

Water and Sanitation in the News

R352m boost for drought-hit KZN

The Department of Water and Sanitation has invested R352m in assisting KwaZulu-Natal to respond to the immediate challenges of water scarcity, it was revealed on Wednesday. Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Makonyane, who is on a fact-finding mission in KwaZulu-Natal visiting various sites which have been affected, said the provincial government declared in December 2014 that it was in a crisis. "The current drought has been identified as being the worst since 1992."

She said out of 14 Water Services Authorities in the province, currently four Water Services Authorities are adversely affected covering areas including the Lower South Coast, Illembe District Municipality, Richards Bay and the Umkhanyakude District Municipality. "Previously, the eThekweni and Amajuba municipal areas were not included in areas under water pressures, but a recent assessment has since dictated that drought alerts and relief efforts be directed to these two areas as well," said Makonyane. "...We have invested R352m to assist the province response to the immediate challenges of water scarcity. "These resources have been used to ensure boreholes are drilled, water is ferried to communities in need and innovative solutions are implemented to promote the efficient use of water in households"...

Source: *News24*, 15 July 2015

Context

The outflow of water from dams in KwaZulu-Natal has reportedly slowed dramatically as residents heed the call to save water as the drought tightens its grip. Severe water restrictions had been imposed by the provincial government and appeals made to use water sparingly. According to Minister for Water and Sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane, the prevailing conditions stemmed from low rainfall, climate change, inward migration of people to economic centres and rapid urbanisation. "The water we lose to leaks, illegal connections, vandalism and lack of operations maintenance is unacceptable. We must consolidate capacity in local government to ensure we manage our resources efficiently to prevent excessive losses due to our inability to act decisively", she said.

As part of the mid-term solutions, the minister said, the Hazelmere Dam wall would be raised to increase its storage capacity. In addition, in the hopes of bringing some future

relief, the department indicated that the Lower Tugela water scheme will be operational by June 2016 to supply the North Coast with water and ease current pressures. At a cost of R1.4 billion, the Lower Tugela Bulk Water Infrastructure Project in Mandini is the largest and most expensive water infrastructure project in KwaZulu-Natal.



Shami Harichunder, representative for Umgeni Water said, "This project has now become crucially important because it will be able to provide water to many parts of the iLembe District, 65 Kilometres north of Durban, which are presently experiencing the effects of the drought. "In that way, quite a lot of the pressure will be taken off the Hazelmere system, resulting in the Hazelmere system having more water to supply to parts of eThekweni municipality that are obviously experiencing restrictions because of the drought." Last week the Hazelmere Dam was at 27.95% of its capacity. The project taps into the mighty Tugela River, from which water is funnelled into an abstraction plant, which filters out rocks and fish, returning them to the river, then it's pumped through a pipeline, across the riverbed, to another plant for treatment and is finally pumped back along the riverbed to a reservoir. A 29km pipeline will carry the water to towns along the KwaZulu-Natal north coast.

Source: *eNCA*, 11 July 2015

For drought stricken areas to enjoy stable supplies of safe drinking water, it is important to ensure that the entire water supply cycle, from abstraction, to treatment, distribution and discharge are done with the correct equipment, that is maintained, and by staff that are technically skilled, with management enabled to lead a team effort. The **Municipal Assistant™** software system helps to achieve this by facilitating efficient management functions in water treatment and supply operations and on related infrastructure assets.

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