



MEDIA STATEMENT

Gauteng water consumers relieved as IVRS slightly rise after weeks of decline

19 February 2019

Water consumers in Gauteng are this week breathing sigh of relief after the Integrated Vaal River System (IVRS) showed an improvement in levels following a steady decline over a number of weeks.

The drop in the IVRS raised concerns of businesses and households as levels of the IVRS slowly dipped closer to the neutral 50% mark. Water consumers were worried they might face the water shortages they experienced in 2016 when Gauteng was hit by a devastating drought in years.

However, this week's increase in the IVRS does not mean that Gauteng is out of the woods as lesser rainfalls are expected as we get closer to the dry winter season.

This week, the IVRS increased from 67.6% last week to 68.2% while last year at the corresponding week it stood at 75.8%. The decline in the system has been attributed to a number of factors, including the recent heatwave and excessive water use.

The IVRS consists of 14 dams, including the important ones such as the Vaal and the Sterkfontein dams. The Vaal Dam is critical to the operations of both the Eskom and Sasol.

After weeks of decline, the Vaal Dam showed a slight increase this week, moving from 71.1% last week to 71.6%, compared with the 82.3% in the comparative period last year.

Steady at 77.0%, the Grootdraai Dam remains unchanged from last week. Last year at the same time it stood just a few notches below 100% at 99.8%. However, the current levels show a significant drop compared with last year's levels.

The Sterkfontein Dam, which recorded a decline last week, has this week seen a minor increase, rising from 93.9% last week to 94.0%. In the comparative period last year the dam stood at 94.2%, indicating that the dam has remained steady up until now.

The Bloemhof Dam also notched an increase this week. The dam surged up from 56.1% last week to sit at 57.3%. During the same week last year, the dam hovered at 73.9%.

Diametrically opposite the increase in the other dams, the Katse and Mohale dams continue to be a cause for concern. Both dams have remained in a shrunken state for months and this stark reduction looks set to continue into the future.

Presently the Mohale Dam, which is the worst of the two dams, increased from a trivial 18.4% last week to 19.9% this week. At the same week last year it was at an insignificant 20.9%.

The Katse Dam slightly increased this week, notching up from 36.9% last week to 37.0% but down from the recorded levels of 47.4% during the comparative period last year.

The Department of Water and Sanitation in Gauteng is urging water consumers to not lower their guard as the recent rainfalls in Gauteng are not nearly enough to replenish the IVRS to a





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point where the province is out of the woods. In this regard, water consumers are called upon to press ahead with cutting back on their water usage.

End

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For more information contact Sputnik Ratau, Spokesperson for the Department of Water and Sanitation on 082 874 2942 or Hosia Sithole on 082 723 2442.

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