



MEDIA RELEASE

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STATUS OF WATER SUPPLY IN FREE STATE TOWNS

The latest report by the Department of Water Affairs' Free State Regional Office indicates that the majority of the Free State towns do have potable water. While the report admits to challenges of shortages in some cases, and problems of intermittent running out of water in others, the overall picture is that ***there isn't a 'total lack of water'*** as implied by the DA's findings.

Problems experienced do range from natural water shortage, loss through aged infrastructure, high demand and storage limitations. According to the DWA report, all these challenges have been earlier identified and are currently being addressed with immediate or short term solution being to ensure that our communities do have water daily. Long term permanent solutions such as infrastructure upgrade and finding alternative water sources are being implemented.

The report acknowledges challenges in the said towns and clearly indicates solutions adopted by the municipalities, the Department of Water Affairs in collaboration with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to address immediate and long term problems.

In a town that does not have sufficient water to be supplied throughout the day, the local authorities have arranged for alternative methods of managing water to ensure that all citizens do share in the little available resource. Thus, water gets to be 'saved' and shared.

In Fauresmith for instance, where there is an unreliable source for supply of ground water, water gets pumped from the bore-holes to fill reservoirs during the day and supplied during peak period of 06:00 to 08:00 in the mornings and 17:00 to 20:00 in the evenings. In addition, water tanks have been placed at strategic positions and these get filled by tankers from the municipality. Here, a permanent sustainable solution is being constructed which entails laying of a pipeline from Jagersfontein Water Treatment Works (WTW) to Fauresmith. This project is now 50% complete. Water storage capacity is also being increased in Fauresmith and the project is targeted for completion by end March 2014.

Mohokare municipality's town of Smithfield experiences water shortage due to increased water demand and high water losses in the internal network. In response, the municipality, through Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), is upgrading a Water Treatment Works plant to argument clear water supply. The project is planned for completion by end July 2013.

In about 5 of the mentioned towns including Vredefort, Bethulie, Dealseville, the report mentions that there are no water shortages or no significant water shortages. It being winter, the natural water sources such as the Caledon River, run low however, alternative methods of supplying water to our communities are used to augment the shortage.



On the whole, the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) has embarked on a National Bulk Water Programme to address the water shortages by providing sustainable, efficient and effective water supply to households, institutions, industries and businesses. Other programmes such as Accelerated Community Infrastructure Programme (ACIP) and Municipal Water Infrastructure Grant (MWIG) are being implemented in various contexts, as is necessary, to address water challenges.

A long term, overall water solution is being implemented through the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Programme (RBIG) to which a total of R225 million has been allocated to municipalities to address water related infrastructure in municipalities in the 2013/2014 financial year, with some of the projects already running.

Government's commitment to supplying its people with water can never be questioned or doubted, as this is clearly not the case.

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