



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Emfuleni Municipality's failure to settle water debt threatens water supply to key institutions and communities

20 November 2017

Residents of Emfuleni Local Municipality have been faced with water shortages due to the Municipality's failure to settle a R400m water bill owed to Rand Water dating over two years.

Rand Water commenced with action to force the Municipality to settle debts owed by restricting water supply to the municipal area by 40% and increasing this to 60% from 12 November 2017.

This 60% water restriction resulted in a number of wide spread water shortages with the high-lying areas being worse affected. Among the affected areas were a number of schools, clinics and Sebokeng Hospital.

Rand Water has in the past held several engagements with the Municipality in attempt to conclude settlement terms for the debt and all previous commitments to settle the outstanding debt have to date not been met.

The imposition of restrictions on the Emfuleni Municipality is an attempt to compel the municipality to satisfy its obligations and to settle the debt as matter of urgency.

From the 17 – 19 November 2017 the Department together with Rand Water conducted an assessment of the public institutions that urgently needed water supply.

On the 18 November 2017 Sebokeng Hospital was supplied with water tanks by Rand Water namely, Jojo tanks (4 x 5000L, 2x 10 000L and a further 2x 10 000L will be delivered on 20 November 2017. Four clinics were also supplied with water to ensure that critical health services and functions are not negatively affected.

"The department of water and sanitation is owed R7 billion by Municipalities for bulk water services and unlike electricity, a total shutdown is not possible as access to water is a right enshrined in our constitution. These debts however have a huge impact on the department's finances and delivery of new infrastructure."

"As a department we are in discussions with the MEC of Cooperative Governance in Gauteng to finding lasting solutions to the incapacity at Emfuleni Municipality and will further be engaging National Treasury on a need to redirect the equitable share of the Municipality to directly service the debt in order to guarantee uninterrupted future water supply for residents of Emfuleni" said Minister Mokonyane.

The supply of water through the water tankers is costly and unsustainable however, it is necessary to ensure that some water is supplied to the Sebokeng community. We will continue to supply water through these means until a permanent lasting solution is found.

END



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