



VulPro ANNUAL REPORT 2016

(VulPro NPC [Vulture Programme for the Conservation of Vulture Species in southern Africa]
Registration No. 2011/127419/08 [Section 14, Companies Act 2008])



Table of Contents

1. SUMMARY	3
1.1 Executive Summary. VulPro, 10 years old.	3
1.2 Accomplishing the mission of VulPro	3
2. Performance reviews	4
2.1 Rescue & Rehabilitation	4
2.1.1 Age and reason for admission	5
2.1.2 Travel	6
2.1.3 Feeding costs	6
2.2. Monitoring of breeding levels in the principal Cape Vulture colonies	6
2.3 Monitoring breeding success in tree-nesting vulture species	7
2.4 Management and associated work around vulture restaurants	7
2.5 Community outreach, interaction and education	7
2.6 Involvement in research projects	9
2.6.1. Publications	10
2.7 Media interest	10
2.8 Breeding of non-releasable vulture species, Cape Vultures in particular, for reintroduction purposes	11
3. Administrative issues	12
3.1 Board, staff, volunteers, students.....	12
3.2 Travel	12
4. Costs.....	13
5. Fundraising, sponsorship, acknowledgements and sustainability	13
5.1 Fundraising, sponsors, acknowledgements	13
5.2 Sustainability.....	14
6. Report from the honorary treasurer	15

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Executive Summary. VulPro, 10 years old.

VulPro was established on New Year's Day, 2007, with its rehabilitation centre and vulture restaurant located at Skeerpoort on Nyoka Ridge. Those premises had to be vacated in February 2009 and the operation was moved to its current location at Hartbeespoort, Rietfontein. Operating then under the umbrella of the Rhino and Lion Wildlife Conservation NPO, it established its independence in October 2011 with its registration with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission of South Africa as a non-profit company in its own right.

The interest VulPro has generated both within South Africa and its near neighbours but also globally, and the clear value of its work in turning the tide at an uncomfortably late date in the serious decline among southern Africa's unique vulture species, underscore the remarkable achievements accomplished in just 10 years.

Novel operations inevitably attract interest in their opening periods and the challenge, of course, is for VulPro to continue to hold the public, local and global interest which has allowed it to maintain the intense momentum it has developed in its first decade of existence. The fragility of the vulture communities in southern Africa remain very real under the continuing threats which are almost all the result of human expansions, developments and traditional beliefs. There can be no let-up in VulPro's work and mission if these beautiful and essential birds are still to be there helping us keep our ecosystems healthy in a few more decades' time and beyond.

This report, which generally follows the format of VulPro's annual reports since becoming an NPC, supplies VulPro's operational statistics for 2016. As previously, rescue, rehabilitation and release figures are presented as is the developing picture on the health of breeding colonies and of populations determined from monitoring tagged birds and vulture restaurants. The enormous effort that goes unabated into educational outreach is as clear as in previous years. Media interest, perhaps a little less marked in 2016 than when Britain's Prince William's presented the Tusk Trust awards in 2013, continues on a regular basis nonetheless. Also continuing is VulPro's exciting programme putting non-releasable vultures to the useful function of captive breeding. The numbers are not huge, but every bird released has the potential of being a productive addition to the overall community.

The opportunity VulPro's work affords for observing the behavioural patterns vultures adopt to maintain their individual and community health and the threats that stand in their way is utilised to best effect within research projects resulting, as far as possible in publications. The wide variety of research projects being undertaken by or with VulPro in 2016 is outlined.

The all-important topic of money – our income and outgoings – brings up the end of the report in the usual way. It is not the least of our challenges to find a way of adequately thanking our sponsors/donors/supporters but we hope they will sense the sincerity of our attempts to do this. Let it be written in stone how much vultures and VulPro depend for their future on these persons/groups/organisations.

1.2 Accomplishing the mission of VulPro

There has been no change from previous years in VulPro's mission statement—*“To advance knowledge, awareness and innovation in the conservation of African vulture populations for the*

benefit and well-being of society”, or the manner in which it goes about achieving the targets embodied within this statement through its:

- ongoing rescue and rehabilitation service for vultures and other raptors
- monitoring of breeding levels in principal Cape Vulture colonies within southern Africa and colonies of Hooded and African White-backed Vultures in the Limpopo and North West Provinces in South Africa.
- its vulture restaurant cooperatives
- community outreach, interaction and education programmes
- farmer and landowner awareness and educational extension activities
- involvement in research projects
- collaborations with other NGOs both locally and internationally on vulture related conservation activities
- regular output of information and profile through the media, and
- programme of breeding of non-releasable vulture species, Cape Vultures in particular, for reintroduction purposes

2. Performance reviews

2.1 Rescue & Rehabilitation

Rescue and rehabilitation remains first and foremost among VulPro’s missions. The numbers are given in Table 1. Overall numbers in residence at the end of 2016, excluding captive bred vultures were 176 (161 non-releasable) up from 162 (142 non-releasable) last year, though the rise due to other species than Cape Vultures, principally African White-backed.

When it is appreciated that the cost of feeding a single vulture works out at about R25 per week (see 2.1.3), the increase of 11 birds roughly equates to SAR14 000 per year.

The demand for VulPro’s rescue, palliative care and release services is clearly not declining. The release figures again underscore the value of these services (Table 2). Since VulPro took possession of its present premises, 132 Cape Vultures (39% of those rescued), 9 other vulture species (20% of those rescued) and 45 other raptors (41% of those rescued), which would have been lost to their already threatened or dwindling communities, were successfully returned there to continue breeding and maintaining those communities.

As covered below (section 2.7), the captive breeding programme, utilizing non-releasable birds, is beginning to prove successful and contributes more releasable birds to the wild communities.

Table 1. Up to date rescue and release data

Species	In 2016						
	In residence at 1.1.16	Collected/ brought In	Released	Died	Euthanased	Transferred or donated or on loan	In residence at 31.12.16 (non-
Cape Vulture	88(84)	52	14	4	4	0	118 (106)
African White-backed Vulture	24(23)	27	10	2	3	0	36 (36)
White-headed Vulture	2(2)	0	0	0	0	0	2 (2)
Lappet-faced Vulture	5(5)	4	1	0	0	0	8 (7)
Palm-nut Vulture	4(4)	0	0	0	0	1	3 (3)
Condors	2(2)	0	0	0	0	0	2 (2)
OTHER RAPTORS	7(5)	9	3	2	5	0	7 (5)

Table 2. Summary of rescue and release data since VulPro established itself in its Hartbeespoort, Rietfontein, location

Year	Cape Vultures		Other vultures		Other raptors	
	Rescued	Released	Rescued	Released	Rescued	Released
2009	40	12	7	2	19	0
2010	25	13	5	0	14	4
2011	38	15	1	0	17	7
2012	53	31	5	0	15	6
2013	42	24	4	0	13	7
2014	54	12	18	3	8	9
2015	52	17	23	4	22	12
2016	52	8	21	8	9	3
Total	356	138	84	17	117	48

2.1.1 Age and reason for admission

Of the 85 vultures collected or brought in

- 28 (37%) were specifically described as young fledglings and the remaining 57 (63%) as immature and sub-adults. Most of the fledglings were found in December.

- 47% had some level of mechanical injury, 45% of these attributed to power line collisions
- 3% showed evidence of poisoning
- 5% were victims of electrocution

2.1.2 Travel

Journeys amounting to a total of 52 000 km were required for rescue work (this excludes field related work and travelling)

2.1.3 Feeding costs

The average cost of feeding vultures in our enclosures was R4500 per week. This cost does not include staffing, maintenance and other costs incurred in running VulPro. In addition, the cost of food for the wild birds at the VulPro vulture restaurant amounts to R1800 per week on average

2.2. Monitoring of breeding levels in the principal Cape Vulture colonies

The vital role VulPro plays in vulture conservation is clear from the fact that its monitoring programme encompasses roughly 50% of the world's Cape Vulture populations. Readily apparent from this is the fragility of the global Cape Vulture community and the significance of the responsibility VulPro has taken on.

Table 3 summarises the overall monitoring data from the 6 years this programme has been running. While no dramatic changes appear to be taking place, there does appear to be reason to believe the health of the colonies is good and possibly even improving slowly.

Table 3. Breeding pair counts since monitoring by the Standard Cape Vulture Monitoring Protocol began

Colony	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Blouberg	572	851	1015e	NR	900e	NR
Kransberg	638	661	611	632	580	NR*
Magaliesberg	332	273	309	319	344	390
Manutsa	539	434	444	563	558	621
Moletjie	NR	20	13	17	18	19
Soutpansberg	NR	182	168	187	196	213
Mannyelanong	NR	NR	NR	62	93	NR
Moremi Gorge	NR	NR	NR	NR	194	NR
Kammelkspruit	NR	NR	NR	44	NR	NR

e, estimate; NR, not recorded;

*breeding pairs not recorded but 635 active nests were counted

As stated in last year's report, VulPro does not have the capacity to take on additional monitoring. Attempts to recruit other groups or individuals for monitoring the smaller colonies have had limited success so far and, indeed has run into problems with some utilising helicopters and other sources of aviation for this purpose and disturbing the colonies.

2.3 Monitoring breeding success in tree-nesting vulture species

The conservation and population status of several tree-nesting species were upgraded to ‘critically endangered’ in 2015. Through our breeding surveys we strive to add to the knowledge of these data deficient species as well as closely monitor these populations that vary drastically based on land management practices and habitat selection. This year we have continued to monitor 3 separate populations of African White-backed and 1 population of Hooded Vultures, and are thrilled to have added a dense and successful site for AWBV at Swineburne game breeding facilities in Limpopo Province. Breeding counts for these species are typically conducted twice a year.

Table 4. Breeding counts of African White-backed Vultures at 4 sites across South Africa.

Location	Breeding Pairs June	Total Active Nests Aug/Sept	Estimated mid-season success (%)
Boikarabelo	40	34	85
Swineburne	-	16	84
Curly Wee	8	5	63
Olifants River PNR	37	54	146*
Total		109	

*several active nests were noted in the September survey which were not noted in June. The cause of this increase is unknown, but may be a result of the drought and beneficial regional increase in food availability, possibly attracting pairs to the study site.

Our Hooded Vulture June survey in ORPGR revealed 16 active nests. The number of breeding pairs increased from last year (14 pairs), as this year the survey was extended by an additional 5 km.

2.4 Management and associated work around vulture restaurants

We have continued to work with owners and managers of vulture restaurants throughout 2016, providing advice, offering assistance, undertaking site visits to feeding sites and helping to set up new feeding sites. We continue to provide the managers/owners with relevant information and continue our ongoing studies aimed at maximizing the value of vulture restaurants for conservation purposes.

2.5 Community outreach, interaction and education

VulPro remains wholly committed in its belief in education as the route to public awareness of the value of vultures to the ecosystem and of their threatened status. The extent of this commitment is apparent from Table 5 which shows that some 1414 individuals were reached either through being hosted at the VulPro site (no asterisk) or attending lectures on VulPro’s activities (asterisks) in 2016. In addition, the Monte Casino Bird Gardens featured a showcase on VulPro in June estimated to have been viewed by around 1000 persons.

Table 5. Numbers of individuals (written in order of attendance within the month) hosted by VulPro or addressed by VulPro staff in 2016

Month	Family Groups	Other small groups	Club, conservancy, etc. groups	School & scout groups	Totals
January	4	2, 3, 2	30*	8	49
February	6	4, 7, 10	20, 25*		72
March	4	5	18, 30*	8, 74, 29*	168
April	6, 5, 4, 4	10, 12, 8, 7, 7	20*	60*, 9	152
May	3	3, 4, 5, 2, 8		25, 15, 15, 2	82
June	11	3, 3	15	10, 35*, 15	92
July		2, 10, 2, 9, 7, 2, 8	30		70
August	4	2, 3, 2, 3	15, 25, 40	2, 20	116
September	6	10, 5		240, 141	402
October		1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 6, 4	30		46
November		3, 5, 4	26*	60, 12, 20, 12	142
December		3, 6, 2	12		23
Totals	57	219	326	812	1414

The importance of reaching people when they are young for the most effective education was emphasised in last year's report. The predominance in the numbers of school and scout groups again reflects VulPro's continuing view of this.

Worthy of special note are the following:

- The visit by a family group in February during which they donated six trees for VulPro's captive birds; this was a very kind gesture
- The visit by 8 children from the Children of Fire Trust in July
- Attendance by 40 farmers' association members in August, as part of the ongoing effort to convey to farmers the value of vultures to their ecology
- The visit by a group from the Logwood Village for Intellectually Disabled Adults in September
- The hosting of 30 Eskom staff in October as part of the ongoing efforts to minimise the conflict between vulture conservation and power line threats
- The lecture given to 24 residents at the Centre of Hope Rehabilitation Centre in November
- Pairs of St Stithian students undertook 8 hours of community service on three occasions, in May, July and August
- One couple even chose the moment of being at VulPro to announce their engagement in May. We are certain this had to be a blessed start to a long and happy relationship.

A number of the visits were from individuals and groups from outside South Africa. Among these were:

- Four international veterinarians in February
- 18 international paragliding pilots in March
- 12 Nigerian visitors with an interest in assisting with vulture conservation efforts in Nigeria

2.6 Involvement in research projects

Invaluable as VulPro's fundamental programme of rescue, rehabilitation and release is, it would clearly be a waste of a golden opportunity to alleviate the many threats to southern Africa's precious vulture populations if we did not use the close contact it gives us to deepen our understanding of the behavioural patterns these birds adopt to maintain their individual and community health. Conversely, this also deepens our understanding of the threats that stand in the way of this individual and community health. Research, therefore, inevitably is another important constituent in VulPro's overall range of activities.

While some of the research projects are welcomed as graduate student projects, tending to be 'one-off' in nature and seeking to fill a fairly well-defined gap in our knowledge, these are underwritten by important 'bread-and-butter' (but no less exciting) studies which are largely ongoing year by year. The latter include

- The annual survey of the health of breeding colonies covered in 2.2 above.
- The annual survey of the health and breeding success of Hooded and White-backed vultures in the Olifants River Private Nature Reserve, Boikarabelo Mine, Swinburne game breeding farm, and Curly Wee farm, covered in 2.3 above.
- Expanding the vulture re-sighting database, which has grown steadily year by year with the associated bird ringing operations. As of December, there have been some 18,000 re-sightings reported
- Following the movements of vultures fitted with tracking devices as these have become more available
- Developing the population censuses from re-sightings at vulture restaurants and elsewhere.
- As last year, power lines have been associated with high mortalities in one or two instances and power line surveys are now an important part of VulPro's monitoring work, with regular reports of incidences or clear threats being sent to Eskom.

With respect to the re-sighting databases, with the help of various collaborators the data is being analyzed. Together with the Animal Demography Unit we are creating distribution maps for all vulture species. A PhD student at the University of Cape Town is using the restaurant data to understand the role vulture restaurants are playing in breeding success and population maintenance. Tracking and re-sighting data are being used to obtain an increasingly clear picture of Cape Vulture foraging ranges, survival success, preferred habitat types and so on. In an association with environmental consultant Alvaro Camiña Cardenal the data is proving of considerable value in the planning of wind farm and power line developments such that they are of minimal threat to vultures. They are also furthering our understanding of the movements of Cape Vultures holistically throughout southern Africa. Alvaro is also comparing the threats in South Africa to the threats vultures are facing in Spain and Europe thereby developing a clearer picture of where vulture conservation stands in South Africa in comparison to Europe and where our priorities need to be with regards to conserving vultures in South Africa.

VulPro also strives, of course, to increase breeding success in its Captive Breeding Programme (2.7 below) and towards this end we have initiated a study on egg calcium levels in our incubating eggs in collaboration with the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences, University of Pretoria, and the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute using X-ray studies and chemical analyses after hatching.

Biological samples are collected at times of trapping for ringing or tagging for the National Research Foundation Biobank at the National Zoological Gardens, the purpose of which is to develop a DNA databank for species and individual birds. Amongst other envisaged uses of the bank is that of a forensic tool for monitoring trade in these endangered species.

2.6.1. Publications

The results of the research work are put into the public domain in publications wherever possible. An impressive list of publications has accumulated over the years resulting from research done at or with VulPro in the 10 years of its existence. In 2016, the following papers have been published:

Home range and habitat selection of Cape Vultures *Gyps coprotheres* in relation to supplementary feeding A Kane, K Wolter, W Naser, A Kotze, V Naidoo, A Monadjem, Bird Study 2016. DOI: 10.1080/00063657.2016.1214105.

Natal philopatry in young Cape Vultures *Gyps coprotheres*. MT Hirschauer, K Wolter, W Naser. Ostrich 2016. DOI: 10.2989/00306525.2017.1245683.

Lead ingestion as a potential contributing factor to the decline in vulture populations in southern Africa. V Naidoo, K Wolter, CJ Botha. Environmental Research 2017;152:150-156.

Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres* breeding status in southern Africa: monitoring results from 2010–2014. K Wolter, W Naser, MT Hirschauer, A Camiña. Ostrich 2106. DOI: 10.2989/00306525.2016.1179689.

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* and African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* nesting at the Olifants River Private Nature Reserve, Limpopo province, South Africa. A Monadjem, K Wolter, W Naser, K Bildstein. Ostrich 2016, DOI: 10.2989/00306525.2016.1179690.

Release success of captive bred Cape Vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*) in the Magaliesberg Mountains, South Africa. A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science. M Hirschauer, June 2016.

The collaborative study with the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science on safety testing of the NSAID, Carprofen, again mentioned in the 2014 annual report, is still ongoing. A pharmacokinetic study and analysis is still in progress and more tests are planned in 2016. In preparation.

The ecological consequences of inter-individual differences in behaviour for a social scavenger, the Cape Griffon vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*)" is in preparation from the PhD student's programme at Swansea University, UK, referred to in the 2014 annual report. In preparation.

2.7 Media interest

VulPro's activities and campaigns have always attracted media attention. Unsurprisingly, this peaked in 2013 when VulPro's CEO Kerri Wolter was a finalist in the Tusk Trust's inaugural Awards for Conservation in Africa, meeting Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge when

he was presenting the awards. Nevertheless items featuring Vulpro's work and challenges continued to appear in various media outlet types every month in 2016. While sometimes it is hard to precisely categorise 'type', especially as most types have online versions now, Table 5 is a summary of media coverage this year.

Whether by major TV channels, or daily newspaper, or small specialist newspaper, or U-tube item or other, VulPro recognises that every bit of publicity on its mission and activities adds to public awareness vulture conservation needs.

Table 6. Media coverage in 2016

Month	Journals, Magazines	Radio	Television, documentaries	Local/corporate newsletters	Web, U-tube, etc
January	1	1	1	1	
February	5	1			
March	1		2		
April	2	1			
May		1		1	1
June					3
July	2			4	
August	4		1	1	
September		1		1	2
October	3	1		2	2
November		1		1	1
December	1				
Totals	19	7	4	11	9

2.8 Breeding of non-releasable vulture species, Cape Vultures in particular, for reintroduction purposes

2016 was year 6 in VulPro's ambitious breeding programme. While there were no releases this year, 7 captive-raised birds are nearing release (Table 7), which awaits completion of construction of the new release enclosure.

Table 7. Summary of breeding by non-releasable Cape and African White-backed vultures

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Breeding pairs	10	10	10	10	15	17
Eggs laid	8	10	12	12	16	23
No. hatched	3	6	3	8	12	11
No. chicks fledged	1	2	2	5	5	7
Ready for release	1	2	2	5	5	7
Released		1*	0	0	7 [†]	0

*chick from 2011 released and found dead a few later, believed to have been killed by a leopard

[†]together with 3 bred at the National Zoological Gardens, Pretoria

3. Administrative issues

3.1 Board, staff, volunteers, students

As an independent NPC since 2011, VulPro has been managed by CEO Kerri Wolter under the direction of the Chairman and members of the 5-member Board (Table 8). The staff in 2016 are listed in Table 9.

Table 8. the VulPro Board (first established in 2011 when VulPro registered as an NPC)

Name	Company	Role	From
Prof. Vinny Naidoo	University of Pretoria, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences	Chair	2013
Adv. Matthew Welz		Legal adviser	
Mark Wolter		Treasurer	2016
Robyn Craven		HR & Marketing	2014
Kerri Wolter	VulPro	CEO	2011

Table 9. Staff at VulPro in 2016

Name	Status	Role	Notes
Kerri Wolter	Permanent*	CEO	
Mandy Schroder	Appointed*	Media and communications liaison	Left 31.12.2016
Orbert Phiri	Permanent*	Culture care and property maintenance	
Notice Phiri	Permanent*	- ditto -	
Charles Banda	Permanent*	- ditto	
Maggie Hirschauer	Graduate student	Research and general assistance	1.4.16- 31.3.17
Kerrow Miller	Temporary*	Management assistant	1.10.15- 1.4.16
Bhekinkosi Sibanda	Student (Nature conservation student)	Student project	1.8.16- 31.7.17
Anzelle van Wyk	Field manager*	Surveys and monitoring in the field	

*Salaried

The number of salaried staff VuPro can employ is inevitably restricted to that affordable with available funds and VulPro depends greatly on volunteers and, in the case of research projects, persons from collaborating institutes. We once again take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the many persons who have given their time in various volunteering capacities for varying time periods to help us.

3.2 Travel

As stated in section 2.1.2 above, collection of birds needing rescue and rehabilitation involved approximately 52 000 km of travel. Other activities requiring travel, as in previous years, were:

- Collection of carcasses from farms for feeding the birds
- Management and visitations to vulture restaurants
- Travel as required for research projects
- Travel as required for field work i.e. vulture monitoring
- Travel as required for transporting birds for veterinary attention
- Travel to schools, clubs, and other places for the Educational Outreach work
- Travel to meetings relating to vulture conservation aspects, funding, research projects, media interviews etc.
- Travel for vehicle service

All in all, the total distance travelled throughout 2016 came to 82 000 km.

4. Costs

Operational costs are broken down into:

- Salaries (section 3.1)
- Travel (section 3.2)
- Veterinary services
- Feeding
- Property maintenance
- Security
- Electricity, phone, etc.
- Office costs
- Research, including colony monitoring (2.6)

The major structural enterprises in 2016 have been

- the construction of a new large African White-backed vulture breeding enclosure
- construction of another volunteer room with en-suite bathroom
- revamping of the existing volunteer bathroom
- construction of a small volunteer kitchen.

5. Fundraising, sponsorship, acknowledgements and sustainability

5.1 Fundraising, sponsors, acknowledgements

Communications liaison manager, Mandy Schroder, who joined VulPro in 2015 to take on responsibility for fundraising, has now left. We are interviewing for a suitable replacement to not only assist us with our fundraising activities but also to take on bookkeeping. No change can be anticipated in the high proportion of VulPro's operational time and effort that must go into these essential activities, working with existing and potential sponsors, adoption 'parents', voluntary collections at Educational Outreach events, and so on.

As always, we thank all our friends, sponsors, donors, adoption 'parents', family members, volunteers and supporters for their ongoing commitment, enthusiasm and help towards enabling VulPro to continue achieving ever more of its aims and mission to stabilize the Cape, African White-backed and all other vulture populations.

Also as always, our special thanks to our long-standing donors,

- Bayer SA, RSA
- Boehringer-Ingelheim Vetmedica GmbH, RSA
- Boikarabelo Coal Mine, RSA
- Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, USA
- Colchester Zoo, UK
- Columbus Zoo, USA
- Computer Facilities, RSA
- Copper Sunset Sand (Pty) Ltd, RSA
- Dallas Zoo, USA
- DHL Supply Chain, RSA
- Different.org, RSA
- Gallagher
- Gauntlet Conservation Trust, UK
- GH Braak Trust, RSA
- International Centre for Birds of Prey (ICBP)
- Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, USA
- LUSH, Natural Encounters Inc, USA.
- Prince Bernhard Nature Fund
- Rand Merchant Bank, RSA
- Rufford Foundation, UK
- Sacramento Zoo, USA
- The Hawking Centre, UK
- The Tusk Trust, UK
- SW Living Creatures Trust, RSA
- Zoo Atlanta - Reeder Conservation Fund, USA

As in previous years, we would like to remind our well-wishers that they can support us greatly at no cost to themselves through the MySchoolMyVillageMyPlanet programme, which helps to raise essential funds for schools, charities and environmental concerns throughout South Africa. In 2016, a valuable R14 760 was raised this way, which amounting to approximately R1230 per month. Warm thanks to those individuals who support us this way.

5.2 Sustainability

VulPro recognises that calls on the generosity and beneficence of donors and sponsors by a wide range and number of worthy causes are very substantial and that the philosophy of sponsorship is to enable a good cause, over the period necessary, to get itself launched and find its way to self-sustainability. VulPro has taken the approach of setting aside 5% of income in a range of investments (see section 6 below) with a view to building up a portfolio, the interest from which will eventually underwrite at least the basic operation such that, in lean years, the operation remains financially safe. The current variability of the ZAR makes it difficult to project a time point at which a stable operating income, covering the fundamental rescue and rehabilitation functions, will be generated but it is hoped that national financial stability will be established soon and the future of our own financial base become clearer accordingly.

6. Report from the honorary treasurer

Our finances are stable at this stage whereby we have managed to mostly secure ongoing annual support as well as growing our sponsorship base to include another two large sponsors, both locally and internationally. We hope to have the full set of audited financials out by April 2017.

Total turnover as of 31 December 2016 is up by 21,8% compared to 31 December 2015, however one third of our total turnover is currently held in assets. With the ongoing growth of VulPro, our running expenses (additional salaries, fuel expenses and administrative costs) have increased but we have balanced the increased expenses with international sponsorships coming through.

Over the past few years, VulPro has been incredibly fortunate in having Computer Facilities undertake our bookkeeping administrative functions at no cost. However, as VulPro has grown, this function has now become too much to handle on a part time and voluntary basis. VulPro would like to thank Computer Facilities for years of assistance and support and to also thank Computer Facilities for assisting us during this transitional phase.