



MEDIA RELEASE

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Breaks in the Water Reticulation System

Knysna has been experiencing a number of water pipe breaks which have left residents and businesses frustrated.

The Knysna Mayor & her team sincerely apologise for the water outages. This has been a recurring problem that affected the municipality for a number of years.

Knysna Municipal Manager, Kam Chetty attributed most of these major pipe breaks to ageing infrastructure, weather and soil conditions. “The water infrastructure in the CBD was installed over 50 years ago and was one of the first water reticulation systems that was constructed in Knysna. This infrastructure has reached its lifespan in engineering terms - a typical life cycle of water infrastructure is 30 years. Moreover, the water pipes are made from asbestos which is brittle and the frequency of breaks have been exacerbated by the extreme weather conditions particularly the expansion and contraction.”

The Knysna Municipal, Technical Services Department has been working tirelessly and around the clock on repairing various water pipe breaks. Chetty explained the procedure of dealing with pipe breaks. “An average pipe break takes approximately four to six hours to repair. The Technical team isolates (by closing the valve) the area where the pipe break occurred. This minimises water loss and the number of people/households affected. Thereafter, the digging and repair process starts.”

Based on the numerous pipe breaks that have occurred recently, Mayoral (Mayco) Committee members had an urgent meeting, today, 19 January in order to urgently address this problem. The following resolutions were taken:

- In the short-term to commence in February with the valve replacement programme to reduce the impact of the breakages by isolating the impact to smaller areas. (Please note, this will not completely stop the pipe breaks however, will assist with minimising water losses and affected people.)
- To develop a scope and cost estimate for the replacement of the entire aged water network in Town.

- The funding for these interventions will be discussed in Council as a matter of priority.

The Mayco members agreed that the replacement cannot be postponed for much longer. We want to assure our residents that we are committed in addressing water problems in Greater Knysna and upgrading of infrastructure is on our top priority.

We want to reassure our residents that we are working on short and long term interventions. The municipality has started with replacing old water pipelines. "We have commenced with the replacement programme, this includes upgrading of the ageing water lines. The old asbestos pipes are replaced with UPVC (plastic) pipeline which is more conducive to the soil condition. In the areas where this has been implemented the number of pipe breaks has significantly decreased."

We further urge residents to report water leaks and pipe bursts as soon as possible and accurately in order for them to be repaired timeously. Residents are encouraged to report water and sewerage leaks to 044 302 6331 and water abuse via WhatsApp 060 998 7000.

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Knysna Municipality Communications Department
P O Box 21, Knysna. 6570. Western Cape. South Africa
Tel +27 (0)44 302 6300 (switchboard) or 302 6471 (direct)
Fax +27 (0)86 215 4818 e-mail communications@knysna.gov.za