

Water and Sanitation in the News

Parliament on Water Challenges in Madibeng

Along with other water and sanitation infrastructure improvement projects the municipality is busy with, the upgrading of the Brits Water Treatment Plant in North West could lead to the evaporation of water challenges that have been a thorn in the garden of the Madibeng Local Municipality in the recent past. The improvement of this treatment plant, which is scheduled for completion in 2018, is meant to address the water shortages the municipality faces and is estimated to cost R578 million.

Mr Monde Juta, the Municipal Manager, 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. Another treatment plant, whose supply was lower than the demands of the residents, was the Hartebeespoort Water Treatment Plant. It supplies 10 mega litres per day against the demand of 11 mega litres per day. The demand rose to 15 mega litres per day during peak periods. The municipality also supplies water to rural areas through the use of 18 water tankers.

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. HOD of the Department of Local Government and Human Settlements, Moss Kgantsi, said the ageing infrastructure did not only affect the provision of water but the quality of water too. He said because the demand surpassed the supply especially during hot seasons, the raw water from the Hartebeespoort Dam deteriorates to the worst level...

Source: *Parliament of South Africa*, 22 April 2015

Context

The Madibeng municipality, has been hit by serious protests over dysfunctional water delivery in recent years. Earlier in April 2015, mere weeks after government stepped in to resolve the Madibeng Municipality's water problems, it was the residents of Hartbeespoort's turn to suffer water shortages. Shortly after government's intervention in

Madibeng Municipality, media reports surfaced that the Director Infrastructure and Technical Services was suspended during a special council meeting. The suspension was approved by council because it is alleged by the municipal manager that the Technical Director failed to exercise his duties with due diligence and thus brought the municipality into disrepute. The director reportedly reacted to his notice of suspension by saying that he was unable to perform his duties properly due to the municipality's lack of funds and subsequent failure to acquire the necessary equipment that enables his department to perform their duties. Among these are the purification plant in Brits and the repeated shortage of chlorine gas to purify the water.



In 2014, Trevor Manuel, then Minister in the Presidency said the NDP required both a *developmental state* and a *capable state*. In the context of Madibeng, the developmental side had been upheld in that the bulk water supply, the pump stations and the purification plant were in place. "The capability side is a slightly different question. It ensures that water flows through the taps and when you open it, it's available in your house.

Sources: *Kormorant*, 3 & 10 April 2015; *Infrastucturene.ws*, 18 Feb. 2014

Consequently, while new infrastructure would certainly assist in improving the delivery of water and sanitation services, the correct management of available water resources and treatment and distribution assets are equally (if not more) important in ensuring that needed supply levels are achieved. The **Municipal Assistant™** software system helps to achieve this by facilitating the efficient management (including demand management) and process controlling functions related to water treatment and supply.

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