



Cape Karoo Tourism Visitor Trends

January to June 2025

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1. About this Report

This report is based on tourism destination insights from ROVE: This is a mobile location data insight dashboard, designed to uncover actionable insights about tourist visitation patterns, tourist origin markets, location affinity, visit times, visit duration, and tourist demographics.

The report details insights from the dashboard regarding the Cape Karoo region for the period January to June 2025. The mobile location data was used to analyse the travel behaviour of tourists visiting the Cape Karoo and the nearby towns of Beaufort West, Laingsburg, and Prince Albert.



Image source: Wesgro (2025)

2. Key Insights

Rove mobile location data from January to June 2025 was used to gain insights into the travel behaviour of domestic and international tourists visiting the Cape Karoo region. The following findings were observed:

Domestic tourists:

- Mobile location data offered valuable insights into the travel patterns of 34,436 domestic tourists who visited the Cape Karoo between January and June 2025. The majority of these tourists were from key municipalities, including Cape Town, Tshwane, Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and George, highlighting the region's appeal to urban dwellers.
- The average length of stay for domestic tourists in the Cape Karoo was 1.6 days. Notably, 38.80% of domestic visitors were repeat tourists, suggesting a strong level of satisfaction and loyalty to the destination. A closer look at the data revealed that 66.20% of the visitors chose to stay for only a single day. The duration of stay fluctuated between 1.5 and 1.7 days, indicating a relatively even distribution of overnight visits between the months of January and June 2025.
- In addition, 27.50% of domestic tourists opted to stay overnight in the region, and this preference exhibited a steady distribution of overnight stays between January and June 2025. An analysis of arrival and departure trends indicated that Friday was the most popular day for tourists to arrive, while Sunday was the favoured day for their departure. This pattern underscores both the weekend getaway nature of many visits and the significance of Friday as a key travel day for those seeking a brief escape in the Cape Karoo.

International tourists:

- Mobile location data provided valuable insights into the travel patterns of 162 international tourists who explored the diverse landscapes and attractions of the Cape Karoo. A share of visitors were from countries such as India, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Namibia, highlighting the region's appeal to a broad range of international travellers.
- On average, international tourists spent approximately 1.6 days in the Cape Karoo, with 34.60% indicating they had visited the region in the past, suggesting a level of repeat interest and satisfaction with their experiences. Interestingly, 56.20% of tourists opted for a stay of just one day, and 31.50% stayed for two days, which reflects a tendency for shorter visits, likely driven by travel itineraries that include multiple destinations.
- The average length of stay during the first half of 2025 ranged from 1.2 days to 2.0 days. Furthermore, 34.60% of international tourists chose to stay overnight, with February and May 2024 recording peak overnight stays, with 45.80% of visitors staying overnight in February, and 53.80% overnighiting in May. These peaks may correlate with specific events or favourable weather conditions during those months.
- An analysis of arrival and departure patterns revealed that Saturday was the favoured day of arrival and departure, suggesting that many visitors prefer to stay longer in the region.

2. Key Insights

Rove mobile location data was used from January to June 2025 to gain insights into the travel behaviour of domestic and international tourists visiting select towns in the Cape Karoo region. The following findings were observed regarding each town.

a) Beaufort West:

- Beaufort West emerged as the town that attracted the most visitors, having welcomed a significant total of 30,852 domestic visitors. Most of these visitors came from Cape Town, with visitors from there contributing a notable 7,876 to the total number of visitors in Beaufort West.
- In total, more than 6,700 visitors travelled to Beaufort West from the Gauteng province, particularly from urban or metropolitan areas such as Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Ekurhuleni. This influx highlights Beaufort West's appeal as a destination, which offers a unique contrast to the bustling city life in the identified three urban centres.
- A substantial 75.30% of domestic tourists visiting Beaufort West opted for a one-day stay. In addition, 27.80% of overnight visitors were international tourists and 19.9% of overnight visitors were domestic tourists.

b) Laingsburg:

- The town ranked as the second most favoured destination, having attracted 3,142 tourists from January to June 2025. About 60.90% of domestic visitors chose to spend just a day in the town. The town welcomed a varied group of overnight visitors, with 40.00% of its tourists being domestic travellers and 29.80% coming from abroad.

c) Prince Albert:

- The town ranked as the third most popular destination, attracting a total of 1,924 domestic tourists. Notably, only 42.70% of domestic tourists visited for just one day. The town stands out for having the highest percentage of overnight domestic visitors, which was 52.90%. This trend highlights the area's unique attractions that encourage visitors to stay longer.

3. Cape Karoo Mobile Location Data Insights: Methodology

What is mobile location data?

- This is geo or spatial data from smartphones. When a user installs an app, they are often asked to share their location data with the company which provides the app, and other companies who are partners with the app publisher.
- Users can “opt in” to location sharing (or choose not to “opt in”). When they opt in, then their phone collects data and shares it with the publisher companies.
- All data collected is anonymised and does not include any personally identifiable information.

Why use mobile location data insights?

- Mobile location-based data offers a more granular lens on visitor behaviour and provides a much larger sample size.
- These insights aim to facilitate a better understanding of visitor movement throughout the Western Cape’s six regions.
- Mobile location data serves as a sample. It does not represent 100% of visitors, and it should not be treated as such. Like any sampling method, it can be subject to biases or lack of volume.

Factors influencing international and domestic sample counts:

The volume of mobile location data counts is influenced by several factors including, but not limited to:

Data Source Variability

- Changing volume of mobile applications collecting and sharing data
- Data privacy and regulatory changes affecting sharing of data (GDPR, mobile OS policy changes etc.)

Data Collection and Processing Variability

- Mobile network and internet connectivity
- Mobile infrastructure technical issues (hardware failures, solar flare activity)
- Tourist logic to segment tourist from non-tourist mobile devices

Mobile Use Variability

- Tourists disabling data transmission services due to high international data costs
- Tourists not using partnership apps as often.

While all mobile devices are affected by the above, international mobile device counts are affected more than domestic mobile devices when it comes to both mobile use fluctuations and data privacy restrictions. Tourists use their phones differently when travelling internationally – they may want to avoid additional out-of-country fees and only use their phones through wi-fi services. Tourists may not use the partnership apps they usually use while on extensive holidays. Restricting data privacy laws are also affecting the international landscape, which has an impact on the data that can be shared. This, in turn, may affect processing that identifies tourists.



Visitor Trends in the Cape Karoo

Mobile Location Data Insights

4. Cape Karoo Mobile Location Data Insights: Sample Size

- The insights in this report represent mobile location data from a sample of 34,436 domestic tourists and 162 international tourists who visited the Cape Karoo between January and June 2025. This is illustrated in Figure 1.
- Figure 2 shows that a significant portion of domestic visitors to the Cape Karoo came from urban centres in South Africa. Cape Town was the leading source market with 9,608 visitors, followed by Tshwane (2,476), Johannesburg (2,454), Ekurhuleni (2,124), and George (1,000), highlighting the Cape Karoo's appeal to a diverse national audience.

Figure 1: Cape Karoo sample size, January–June 2025

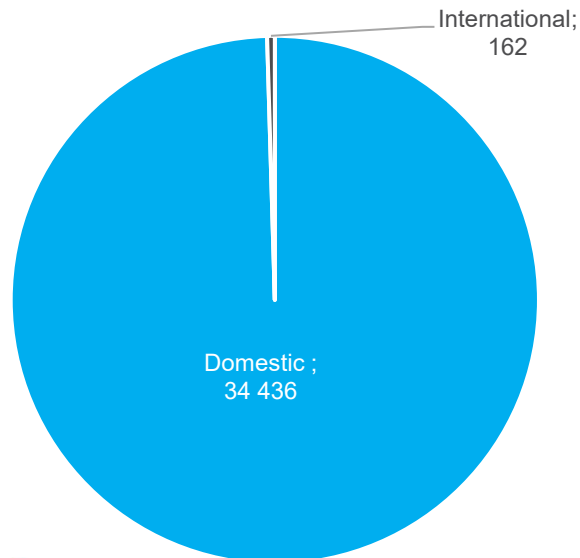
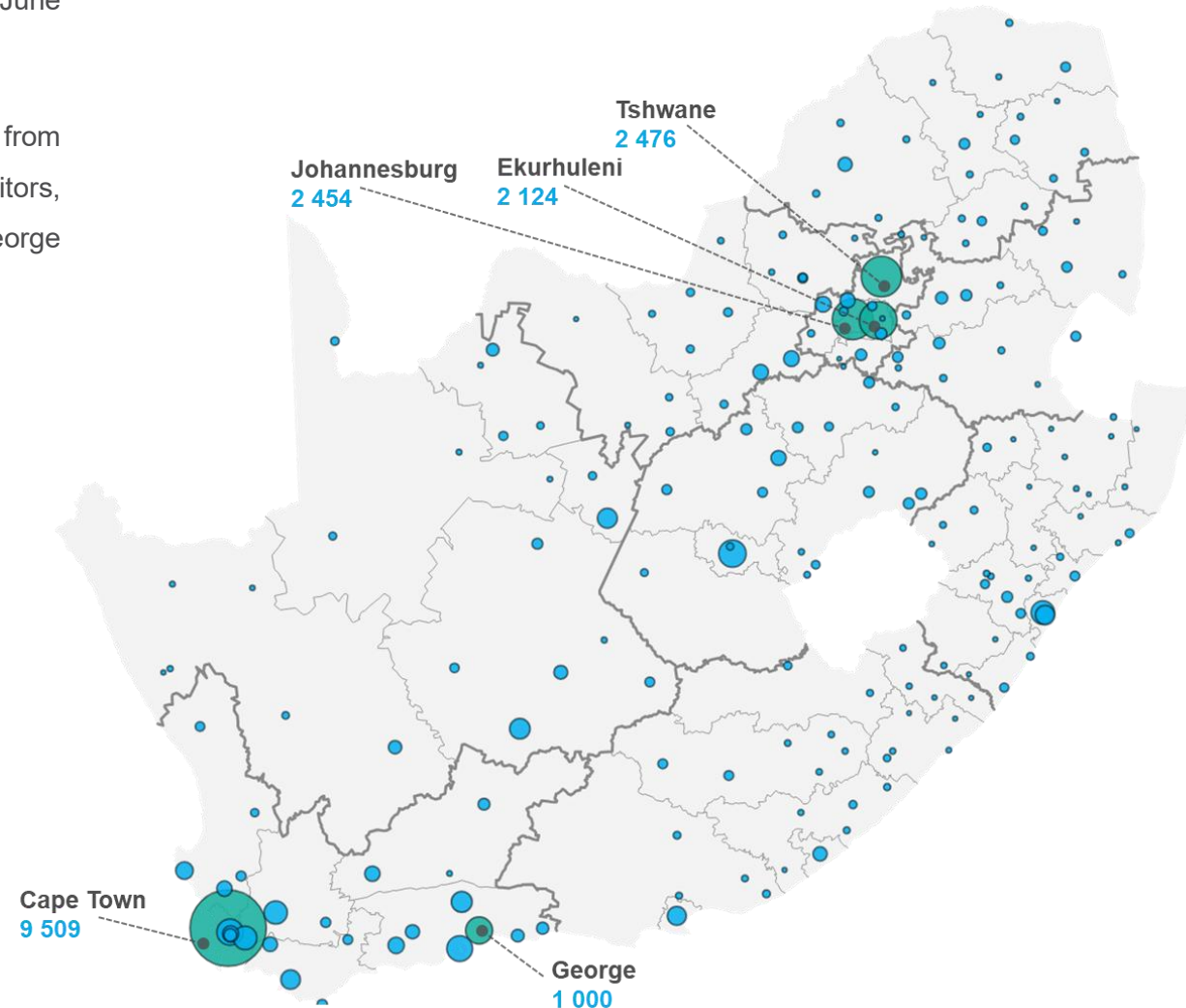
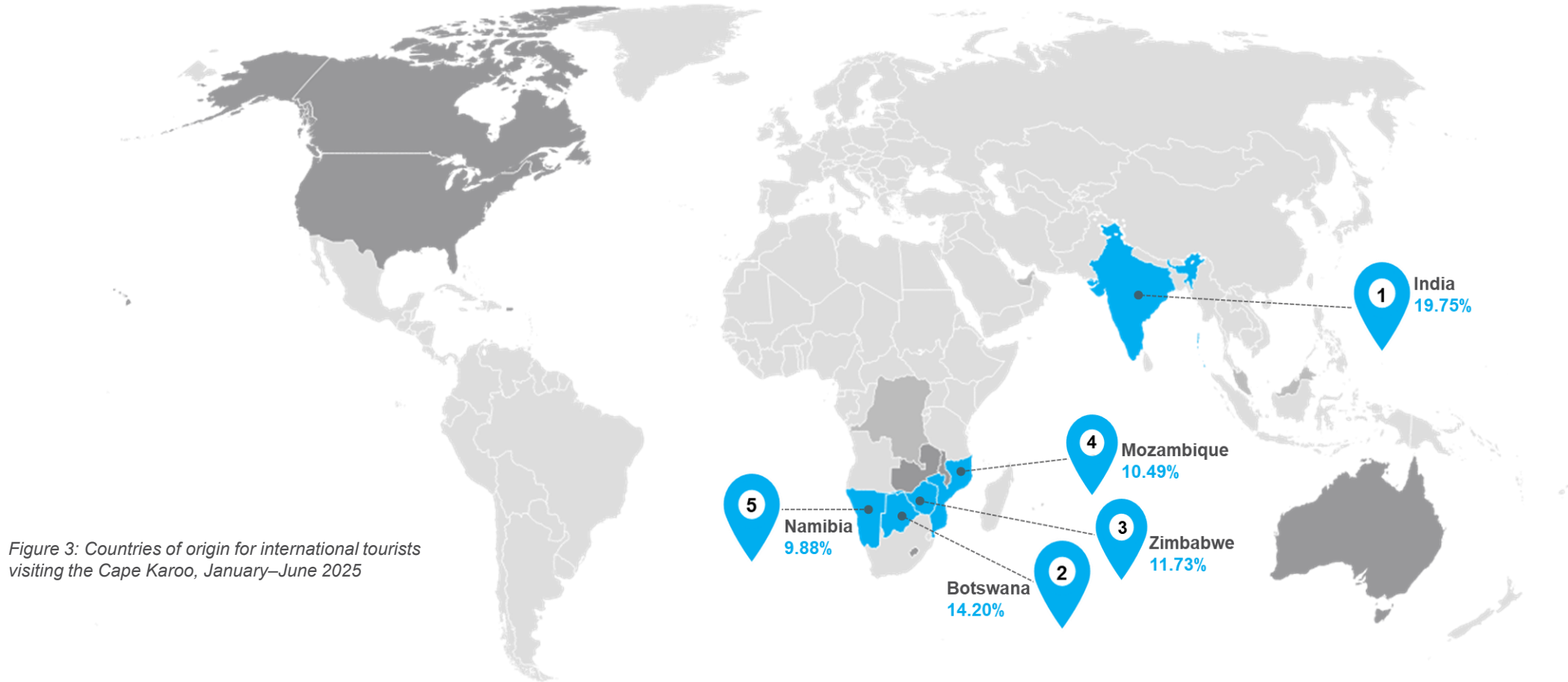


Figure 2: Municipalities of origin for domestic tourists visiting the Cape Karoo, January–June 2025



4. Cape Karoo Mobile Location Data Insights: Sample Size

- In the sample of 162 international tourists, 19.75% came from India, who showed an interest in the region's attractions and cultural experiences. Following India, 14.20% of the tourists were from Botswana, 11.73% from Zimbabwe, and 10.49% from Mozambique. Lastly, 9.88% of the tourists came from Namibia. These figures highlight the destination's appeal to travellers from nearby African countries. This can be seen in Figure 3.



4. Average Length of Stay and Repeat Visitors

- On average, both domestic and international tourists spent 1.6 days in the Cape Karoo. This information is based on data analysed between January and June 2025, which highlights the average length of stay for tourists in the region. This is reflected in Figure 4.
- The data showed that 38.80% of domestic tourists and 34.60% of international tourists were repeat visitors to the region, as illustrated in Figure 5. This indicates that the region is a popular destination among tourists, who often choose to return for subsequent visits.
- However, findings also indicated that 66.20% of domestic tourists and 56.20% of international tourists visited the region for just one day (Figure 6). Overall, visitors stayed an average of three days in the region between January and June 2025.
- The mobile data also provided information about tourists' average length of stay in the region by month, as shown in Figure 7. Domestic tourists stayed on average between 1.5 and 1.7 days during the months of January and June 2025. International tourists stayed on average for 1.5 to 2.0 days in January, February, April, May, and June 2025.

Figure 4: Average length of stay (LOS), January–June 2025

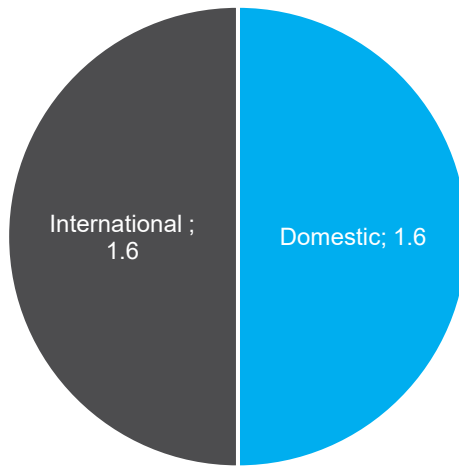
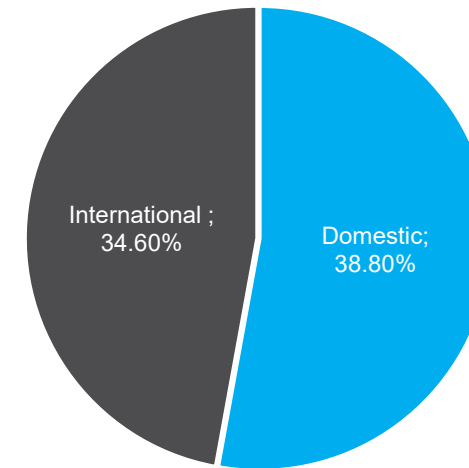


Figure 5: Repeat visits to the Cape Karoo, January–June 2025



4. Average Length of Stay in Cape Karoo

Figure 6: Average length of stay (number of days) in the Cape Karoo, January–June 2025

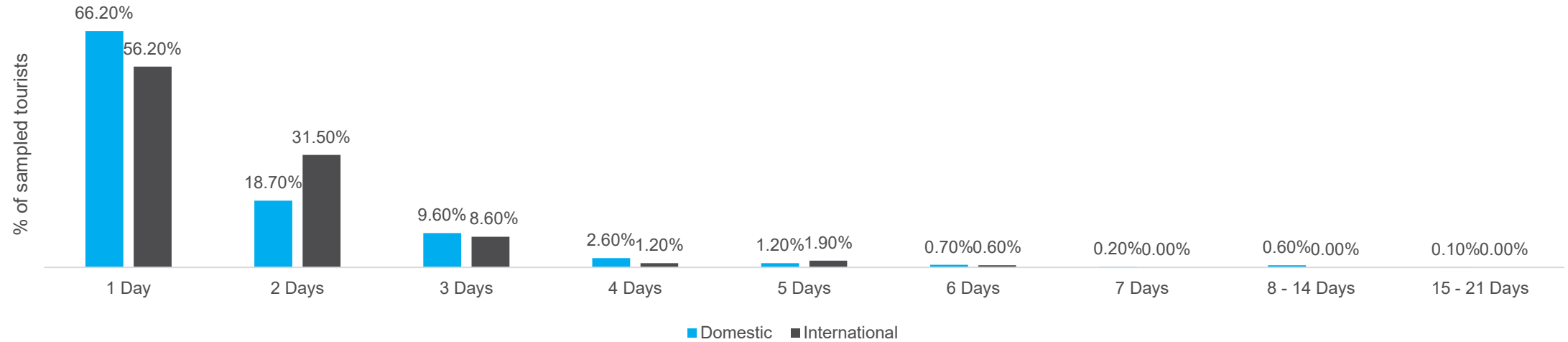
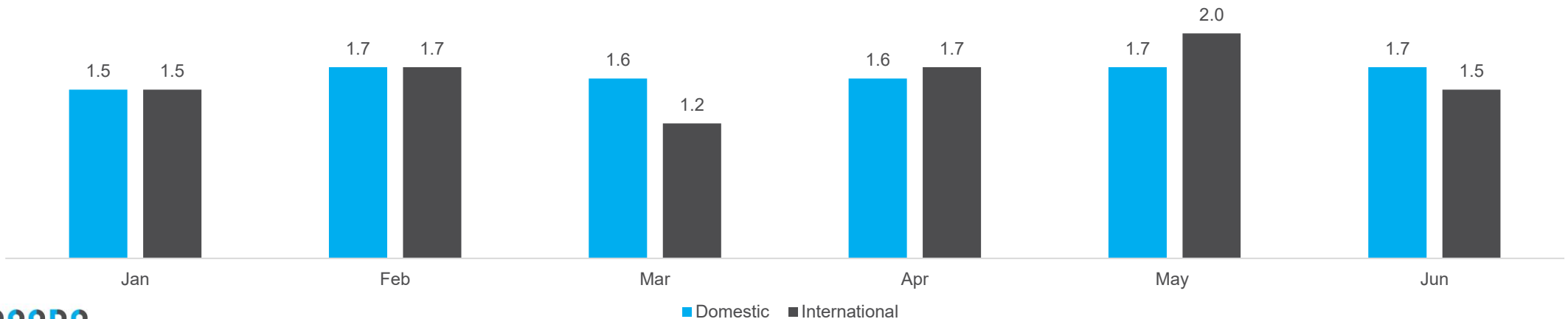
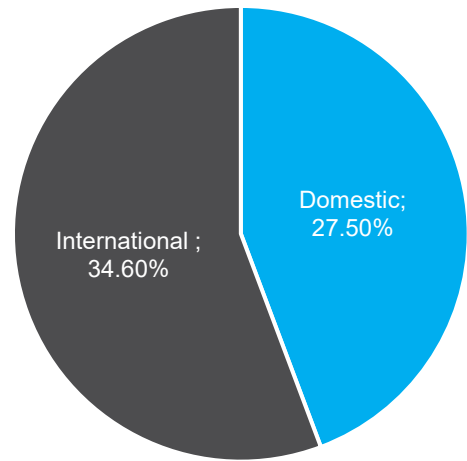


Figure 7: Average length of stay in the region by month, January–June 2025



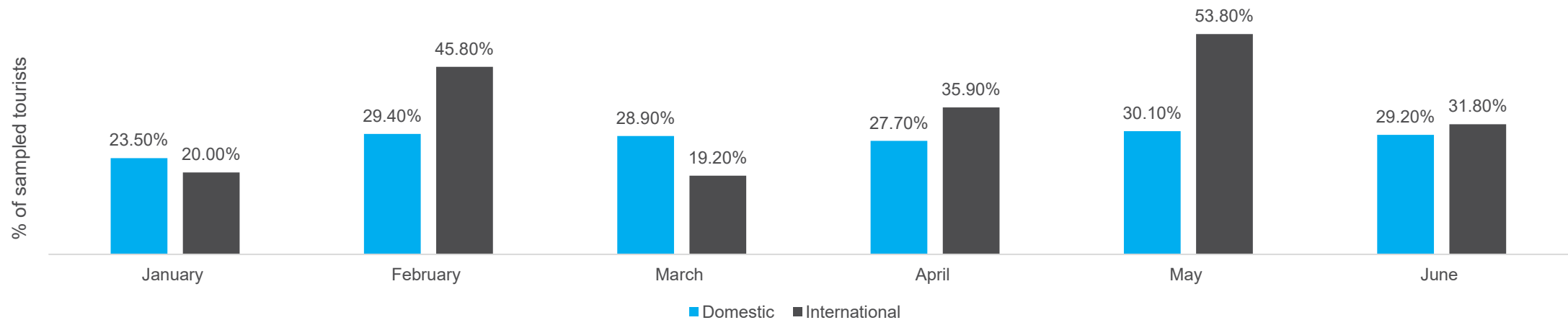
4. Overnight Stays: Trends in the Cape Karoo

Figure 8: Overnight stays in the Cape Karoo, January–June 2025



- Approximately 34.60% of sampled international tourists and 27.50% of domestic tourists preferred to stay overnight in the Cape Karoo. This can be observed in Figure 8.
- February and May emerged as the peak months for overnight stays by international visitors in the region, as illustrated in Figure 9. In addition, there was a relatively fair seasonal spread for overnight stays from domestic visitors between January and June 2025.

Figure 9: Overnight stays in the Cape Karoo by month, January–June 2025



4. Popular Arrival and Departure Days

- Figures 10 and 11 indicate that domestic visitors opted to begin their stay on a Friday, possibly to take advantage of the weekend that followed. On the other hand, Sunday has been identified as the most popular day for departures from the region.
- Interestingly, when looking at the behaviour of international tourists, a different pattern emerges: Saturday was highlighted as the favoured day for arrival and day of departure. This preference could be attributed to several factors, such as longer travel itineraries or the desire to experience a full week in the Cape Karoo region.

Figure 10: Popular arrival days of the week in the Cape Karoo, January–June 2025

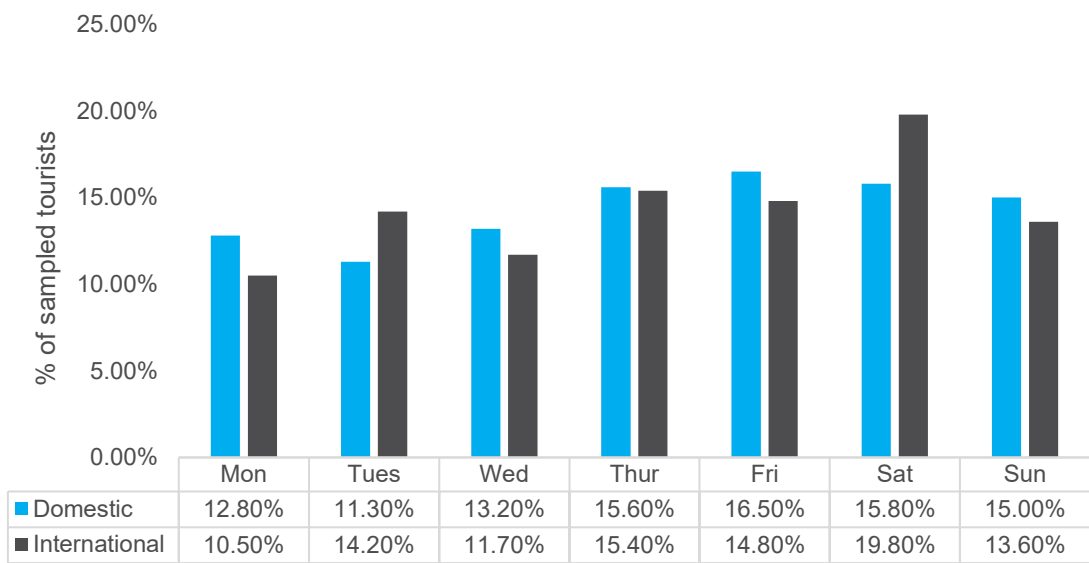
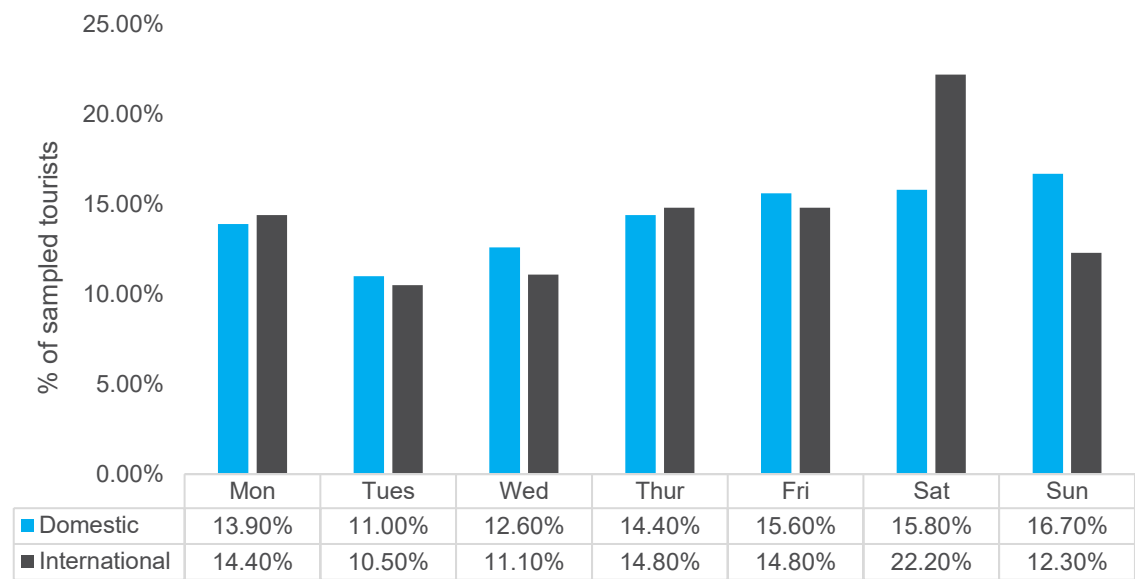


Figure 11: Popular departure days of the week from the Cape Karoo, January–June 2025





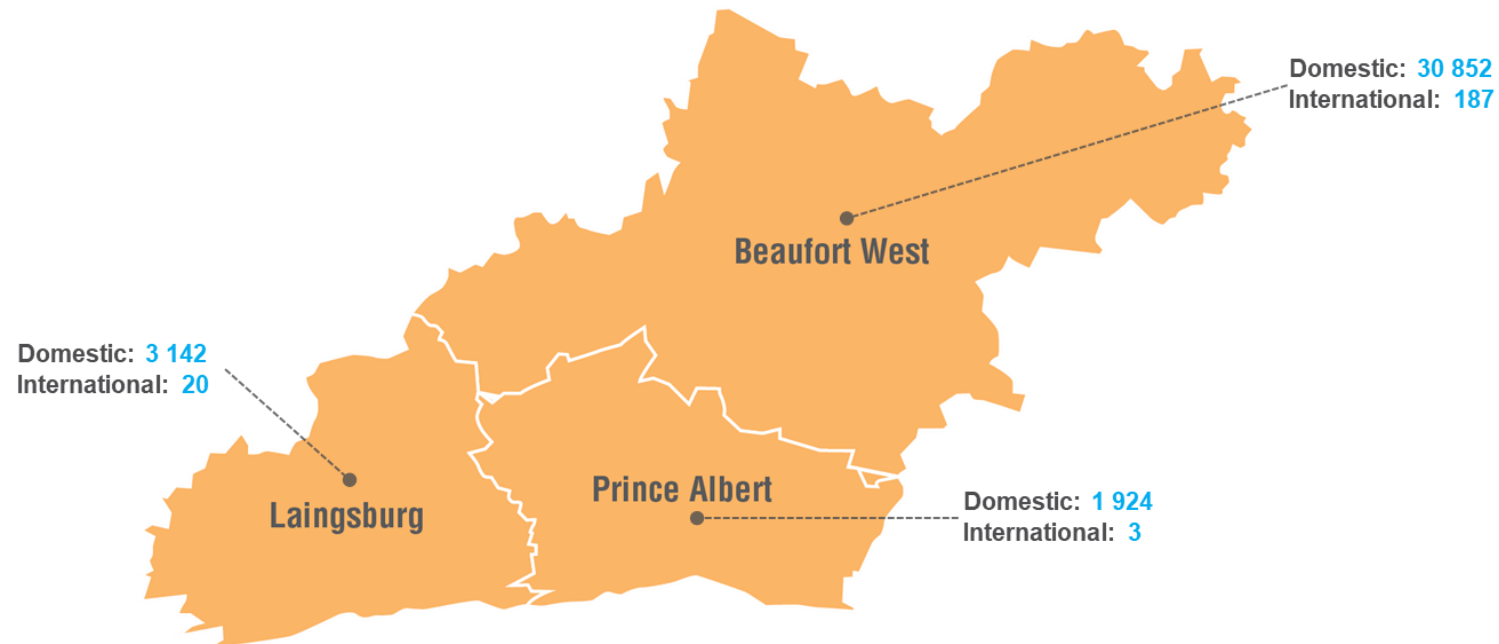
Visitor Trends for Select Towns in the Cape Karoo

Mobile Location Data Insights

5. Domestic and International Visitor Breakdown in Select Towns

- Between January and June 2025, three selected towns in the Cape Karoo region—Beaufort West, Laingsburg, and Prince Albert—experienced an influx of domestic visitors, while international tourist numbers remained relatively low.
- Beaufort West emerged as the most popular destination and attracted an impressive total of 30,852 domestic tourists. Following Beaufort West, Laingsburg welcomed 3,142 domestic visitors, and Prince Albert recorded 1,924 domestic tourist arrivals. This tourism trend is illustrated in Figure 12, which highlights the difference in visitor numbers in the three towns and underscores Beaufort West's dominance in domestic tourism in the region.

Figure 12: Domestic and international visitor breakdown by town, January–June 2025



5. Domestic and International Visitor Breakdown: Beaufort West

- Figure 13 shows that, among the 30,852 domestic tourists sampled in Beaufort West, a notable number came from various urban centers across South Africa. Cape Town emerged as the primary source and accounted for 7,876 visitors. Johannesburg followed with 2,390 visitors, then Tshwane with 2,223 visitors, and finally Ekurhuleni with 2,046 visitors. This highlighted the diverse mix of urban visitors from across the country who visited the town.
- In addition to the domestic influx, of the 187 international tourists sampled, some visitors to the region were from the USA (22.46%), Mozambique (13.37%), and India (12.30%). This can be seen in Figure 14.

Figure 13: Municipalities of origin for domestic tourists visiting Beaufort West, January–June 2025

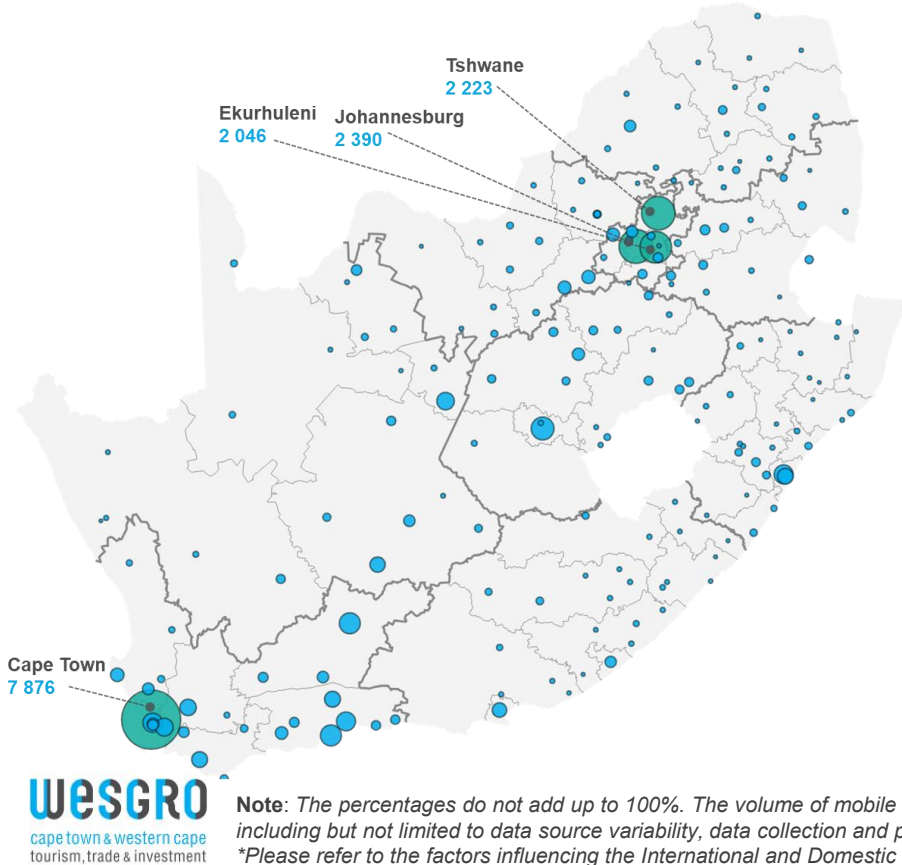
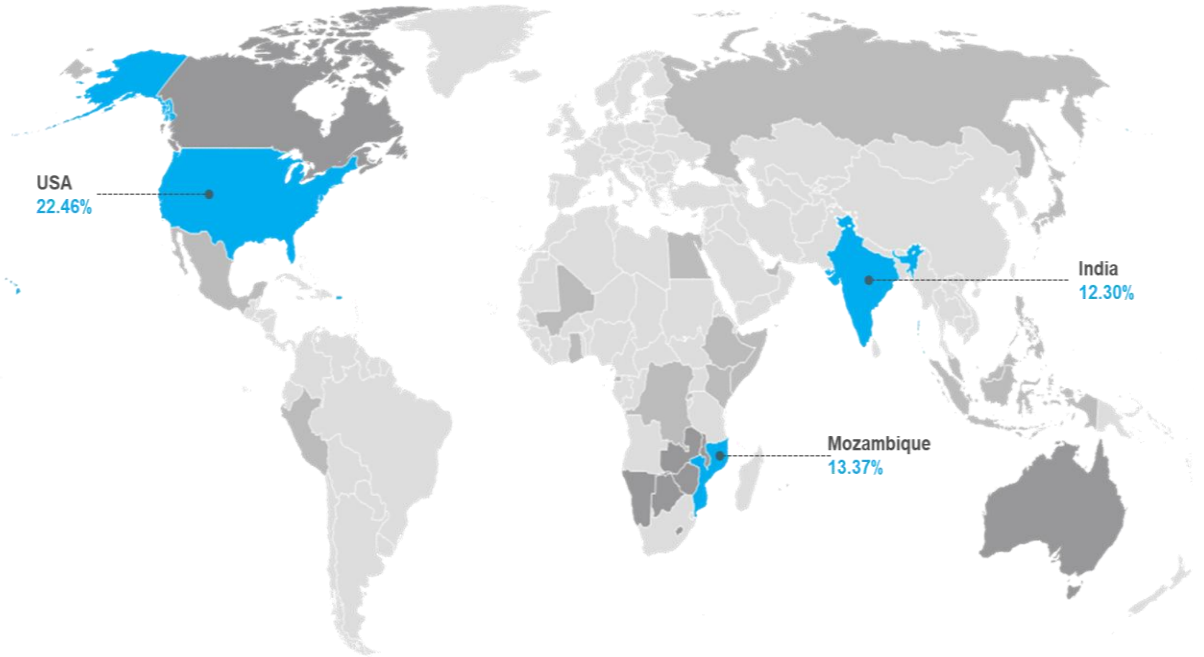


Figure 14: Countries of origin for international tourists visiting Beaufort West, January–June 2025



Note: The percentages do not add up to 100%. The volume of mobile location data capture counts is influenced by several factors including but not limited to data source variability, data collection and processing variability, and mobile use variability.
*Please refer to the factors influencing the International and Domestic sample counts on page 6.

5. Domestic Visitor Breakdown: Laingsburg and Prince Albert

- Among the 3,142 domestic visitors sampled in Laingsburg, 32.46% came from the vibrant city of Cape Town. The sample of tourists from Cape Town highlights the city's significance as a primary source of visitors seeking the unique experiences that Laingsburg offers. This can be seen in Figure 15.
- In contrast, as seen in Figure 16, Prince Albert attracted a total of 1,924 domestic tourists. A notable 25.88% of these visitors were from Cape Town. In addition, 8.8% of tourists were from George, while Tshwane accounted for 6.65% of domestic visitors. This data underscores the regional appeal of Prince Albert, showcasing its ability to draw visitors from various parts of the Western Cape.

Figure 15: Municipalities of origin for domestic tourists visiting Laingsburg, January–June 2025

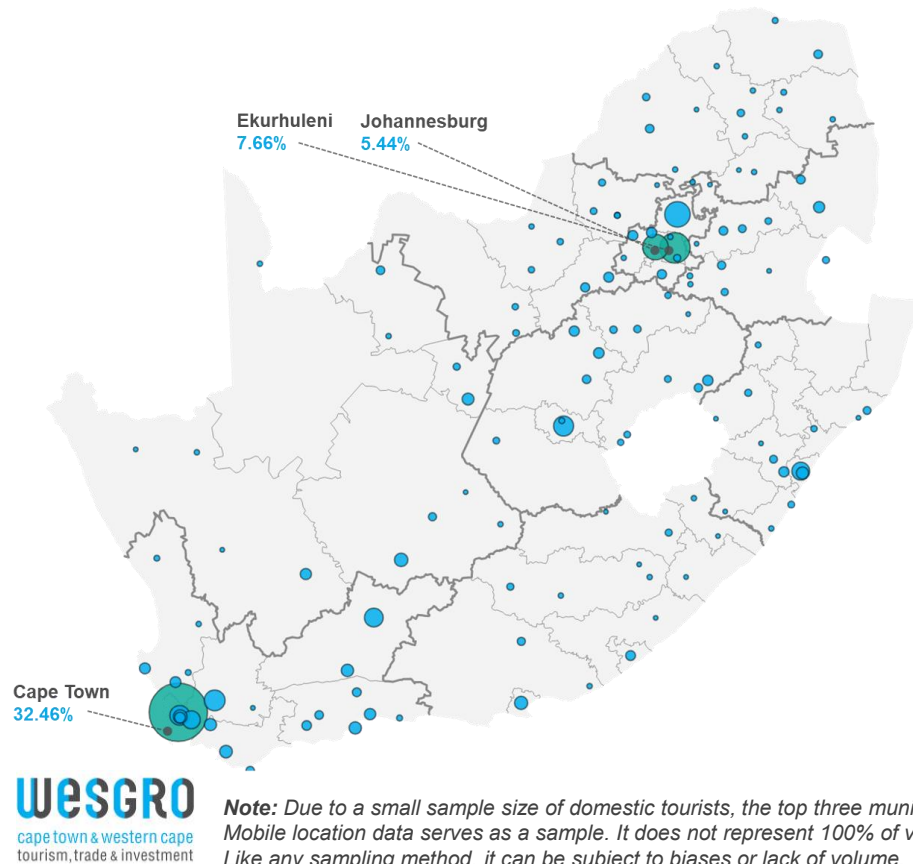
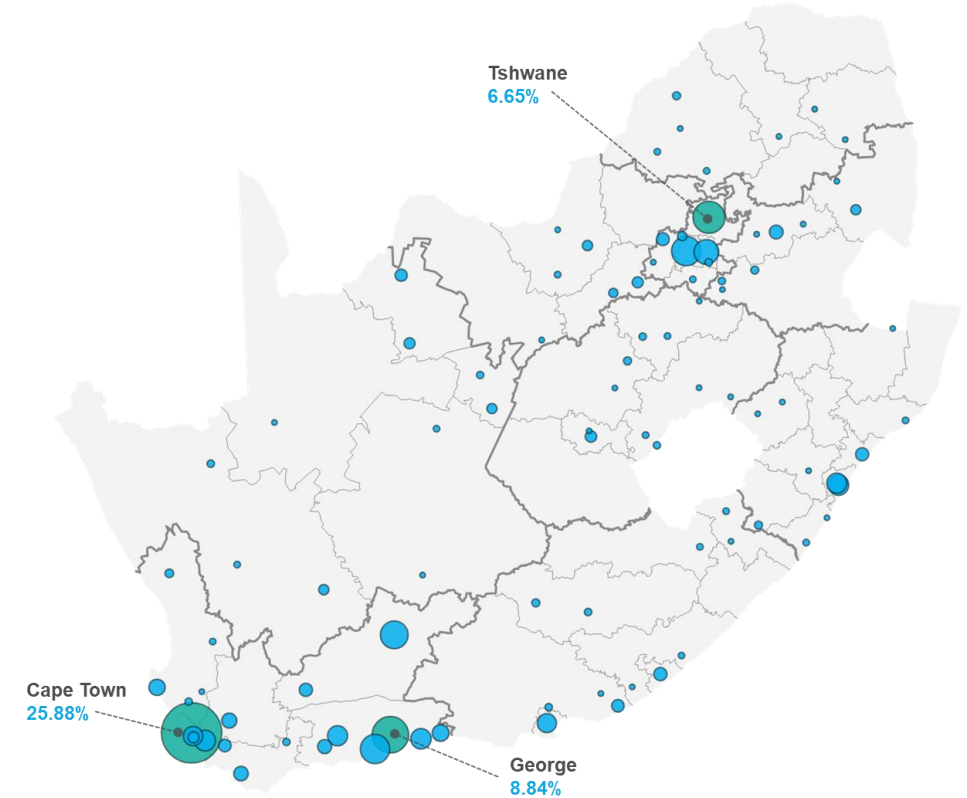


Figure 16: Municipalities of origin for domestic tourists visiting Prince Albert, January–June 2025

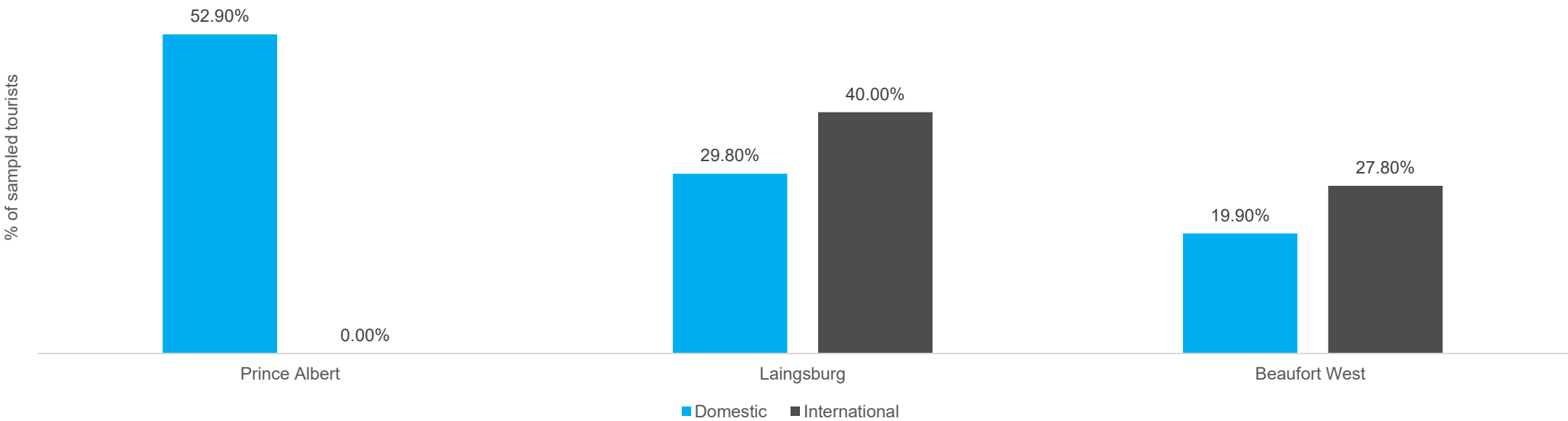


Source: Rove (2025)

5. Overnight Stay Trends in Select Towns

- Figure 17 reveals that Prince Albert attracted the highest number of overnight tourists, with a 52.90% share of domestic visitors. In comparison, Laingsburg attracted a noteworthy portion of tourists, with 40.00% of overnight stays attributed to domestic travellers and 29.80% to international visitors.
- Conversely, Beaufort West attracted a smaller percentage of overnight domestic tourists, with only 19.90% opting for overnight stays, while it saw a slightly higher international presence, with 27.80% of international visitors staying overnight. This variation in visitor demographics highlights the unique appeal of each town and their ability to cater to different segments of the tourism market.

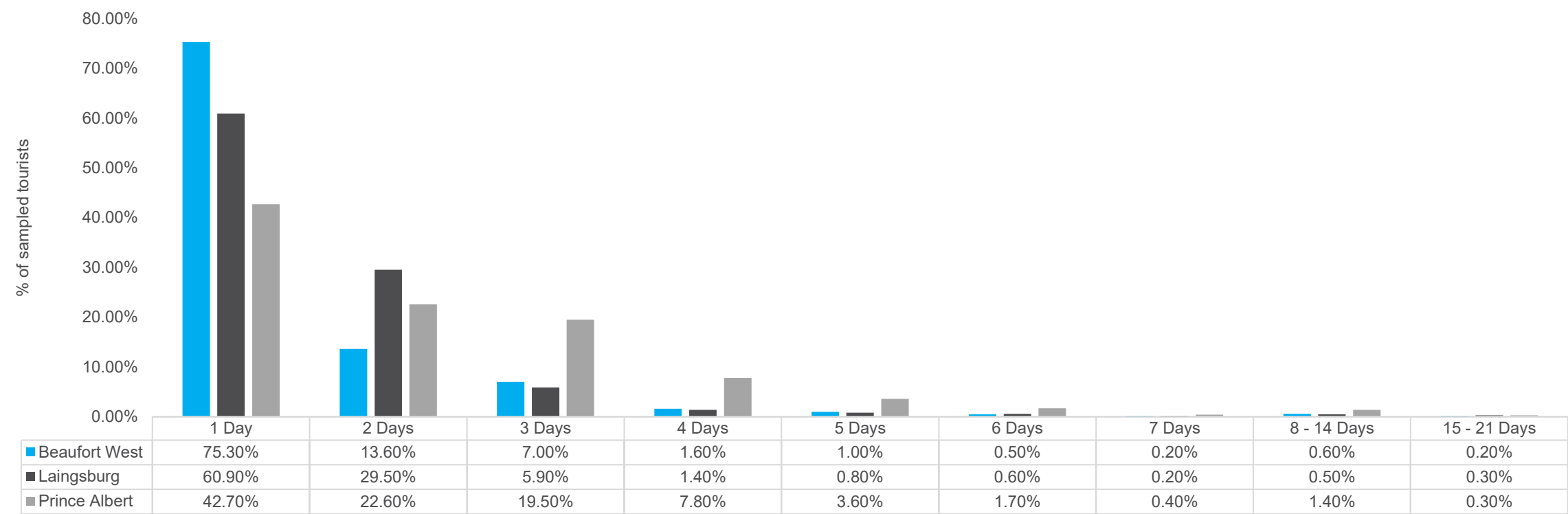
Figure 17: Domestic and international overnight tourists in select towns, January–June 2025

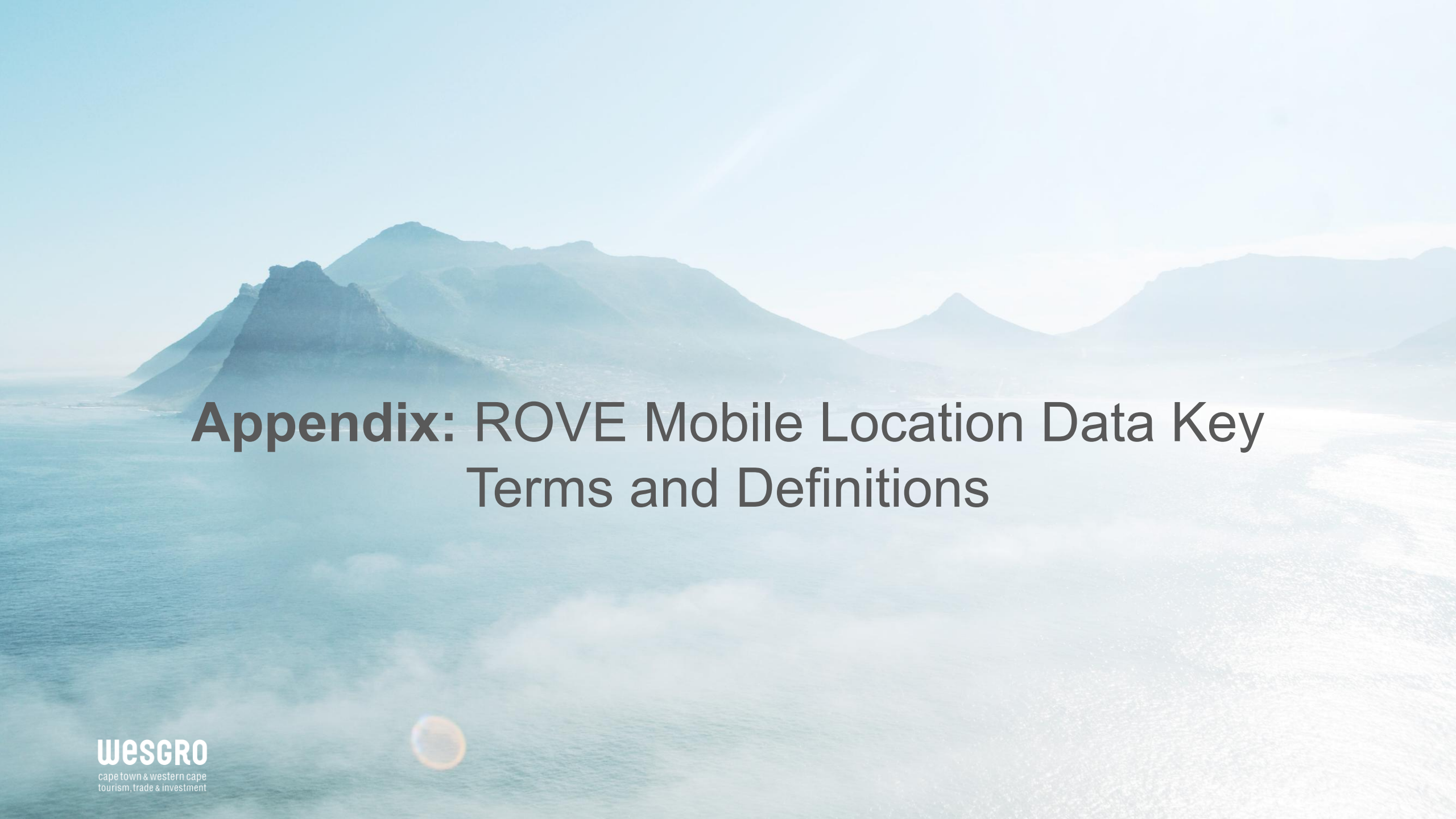


5. Average Length of Stay Trends in Select Towns: Domestic Tourists

- Figure 18 reveals that, on average, domestic tourists who visited the select towns typically stayed for one or three days. Looking at visitors who stayed for one day, Beaufort West stood out, having attracted 75.30% of one-day domestic tourists, which shows a strong local interest in this town. Following closely was Laingsburg, which was visited by 60.90% of tourists who stayed for one day. In contrast, Prince Albert attracted a lower proportion of domestic tourists, with only 42.70% of its visitors staying for one day.
- This variation in tourists highlighted the different attractions and experiences offered by each town, as well as their varying capacities to draw in local visitors for quick trips.

Figure 18: Average length of stay (number of days) by domestic tourists, January–June 2025



A scenic view of a coastline with mountains and the ocean. The mountains are in the background, and the ocean is in the foreground. The sky is blue and clear.

Appendix: ROVE Mobile Location Data Key Terms and Definitions

Definitions of Mobile Location Data and Tourists vs non-Tourists

- About Mobile Location Data

- Privacy compliant data is collected from location-enabled apps on mobile devices. Data is collected when those location-enabled mobile devices enter our geo-fenced areas.
- Data is collected through applications (news, weather, games, texting apps, traffic, etc).
 - Year-over-year numbers could be skewed by increased app penetration and data privacy settings/policies.
 - The exception is China which does not share data...
- Think of mobile data like survey data on steroids.
 - A sample size greater than 30 yields a 95% level of confidence.
 - This may be the largest sample size of data pertaining to visitors•
- This should not be compared to visitation data.•
- Many factors impact total sample size:
 - Number of app partnerships
 - Usage of apps
 - App developer policies
 - Volume of visitors

- Who Are Tourists?

- A tourist is typically defined as follows:
 - A visitor who does not live or work within the study geography
 - A visitor who travels a minimum distance to the study geography
 - A visitor who appears in the study geography for a minimum period of time (exclude commuters/passers through, etc.)

Definitions of Mobile Location Data and Tourists vs non-Tourists

Primary Study Geography	Tourists are defined as:
Province/Tourism Regions	When a visitor does not live or work in Cape Town, Winelands, Cape Overberg, Weskus, Garden Route & Klein Karoo and Cape Karoo and they have travelled more than 25 miles (40km), and they have stayed in the polygon for more than 120 minutes, they are a tourist.
Notes and Considerations: - Residents of the Western Cape are not counted as a tourists - Minimum distance travelled to meet the definition of tourist. Distance travelled is calculated from the visitors' Common Evening Location (latitude and longitude) to the centre of the polygon - Minimum duration of visit of 120 minutes excludes commuters driving through each region	
Secondary Study Geography	Tourists are defined as:
City or Town	When a visitor does not live or work in the city or town and they have travelled more than 25 miles (40km), and they have stayed for more than 45 minutes, they are a tourist.
Notes and Considerations: - Residents of a city are not counted as tourists to the city - Minimum distance traveled of 40km satisfies tourist definition for minimum distance travelled. Distance travelled is calculated from the visitors' Common Evening Location (latitude and longitude) to the centre of the polygon	
Point of Interest Study Geography	Tourists are defined as:
All Tourism Experiences	When a visitor stays in the polygon for more than 15 minutes and has not visited the polygon more than 20 times in any 90 day period, they are a tourist
Notes and Considerations: - Any 90-day period refers to any consecutive 90 days in their mobile location data history - Filter out visitors not staying for any meaningful length of time (couriers, taxis etc.).	
What are Tourist Segments?	
Local Tourists: Tourists who reside within the same region. Domestic Tourists: Tourists who reside in South Africa outside of the Western Cape International Tourists: Tourists who reside outside of South Africa	

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition and Usage
Study Geography	A specific geography, defined by a boundary called a polygon.
Primary Study Geography	The largest area in the destination in which you want to capture mobile device data. For most destinations this is usually a country, province, or state.
Secondary Study Geography	Often destinations want to derive insights about sub-geographies within their destination, such as counties, tourism regions, and city regions.
Point of Interest	Points of interest are the smallest study geographies in your destination such as tourism businesses, parks, roadways, or city districts.
Sample	Not all people carry GPS-enabled, opted in mobile devices with location services always activated. Thus, in any period of time, in any given study geography, mobile location data is a sample. Therefore, whenever this whitepaper discusses “visitors” or “tourists” or “residents” or any other grouping of devices, it should always be understood to be a sampling of real-world visitorship or foot traffic.
Visitors	Mobile devices seen within the study geography during a specific period of time
Common Evening Location (CEL)	Derived latitude-longitude point near which a device spends most of its time on evenings and/or weekends. While most often associated with a device’s home, there is nothing that inherently guarantees that it is a home (e.g. a person who works an overnight shift at a power plant).
Common Daytime Location (CDL)	Derived latitude-longitude point near which a device spends most of its traditional workweek [Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm local time]. While most often associated with a device’s office or work location, there is nothing that inherently guarantees that it is an office or work location (e.g. a person who is a stay-at-home parent).
Residents/Workers/Locals	Terms referring to a visitor segment comprising devices which are determined to have a CEL or a CDL with the study geography or within a certain (usually short) distance of the study geography. For most tourism analyses, these devices are eliminated from the project because they are not, by definition, tourists. However, it is possible to include these devices within a broader visitor study.
Tourists	Term generally referring to a visitor segment comprising devices which are determined NOT to have a CEL or a CDL with the study geography or within a certain (usually short) distance of the study geography but have come to the study geography from a different origin market.
Tourist Segments	Groupings of tourist segments which have a defining characteristic associated with their appearance in a study geography, such as “Short Haul Tourists” or “International Tourists” or “In State Tourists.”
Overnighters	Term which characterises a specific visitor segment where mobile devices are seen in the study geography for more than one consecutive day. An overnight stay is defined as tourists who arrived prior to midnight (0:00) and stayed until 07:00 the following day.
Day Trippers	Term which characterises a specific visitor segment where mobile devices are seen in the study geography for less than one day.
Length of Stay	Duration of trip within the study geography. The methodology for calculating length of stay is based on the characteristics of the geography.

Source: Rove (2025)

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