



MEDIA STATEMENT

Unstable dam levels affect the Integrated Vaal River System

06 March 2019

The instability in the levels of dams that form part of the Integrated Vaal River System (IVRS) is a cause for concern for Gauteng water consumers as the country is moving towards the dry winter season.

Unlike the Western Cape, which is a winter rainfall area, chances of rainfall in Gauteng are few and far in between during the winter season.

This week the system has seen a further decline, moving from 68.8% last week to 68.4%. During the comparative period last year, the system hovered at 76.4%.

After having risen last week, the Vaal Dam, which is one of the key dams in the system, fell from 71.7% last week to 70.8%. During the corresponding week last year the dam floated at 83.3%.

The Vaal Dam supplies much-needed water to households and also fosters the economic sustainability of Gauteng and the entire continent through its supply of water to the petro-chemical giant Sasol and the electricity generator Eskom.

Equally recording a decline, the Bloemhof Dam fell this week, shrinking from 59.3% last week to 58.2%. Last year in the same period the dam was at 75.4%, indicating that the dam is on a decline week-on-week.

The Katse and Mohale dams continue to remain in a depressing state, hovering below the 50% mark. The current state of the dams is contributing negatively to the levels of the entire system and remains a concern.

Showing no sign of improvement, the Mohale Dam edged further down this week. The dam declined from a lowly 37.2% last week to 36.1% presently. During the same week last year the dam was at 48.0%.

Remaining unmoved from last week's levels, the Katse Dam is floating at 20.2%, which is a few notches lower than its levels last year at the same period when it was at 20.4%.

On the contrary, the Sterkfontein Dam has seen an increase, rising from 81.2% last week to 83.2%. Compared with the same week last year when it was at an impressive 99.0%, the present levels indicate that the dam is in a much healthier state. So critical is the Sterkfontein Dam, which is located in the Free State, in the life of the system such that it was used to replenish the Vaal Dam when Gauteng was faced with an unprecedented drought.

The Grootdraai Dam also recorded an increase this week, edging up significantly to 83.2% from 81.2% last week while at the corresponding week last year it was sitting at 99.0%.

Despite being in a stable state presently, the IVRS is decreasing week-on-week and this requires heightened efforts to save water. This is the reason why the Department of Water and Sanitation in Gauteng is calling on water consumers to use the resource sparingly to ensure the water security of the province.





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