

In the Western Cape there are many geographical names derived from Khoekhoe heritage. These names represent aspects of our province's history that should be restored and cherished for posterity. Names contribute to a sense of belonging and ownership and by acknowledging the survival of Khoekhoe heritage through place names, social inclusion is promoted.

This brochure promotes place names in this province that are derived from Khoekhoe heritage. In this way the Department acknowledges the province's shared heritage and its diverse cultures. A limited selection of names is listed below:

KOO

District: Cape Winelands

Municipality: Breede Valley and Langeberg

Coordinates: 33°41'S19°54'E

Koo means cold – t'goaub, t'gaaub, and ku which is an area, land or country.

Koo is the region between Montagu and Matroosberg Station. The name refers to the watermelon *Fockea edulis* growing in the area. It has been adopted as a brand name for canned fruit, vegetables and jams.

BIEDOUW

District: West Coast

Municipality: Cederberg and Northern Cape Province

Coordinates: 32°05'S19°18'E

A reference to the indigenous biedou or bietou plant (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*), the name has been given to the Biedouw River, a tributary of the Doring River, the Biedouw Mountains and the surrounding valley.

The mountains are some 39 km north-east of Clanwilliam.

LEEU-GAMKA

District: Central Karoo

Municipality: Prince Albert

Coordinates: 32°46'25'S21°58'49'E

/Xam - X pronounced as a G - means lion and ka means river. Leeu and Gamka both mean Lion in Afrikaans and /Xam.

The town of Leeu-Gamka is located where the Leeu River enters the Gamka River. The name is tautological.

KAROO (GREAT KAROO, LITTLE KAROO)

District: Central Karoo

Municipality: Laingsburg, Beaufort West, Prince Albert

Coordinates: 32°41'S19°54'E

/ka'ru: from a Khoekhoe word garo meaning desert, arid, hard, dry field. Also pronounced as Xhaeruh, Carrow, Carro, Karow, Karro.

The Tankwa Karoo is between the Cederberg and Roggeveld mountain range (Northern and Western Cape Province), and the Moordenaarskaroo is a region between Laingsburg and Sutherland. The Swartberg Mountain range divides the Karoo sharply into the Great Karoo and the Little Karoo, which runs east to west, parallel to the southern coastline, but is separated from the sea by another east-west range called the Outeniqua-Langeberg Mountains.

The Great Karoo lies to the north of the Swartberg range, and the Little Karoo to the south.



● Biedouw ● Knysna ● Goudini ● Hessequa

● Outeniqua ● Tsitsikamma ● Leeu-Gamka

● Kango caves ● Koo

KNYSNA

District: Eden

Municipality: Knysna

Coordinates: 33°51'S23°48'E

The word Knysna, taken from the Khoekhoe word / naizna means "ferns".

Knysna is the name of a river, a lagoon and the town situated at the mouth of the Knysna River. The area was named after the landscape which is rich with ferns.

OUTENIQUA MOUNTAINS

District: Eden

Municipality: George

Coordinates: 33°48'S23°50'E

Ou-teni-qua: teni = honey; qua = men or people and //Ou = a bag. Meaning 'men who carry honey'.

Outeniqua is said to refer to the Outeniqua Khoekhoe clan that once lived in these mountains. The Outeniqua Mountains are located along the southern South African coast. They run parallel to the coast and form a continuous range with the Langeberg to the east. The range was named *Serra da Estrela* (Mountain of the Star) on old Portuguese maps. Rock art paintings can still be found in this area.

The highest Peak is Cradock Peak: 1,578m (5,177feet).

TSITSIKAMMA MOUNTAINS

District: Eden

Municipality: George

Coordinates: 33°51'S23°48'E

Zitzikamma - Tsitzikamma - tse -tsitsa – meaning clear, transparent, gami meaning water. Tsitsikamma means: "place of much water."

The Tsitsikamma Mountains form an east-west mountain range located in the Garden Route region of the Western Cape and Eastern Cape Provinces between Humansdorp and George.

Highest Peak: Peak Formosa: 1,675m (5,495 feet)

KANGO CAVES

District: Eden

Municipality: Oudtshoorn

Coordinates: 33°23'40"S22°12'54"E

Of Khoekhoe origin, the word Kango is said to mean 'water ridges' or 'wet mountain'.

Kango is the region along the southern slopes of the Swartberg, in the Oudtshoorn district. The Kango caves are found some 30 km north of Oudtshoorn in the south-western foothills of the Swartberg and were declared a national monument in 1938.

GOUDINI

District: Cape Winelands

Municipality: Breede Valley

Coordinates: 33°41'S19°19'E

Goudini: from the Khoekhoe words - Gou meaning bitter. Dini or Denni meaning honey - bitter honey.

The name was used by the local Khoekhoe in the region and it is still used today for the area of the Old Goudini Farms such as Slanghoek, Klipdrift, Groot Vlakte, Groot Eiland, Gevonden, Goudmyn, Boontjiesrivier, Dashbosch Rivier, Pokkekraal and Aande-Smalblaar.

HESSEQUA

District: Eden

Municipality: Hessequa

Coordinates: 34°10'S21°15'E

A more accurate use of the name would be Hessaqua-ku (Ku means land, area or country). Hessequa meaning people of the trees, refers to the particular Khoekhoe clan, the Hessequas, who lived in the region.

The municipality covers the area between the Langeberg Mountains and the Indian Ocean, stretching from the Breede Rivier in the west to the Gourits River in the east, Swellendam in the west, Kannaland in the north, Oudtshoorn to the northeast, and Mosselbaai to the east.

Source: Dictionary of South African Place Names published in 2014 authored by Raper, Möller and du Plessis.

Cover: Rock Art, Monte Cristo, Clanwilliam. Image is courtesy of Prof. John Parkington, Department of Archaeology, University of Cape Town.

For more information, contact:

Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport
Directorate Museums, Heritage
and Geographical Names

Tel 021 483 5959 or

Email: Ceoheritage@westerncape.gov.za

www.westerncape.gov.za



Western Cape
Government

Cultural Affairs and Sport



Khoekhoe Geographical Names in the
Western Cape Province



Western Cape
Government

Cultural Affairs and Sport