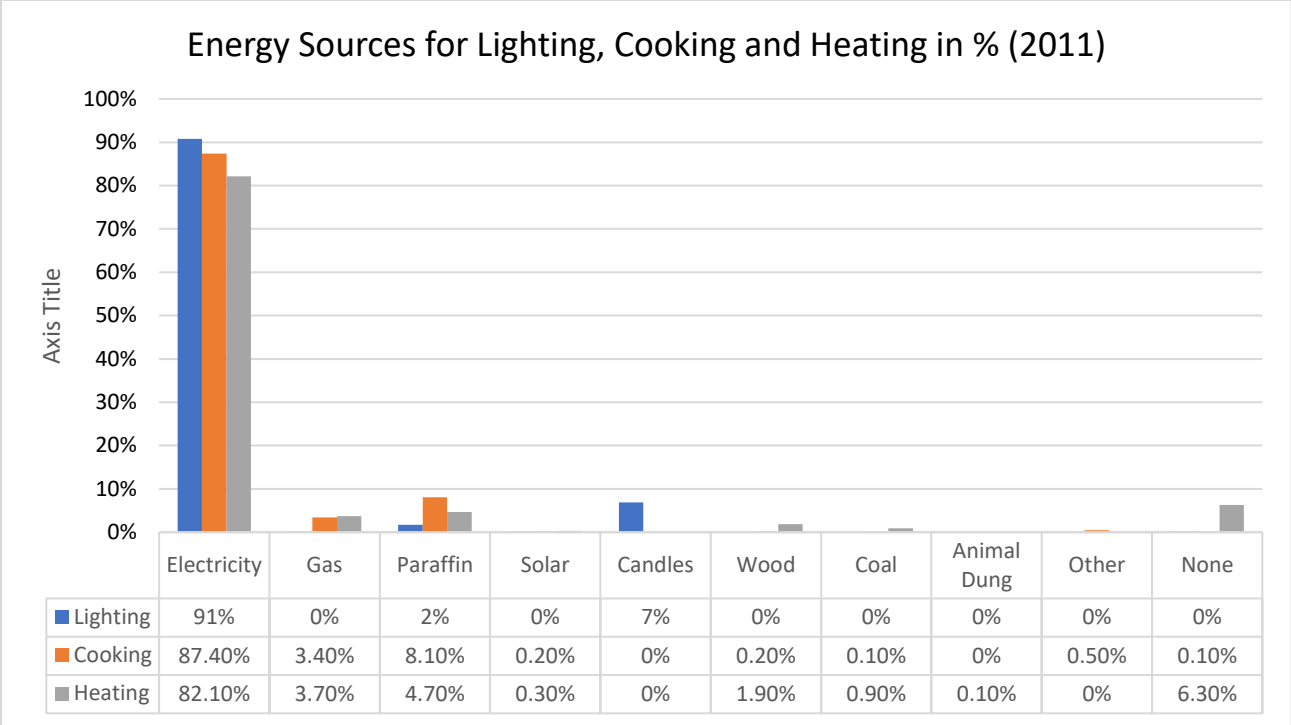
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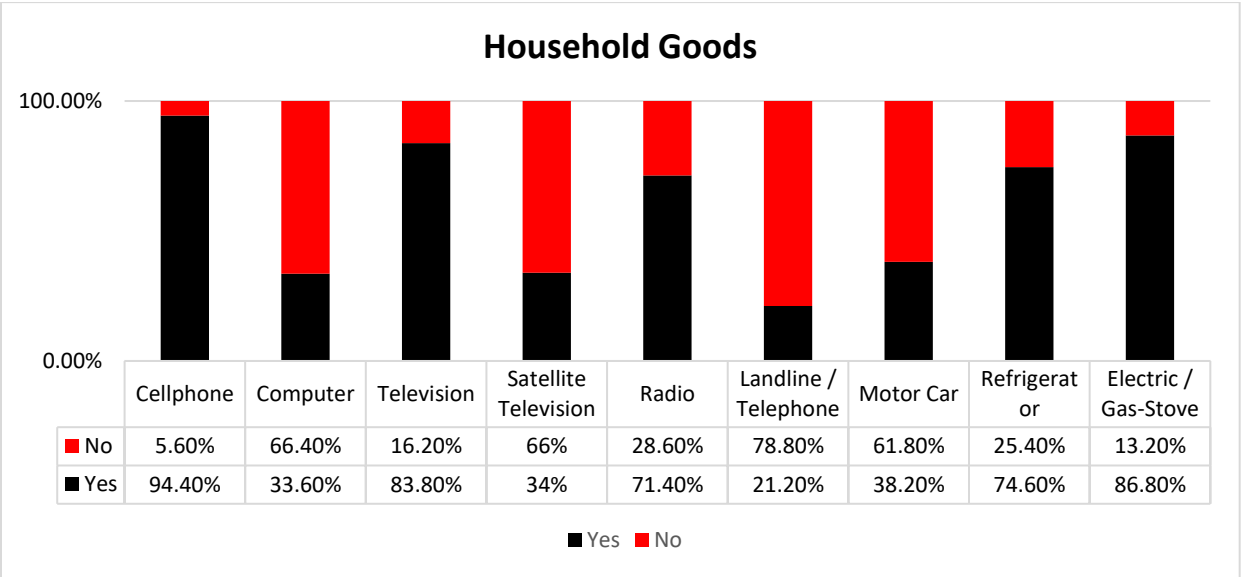
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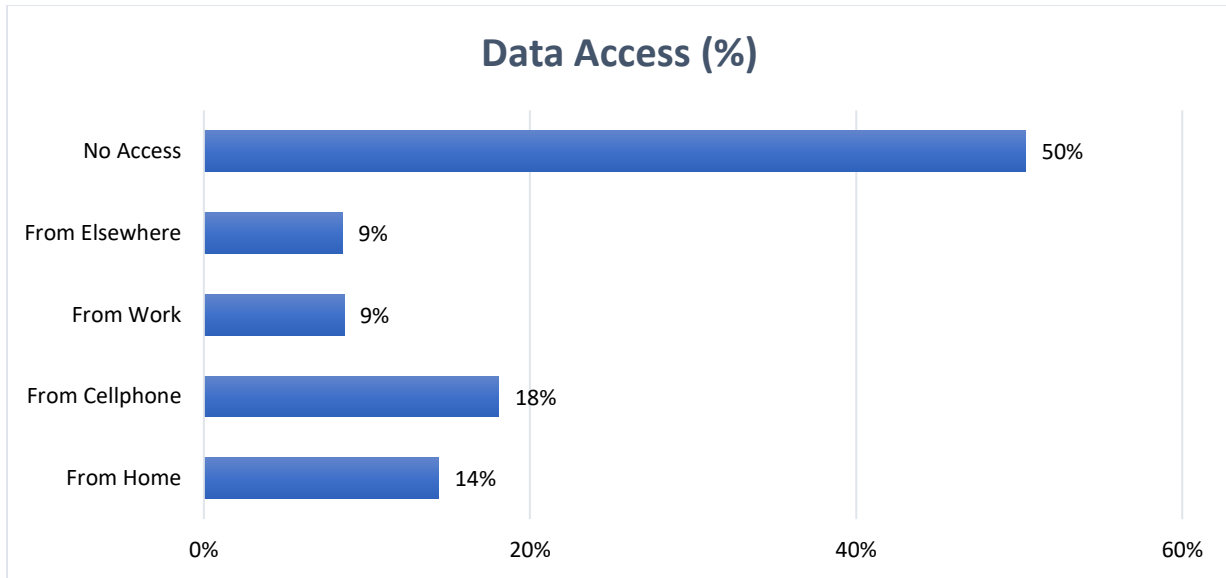
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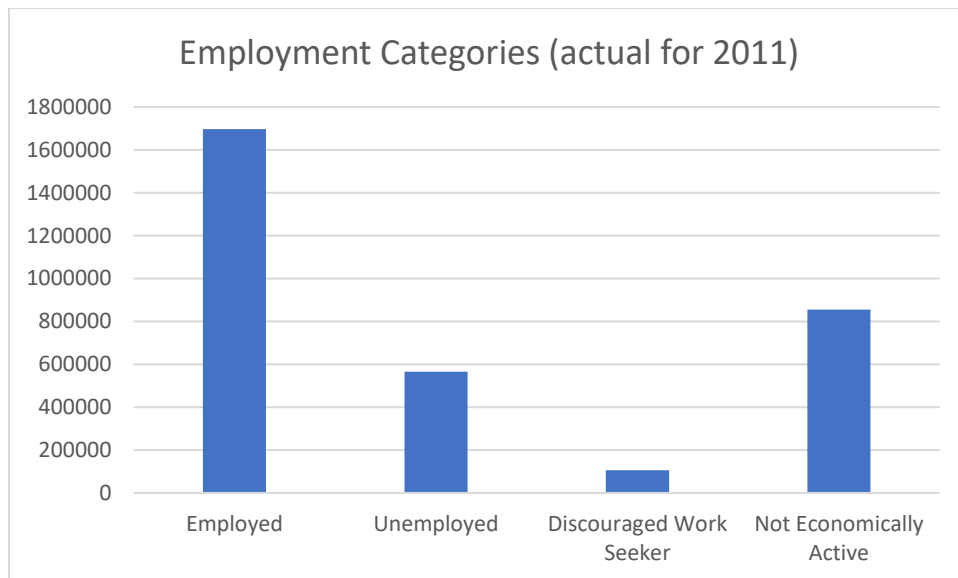


Source: Statistics SA (2011)

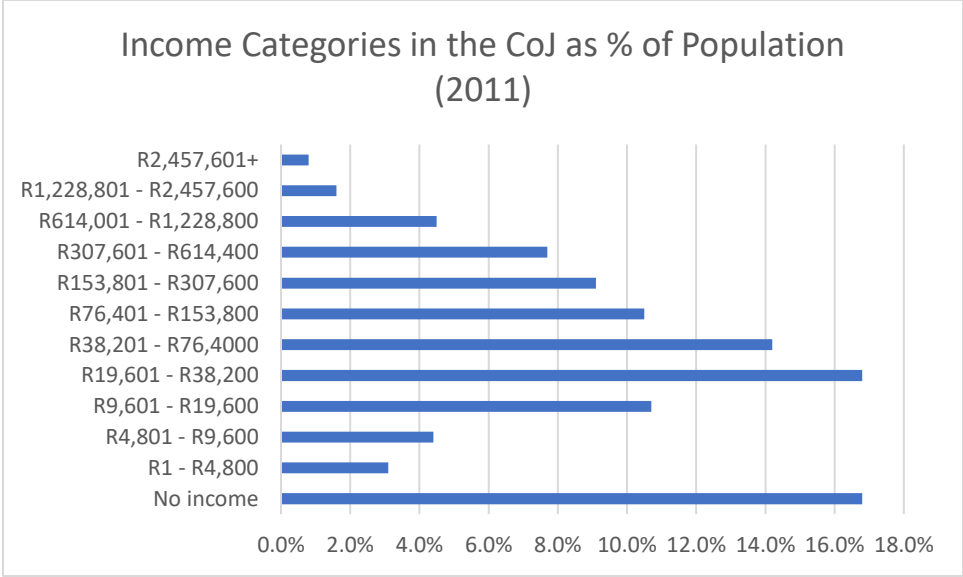


Source: Statistics SA (2011)

Economy



Source: Statistics SA (2011)



Source: Statistics SA (2011)