

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ARCUS GIBB (Pty) Ltd Environmental Services have been appointed by George Municipality (GM) to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for input into their Spatial Development Framework (SDF) that is currently under review.

This SEA considers the environmental attributes of the study area and suggests an environmental planning framework specific to the needs of GM. The objective of the SEA is to proactively plan for future development in a manner that recognises the environmental constraints and enhances the environmental opportunities that characterise the study area. This in turn will aid the GM in achieving the sustainable vision for the municipality.

1.2 LOCATION AND EXTENT OF THE STUDY AREA

The George Municipality is located in the Western Cape Province along the southern border of the Eden District Municipality, approximately halfway between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth (**Figure 1**). The Municipal Area is approximately 1 068 square kilometers in extent with a population of approximately 160 000 people. It is situated between the Outeniqua Mountains and the coastline of the Indian Ocean. It is in an area that has much natural beauty and significant environmental assets, such as the wide expanse of forests, the combination of mountains, rivers, and coastal areas, and fertile farmlands. Agricultural and forestry related land use forms the greater extent of the municipal area. Two national roads in the form of the N12 and the N2 traverse the Municipality.

The Municipality consists of the following areas:

1. The City of George;
2. The Villages of Wilderness and Herold's Bay;
3. Various coastal resorts including Victoria Bay, Kleinkrantz and the Wilderness National Park;
4. Rural areas such as Wilderness Heights, Geelhoutboom, Herold and Waboomskraal.