

MEDIA RELEASE



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Department of Water Affairs and Forestry - Chief Directorate: Communication
Services

MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY, MR RONNIE KASRILS

14 February 2001

Embargo: None

I have instructed the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to review progress of current internal investigations and other management initiatives by the Umgeni Water Board to determine whether an external investigation into the Board's affairs is required.

This follows recent press reports on criticisms from organised labour and concerned employees about alleged management abuse of travel facilities and related matters. It also reflects concerns about Umgeni Water's treasury management arrangements as well as the need to ring fence the commercial activities at the Umgeni's KwaZulu-Natal consumer.

The appointment last year of new Chief Executive, Mr NC Molepo has already gone a long way to addressing the concerns that have been expressed. However, I owe it to the public in Umgeni Water's supply area to ensure that no new problems are emerging.

Most of the issues will be addressed by the normal departmental review of Umgeni Water's business plan, annual report and policy statement later this month and by the Board itself.

I have however, asked my Director-General to advise me as to whether any of the matters which have been raised might require me to supplement these measures.

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