



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### Western Cape dams fill up for the first time in four years

8 August 2019

In a rare hydrological feat, winter rains in Western Cape continue to fill dams to near capacity levels since the downpours started three months ago. The latest figures show that most dams are hovering around 80% and are likely to increase to between 90% and 100% by end of August. Berg River Dam, which forms part of the Western Cape Integrated System, has contributed immensely to the improved water situation in the province. This week it recorded a whopping 86% level to the system.

In July alone the province's dams went up by 20%, pushing the levels to 70%. The dams are reported to be at their highest level in four years.

A weekly report by the Department of Water and Sanitation indicates that the improved Western Cape water situation has pushed South Africa's water storage to 22 510,7 cubic metres. However, Free State - which boasts the biggest dams in the country - continues to store most water at 13 124,2 cubic metres than any other province.

Although some parts are plagued by persistent water shortages, at 2 917,1 cubic metres Mpumalanga is the second highest water-storing province in the country for this week. Its latest average dam level is 68,2%, a fractional drop from last week's level of 69%. The report rates Western Cape among the top three provinces that currently have sufficient water in their reservoirs.

The JS Moroka region which falls under the previous KwaNdebele is experiencing continuous water problems because of acute water shortages. Consequently, the municipality has resorted to water-tankering to alleviate the situation among the beleaguered communities. In Emalaheni township residents were without water for six day after a water pipe burst last week. However, the situation is back to normal after the pipe was fixed this week.

Butterworth residents have been plunged into a serious water crisis after Gcuwa Dam dried up recently. The Department of Water and Sanitation is working with the municipality to help supply tankered water to the town. The department is refurbishing dysfunctional boreholes and erecting new ones to alleviate the water situation in the region. At least three dams - Belfort, Mabeleni and Debe – are 100% full, while Umtata Dam is also on the verge of reaching its capacity with 98,4% .

Nqweba Dam that is supplied by Sundays River is also on the verge of drying up completely. The report paints a dire situation of the dam which has recorded a mere 1,2% dam level in the past 14 days.

However, Gauteng tops the charts on dam levels which was captured at 91,8% this week, followed by Free State and Mpumalanga at 83,8% and 68,2% respectively.

Water storage the Northern Cape Province is currently at 124.3 cubic metres or 84.4%, an increase from last week's 82.3%. The full storage capacity of the Province is 147.3 cubic metres.





## water & sanitation

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The Karee Dam is the only storage facility in the Northern Cape. Other dams are normally used as transient storage and have much smaller capacities than the larger storage dams in other provinces. Hence the levels of these vary from week to week. They are fed from other upstream dams in the Vaal and Orange rivers and water are released from the upstream dams as required.

The Douglas Storage Weir in the Vaal River is currently at 17.197 million m<sup>3</sup> or 105.9%. The full supply capacity of the Weir is 16.245 cubic metres.

Boegoeberg Dam in the Orange River is at 19.502 million m<sup>3</sup> or 94.6% this week, with Spitskop Dam in the Harts River at 44.948 million or 77.7% Vaalharts Weir is at 42.434 cubic metres or 83.7%

In Limpopo the water situation fluctuates from one region to the other. While the average dam level for Nandoni, Dap Naudé, Albasini and Nwanedzi is rosy at 90%, the situation is alarming at Modjadji, Tzaneen, Rhenosterkop and Glen Alpine where the average levels are between 1,6% and 12%. The Mopani District is of particular concern because of its citrus fruit industry where farmers have been barred from extracting water for irrigation.

Last month the Department of Water and Sanitation sent a high level delegation to consult with affected communities, farmers, business and the district municipality. At issue is the raising of Tzaneen Dam Wall whose work will begin in January next year. The multi-million construction is expected to be completed in two years to enable the dam to have a higher storage facility. At the moment, only Magoebaskloof Dam, fed by Polisi River, reached 100% capacity.

**End**

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