



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### **DWS investigates the death of three Mpumalanga boys who drowned in a disused mine**

29 July 2019

The Department of Water and Sanitation is investigating the circumstances around the tragic deaths of three youths in Emalahleni, Mpumalanga, who died after drowning in a mine dam that is being rehabilitated near Siyanqoba Township.

The department learned that in June two youths drowned while playing next to the dam, an incident that sparked community anger. Three weeks ago a 16 year-old boy also drowned in the same dam while he was playing next to it. The dam is part of a coal miner's operations.

The dam is lined with a thick black plastic as it was used in mining activities, which, because of its slippery surface the boys slipped in and could not get out. It is believed that about six boys went to play at the dam.

The department will this week contact the coal mine management to find out among others, why the dam was not fenced off as a safety measure. The investigation will also establish if the mine did not violate clauses of the National Water Act

The department is concerned about poor safety measures at disused mines after the mining houses have closed operations down. The law stipulates that former owners of disused mines must take measures to ensure the safety of communities that live nearby. In terms of the National Water Act the mining houses must comply with the rehabilitation processes of the disused mines as well as the mine drainage regulations.

The DWS will also engage with its sister department, Mineral Resources, to also investigate whether the mine complied with its close down responsibilities.

**End**

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

**For more information contact Sputnik Ratau, Spokesperson for the Department of Water and Sanitation on 082 874 2942**

**For media releases, speeches and news visit the Water & Sanitation portal at:**  
[www.dwa.gov.za](http://www.dwa.gov.za)



Department of Water and Sanitation South Africa



DWS\_RSA