



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

The Department steps in at Kouga to avert a looming water disaster

29 August 2018

The Department of Water and Sanitation in the Eastern Cape will soon introduce 80% water restrictions in order to avert a looming natural disaster of the absence of water in several towns in Gamtoos Valley.

Yesterday; the department's regional head, Ms Portia Makhanya, met with farmers from drought-stricken towns of Kouga, Hankey, Patensie, Jeffreys Bay, Oyster Bay and Humansdorp. The farmers initially wanted the department to reduce water restrictions to 60% for irrigation purposes, but later accepted 80% that the department proposed.

A departmental weekly report on national dam levels reflects that Kouga Dam has dropped to an alarming 6,8%, sparking fears that; unless it rains, the town will soon have no drop of water.

The report paints a bleak picture of the water situation in the Algoa region, including Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, where the drought has gripped the area for over a year. So dire is the situation in the region that the parliament's Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation has raised questions about the department's intervention to avert Day Zero.

However; as part of its short term intervention, the department has provided the Kouga Local Municipality with two 18 000 litre water tankers for emergency water carting to areas where there is insufficient water supply. The department has established a well-represented Algoa Water Supply System Restrictions Monitoring Committee, which monitors the drought carefully and has greatly aided communication and maintained focus to achieve imposed restrictions and water savings. There is also a functional Algoa Water Supply System Reconciliation Study Committee that meets quarterly to assess the situation and make recommendations.

The Water Resources Planning Systems Directorate monitors the situation on a monthly basis and provides expert advice. It also provides expert advice on groundwater exploration. High level Bulk Water Master Plans have been compiled as well as an All Town Studies report to assist the municipality with their medium and long term solutions. Water restrictions are being enforced in accordance with the Drought Operating Rules for each dam.

A sum of R1 090 000 was allocated to Kouga Municipality from the first round of drought funding allocations. The money was used for ground water exploration in Hankey and Patensie. The municipality also laid an 800 metre pipeline from a farmer's borehole to provide water should Kouga run completely dry. Billboards, that explain the dire situation, have been put up at strategic areas of affected towns.

Makhanya appealed to the affected communities to adhere to water restrictions and to use water sparingly.



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“Without the co-operation of the affected communities, including the farmers, we will find it difficult to reduce the risk of water shortage in the Gamtoos Valley,” Makhanya said.

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