

## Water and Sanitation in the News

### Water crisis warning for KZN

A full-scale water crisis has hit KwaZulu-Natal, with restrictions now being enforced on the North and South coasts and water for the Christmas holiday season in jeopardy. The worst-hit areas were in the Ugu District Municipality (Port Shepstone) and iLembe District Municipality (KwaDukuza-Stanger) which incorporates the Zimbali residential and resort development.

The iLembe municipality held a joint press conference with its water suppliers, Sembcorp Siza Water and Umgeni Water to warn of the impending crisis. Umgeni spokesman Shami Harichunder said the level of Hazelmere Dam was 43% and Ugu's Nungwane and EJ Smith dams were at 35%. "If we don't save water now, then we will have dry taps in 150 days unless we get really good rain," he said.

Hazelmere supplies water to the Ndwedwe Municipality, south of KwaDukuza, including Umhlali and Ballito, and north of eThekweni, including Verulam, Tongaat and Westbrook.

The mayor of iLembe, Welcome Mdabe, said the municipality's Dolphin Coast region had the added challenge of a number of new developments taking place in Ballito as well as the expected influx of holidaymakers in December.

"Siza Water is doing everything to sensitise consumers and we won't tolerate deliberate wasting of water," he said. "We are expecting the demand to increase, but we are hoping not to have to implement stage 4 restrictions." Stage 4 restrictions are when dams are less than 30% full. Consumers then have to fetch water from tanks placed at strategic positions.

Siza Water technical manager Kobus Fourie said new developments in Ballito had increased the demand for "grey water" which was used in construction. The municipality has hired 21 water tankers to add to its fleet of 15 to fast-track supply to four local municipalities (Maphumulo, Ndwedwe, KwaDukuza and Mandeni) should taps run dry.

Mdabe said the Tugela River was not flowing well, so even areas with water and sanitation infrastructure now had to be supplied with tankers because the water treatment plants were under stress.

Deputy mayor Nomvuso Shabalala said the water department needed to hand out leaflets to residents in the affected areas to urge them to comply. Councillor Fawzia Peer said officials needed to clamp down on water leaks.

Situations of drought have often been exacerbated by water leaks distribution systems — frequently due to poor maintenance of water infrastructure: In 2013 it was reported by the Department of Water Affairs that 37.2% of water is lost from water networks KwaZulu-Natal. Theft and water leaks contributed to spiralling water losses that cost the city of Durban a staggering R513 million in 2013. The loss was flagged in the auditor-general's report and contributed to the municipality's failure to achieve a clean audit.

In August 2014, KwaZulu-Natal Premier Senzo Mchunu said mayors and councillors should be at the forefront of the fight against water leakages. "At the end of second quarter in December 2012, eThekweni Municipality was losing more than 237 million litres a day - an increase of 3.467 million litres every day when compared to the whole of the 2011/12 financial year period. He encouraged municipalities to use the Municipal Water Infrastructure Grant (MWIG) to implement water conservation programme.

Read the full reports at: <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/water-crisis-warning-for-kzn-1.1785854#.VH Q9n8la8SE>; [http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/hazelmere-dam-critically-low-1.1783042#.VHQ\\_ecla8SE](http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/hazelmere-dam-critically-low-1.1783042#.VHQ_ecla8SE); [http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/ethekweni-recovers-r6m-from-water-thieves-1.1745437#.VHQ\\_msla8SE](http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/ethekweni-recovers-r6m-from-water-thieves-1.1745437#.VHQ_msla8SE); <http://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/war-water-leaks> and <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/9-million-kilolitres-of-water-wasted-1.1332098#.VHRBtla8SE>

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