



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Let's prevent vandalism and work together to keep our canals safe

14 May 2018

Canals are crucial channels to transport water to ensure that everyone has access to this source of life. Canals are man-made concrete lined channels of water that directs water to various places.

As canals play a major role in the movement and accessibility of water, it is crucial that the public play a serious and critical role in preventing the vandalism of the canals and other water infrastructures to keep the canals and the nearby communities safe.

Canals are steep and slippery and often it is impossible to gauge the depth and the volume of water contained in a canal. It is therefore crucial that we all work together to prevent the vandalising of the fencing preventing community members and livestock from entering the canals. It is important to always keep canals secured to prevent the drowning of people and animals.

Drowning remains one of the top causes of unnatural childhood deaths in South Africa. Drowning is however not limited to children, as water is a convergence point for many religious practices. Many communities also collect water from canals for household and consumption purposes and this also poses risks.

In addition to the impact on human beings, farmers also risk considerable investments as livestock often graze close to canals and sometimes slip into the canals, resulting in the loss of livestock.

Many of the countries open canal systems were designed and constructed many years ago and are located in mostly remote, rural areas. However today, as communities grow and encroach onto canal servitudes, many of these canals now form part of urban and suburban landscapes. The resulting increase in population density, is leading to an increase in incidence access and consequently poses a public safety risk. Drowning of both people and animals are one such risk.

Improper use of canals can also lead to flooding. We must always keep our canals clean for the free flow of water for the benefit of all. The use of water canals as dumping sites can have



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very serious consequences as the litter can close the flow of water and lead to flooding. So let us always act and behave in a responsible manner for the benefit of all. Litter can also mean that the community on the other side do not access the much needed water due to blockages in the canals.

The Department of Water and Sanitation would like to urge the public to prevent the vandalism of canal infrastructure and ensure that the surrounding communities and their livestock are kept safe. Working together and acting in a responsible manner will always prevent the loss of life through unnecessary drownings. Let us also keep our children safe by educating them about the dangers and keep them away from the canals.

Canals play a major role in reliable water supply, so let us also play our responsible role of keeping them safe for the benefit of all.

End

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