



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS launches critical Richards Bay Desalination Plant

12 May 2017

Richards Bay: The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) today launched the critical Richards Bay Desalination Plant in KwaZulu-Natal. The launch of the plant is meant to assist in enhancing security of supply within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

The plant was launched in recognition of the centrality of water in all socio-economic development, appreciating that the water sector is critical for government's transformation and development objectives, while the provision of safe and accessible water supply and sanitation services profoundly affects poor people's daily lives.

In recognition of the sustained drought conditions experienced in the province, the KZN Provincial Cabinet issued a drought disaster declaration in December 2014. As a result of the drought, all the natural sources levels ran low and thus not suitable for use, with even the Goedertrouw Dam, the main supply to Richards Bay, dropping to a dangerously low level of 16% as at August 2016.

To mitigate against this misfortune, the Emergency Water Transfer Scheme was activated in July 2014 where water was then pumped from the Thukela River into the Goedertrouw Dam to ensure the dam does not fail. All of this was while the DWS together with the affected municipality focused on changing the water mix with greater emphasis on water harvesting, re-use of return flows, and utilizing ground water by drilling of boreholes.

The aforementioned challenges drove the department to seek and provide a short term intervention.

This was done by the introduction of the 10 Megalitre/day desalination plant in order to augment the domestic water supply and avoid further hardship for the communities in and around Richards Bay.

The desalination plant will benefit the whole town of Richards Bay and surrounding communities from the sea water treated. It will directly benefit the communities of Mandlazini, Nseleni, Khoza, Mzingazi and the Mbonambi Rural Water Supply Scheme.

The water reservoirs in the region have greatly improved since the operation of the desalination plant adding water security and reliability. The reservoirs in this respect include Mapolwane, Khoza, Nseleni, Mandlazini, Meerensee and Brackenham. These reservoirs have moved from an average of 55% to 90%.

Minister Mokonyane aptly put it: "We are delighted to announce that the desalination plant is now 100% complete and functional. In fact, the plant started to produce water on the 14 November 2016 and a total of 10ML/day production was commissioned by 25 January 2017".



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She continued to reiterate that “government implements infrastructure on behalf of and for the benefit of communities and it is equally incumbent upon the communities themselves, to safeguard and protect same from vandalism and any form of criminality.

“Most importantly, there is dire need for coordination of infrastructure investments in targeted spaces across spheres, sectors and with stakeholders; and government across the various spheres should strive to overcome persistent backlogs and inequities in service delivery through improved intergovernmental planning and budgeting processes.

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Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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