

Water and Sanitation in the News

Water restrictions intensified as drought continues

The drought is far from over and water restrictions will continue to be implemented in an effort to conserve water. According to the weekly report by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the national storage is under increasing stress and shows a steady decline week on week. As of 5 September, national dam levels were at 53% compared to 72% at this time last year. Compounding this is the long range forecast which shows below normal expected rainfall in the coming months.

Current dam levels

The Bloemfontein System, consisting of four dams serving mainly Mangaung, has revised its water restrictions to 30% for domestic and 75% for irrigation from the Caledon which will be increased to 100% when transfers are made from Lesotho. In the Orange River system, restrictions of 10% for domestic and industry and 15% for irrigation have been applied. These restrictions are also applicable to transfer schemes from the Orange River.

Dams in KwaZulu-Natal remain dangerously low with Klipfontein at 12.5%, Hluhluwe at 17.7% and Goedertrouw at 17.7%. All these dams are declining slightly week on week. The current restrictions for Goedertrouw dam will remain at 15% industry, 40% domestic and 80% irrigation, but these restrictions might increase if the situation does not improve.

The Vaal River System, serving mainly Gauteng, Sasol and Eskom, has decreased by 0.3% to 53.1%. The Vaal Dam decreased to 32.5% a decrease of 0.7% week on week. Rand Water begun implementing the reduction of supplies to its major customers on 6 September. The City of Joburg also announced its revised restrictions on last week and has established a task team to monitor implementation of the restrictions.

Intensifying restrictions

The current drought has been recorded as one of the country's worst droughts, according to South African Weather Services, with all nine provinces being affected in varying degrees. Although some areas are receiving rain and flooding has been experienced in some provinces, such as KwaZulu-Natal, the drought conditions have not improved and the dams across the country are at their lowest levels in years. "The drought is far from over and even with normal rainy seasons it will take a number of years for the system to stabilise. Therefore there is still a need to continue to intensify the enforcement of restrictions and to stretch the available water supplies," says the DWS.

Sources: [Infrastructurene.ws](#), 12 Sep 2016

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