

Water and Sanitation in the News

Water restored in some areas of Madibeng

Water supply had been briefly restored in some areas at Madibeng local municipality. Madibeng municipality spokesperson Siphon Nkosi said the municipality had experienced low water supply for the past five days due to sludge build-up at the Brits water treatment plant. "Sludge build-up reduced water supply, technicians were working on the restoring water to the affected areas." Nkosi said water was restored in areas in Damonsville, Mothuthlung and some parts of Lethlabile. Water was not restored in the Mmakau area. The department of water and sanitation has taken over the administration of water from the municipality and injected more than R300-million to upgrade the municipality's water provision and purification system...

Source: *eNCA*, 20 July 2015

Context

Madibeng has over the past few years experienced some of the most serious water and sanitation service delivery challenges in the South Africa. Earlier in July 2015, Democratic Alliance MP Nosimo Balindlela undertook an oversight visit to Madibeng and said she witnessed what she called "a crime against humanity". "...It saddens me that for the past 10 years Madibeng, a once thriving municipality has denigrated into a service less, corruption-rife and desolate municipality," she said. "Taps are non-functional and residents have to walk up to 20-30 km to collect water from a nearby church, for which they are charged R1 per 25 litres. "It is unfair that politicians and public officials loot the public purse whilst residents in many of the communities in Madibeng continue to suffer and endure hardship unnecessarily when money should be appropriated for the delivery of basic services." In Majakaneng, residents in some areas complained that the water from their taps stopped as soon as the minister said her goodbyes a month ago. Majakaneng previously relied mainly on water trucks to deliver potable water. However, since the minister intervened four boreholes had been drilled, equipped and connected to the Majakaneng reservoir that had been empty all the time.

In April, Mr Monde Juta, the Municipal Manager, told the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs in a meeting held in Brits that the main thing with regard to their water challenges was demand exceeding the supply. He, for example said, the Brits Treatment Water Plant has a capacity to supply 60 mega litres of water per day

whereas the demand sat at 80 mega litres per day. He added that this demand would sometimes rise to 108 mega litres per day during peak periods, thus making it difficult for the municipality to provide all residents with water. Ageing infrastructure was cited as the major reason why the municipality struggled to meet its water demands. Mr Juta said the infrastructure has exceeded its life span and is also too costly to maintain, especially with the municipality having financial constraints.



The outdated infrastructure also led to the municipality losing 20% of its water due to technical problems such as leaking pipes. Compounding the water challenge further was the unacceptable phenomenon of illegal connections which accounted for 35%. In total the municipality, according to the municipal manager, has 55% of unaccounted water losses, water which could be used to reduce the high demand. The municipality, however, believed water shortages would be reduced once they finish upgrading the capacity of the Brits Water Treatment Plant from 60- to 80 mega litres per day. The municipality said it wanted the upgrade to be finished by 2017 instead of the 2018 scheduled completion date which is too far...

Sources: *Kormorant*, 26 June 2015; *Gov.za*, 22 April; *IOL*, 06 July 2015

The **Municipal Assistant™** software system helps to prevent water service crises by facilitating efficient management functions in water treatment and supply operations and on related infrastructure assets. By ensuring the correct scheduling of preventative maintenance, the MA system helps to extend the lifespan of water treatment infrastructure and helps prevent water losses and the need for costly unplanned replacements of broken equipment.

CONTACT US: Tel: +27 (0)21 887 7161

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