

Water and Sanitation in the News

Bloemfontein gets first water restrictions in 32 years

Bloemfontein is getting water restrictions for the first time in 32 years. The Mangaung metro council decided during a special meeting on Friday (3 July 2015) afternoon to implement the restrictions.

A 20% price increase for water will be part of the deal. Despite a debate on technical issues, the DA and ANC both supported restrictions. "The metro's water situation is bleak. Sixty-nine percent of Bloemfontein's water comes from the Welbedag dam, which provides water to the Bloem Water reservoir. That dam has 26% less water than last year," Democratic Alliance councillor Rossouw Botes said. "Mangaung uses 200 million litres of water a day. The water in the dams that provide water to the metro, will never last until October, when we can expect the first spring rains. "Thaba 'Nchu is already dry and other areas are on a knife's edge. The Groothoek dam, which provides water to Thaba 'Nchu, is completely dry. There are 25 boreholes in Thaba 'Nchu. Of these, 7 are dry and the others are overstressed." The city last had water restrictions in 1983.

Source: *News24, 03 July 2015*

Context

Durban, South Africa's third-biggest city, also started rationing water supplies on Friday to stave off a shortage. Supplies to northern areas of the coastal city will be restricted for six hours a day with immediate effect, the eThekweni Municipality said in an e-mailed statement. Water restrictions were also imposed on several other areas in KwaZulu-Natal. The restrictions affect the uMhlathuze River upstream of the Goedertrouw Dam catchment, the Hazelmere, Klipfontein, Hluhluwe and Lake Merthley dams and the Buffalo system, Water and Sanitation Department Director-General Margaret-Ann Diedricks said in a notice published in the Government Gazette.

The Hazelmere Dam is near Durban; the Goedertrouw Dam near Richards Bay; Hluhluwe Dam near St Lucia and Lake Merthley near Kranskop. Water use for irrigation from the Goedertrouw Dam would be cut by 70%, with domestic use cut 30% and industrial use 10%. People receiving water from the Hazelmere Dam face a 30% cut for domestic and industrial water use and a 100% restriction for irrigation water. For the Klipfontein Dam, there would be a 15% cut for domestic water

use and a 50% cut for irrigation. For the Hluhluwe Dam, there would be a 10% cut for domestic water use and 40% cut for water for irrigation.

The restrictions are expected to intensify in coming weeks to extend supply by the dams for as long as possible until the start of the summer rains. Bulk supplier Umgeni Water said the Hazelmere dam level of 28 percent includes a 15 percent silt content. "This means available water capacity is less than half the measured capacity," Shami Harichunder, a spokesman for the utility, said by phone. "We're in a desperate situation."

Drought in eastern and central South Africa around the turn of the year, the worst since 1992, has slashed corn and sugar output and may trigger water shortages for homes and businesses. Weaker river flow also threatens water quality. South Africa is the 30th-driest nation on Earth, according to the government, which expects water demand to outstrip supply as early as 2025.

Source: *Bloomberg; News24, 03 July 2015*

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