



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### **Department of Water and Sanitation warns consumers to avoid restrictions and save water during winter**

6 June 2019

With the winter having set in, most of the country has officially entered a dry season during which all South Africans are called upon to be circumspect in their water use as the next rains are expected return five to six months from now.

A weekly report by the Department of, Water and Sanitation indicates that South Africa has stored 23 617 cubic metres in its reservoirs that is sufficient to sustain the country throughout winter provided the precious resource is used conservatively. However, the Western Cape this week received its first heavy rainfalls that normally come down during winter. Although some low areas were flooded, the rains are already making a difference in the province as the dam levels have risen to 35%, an 8% improvement compared to the same period last year. The current rains are likely to increase provincial dams to higher levels by the end of the week.

Failure by inland consumers to conserve water may deplete resources to low levels, a trend that is likely to force municipalities in different provinces to impose mid-year water restrictions. Currently, the country's average dam levels are recorded at 73,1%, a drop of 6% compared to the same period last year.

Gauteng has stabilized its dam levels to 95,4%, the highest in the country, followed by Free State and Northern Cape with 88,3% and 74,3% respectively. The weekly report states that Gauteng has stored 122,2 cubic metres of water while Free State (which has most of the big dams) has stored 14 073,9 cubic metres and Northern Cape 109,5 cubic metres. Mpumalanga is hot on the heels of the first three provinces with 72,8% dam levels having been recorded in the past week.

The situation remains untenable in Eastern Cape where Makhanda residents continue to scrape for water for basic use. However, the DWS continues to work with Makhanda Local Municipality, the Eastern Cape Provincial Government and NGOs to alleviate the situation in the town. Nqweba Dam remains empty 1.4% while Laing, Umtata, Mabeleni, Ntenetyana and Belfort dams are bursting at the seams with 100% levels and above.

North West has maintained stable dam levels at 65,7% despite fears at the beginning of the year that the province was headed for yet another drought. Officials in the Department of Water and Sanitation are devising an integrated plan together with municipalities to sustain the current water levels until the next summer rains. According to the weekly report, North West is the only province that has four dams whose levels have reached capacity. They are Roodekopjes which recorded 100,8% and Klipvoor Dam which is fed by Pienaars River is at 100,4%, Klipdrift also at 100,4%, and Elandskuil which is at 101,8%

In Limpopo Hans Merensky, Tonteldoos and Magoebaskloof dams steadied their capacity levels while Middel-Letaba is the lowest at 6,3%.

Despite last month's heavy rains that resulted in destructive flash floods in parts of Durban, Spienkop in KwaZulu-Natal is the only dam in the province that reached its capacity at 100,1.





## water & sanitation

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The dam is supplied by the perennial Tugela River that sources its water from the mountains of Ukhahlamba in Bergville.

The dry season has truly started for the mainly inland provinces and therefore the need to use water wisely remains.

**End**

**Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation**

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