



MEDIA RELEASE

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Knysna Municipality addresses water crisis

Due to the extreme Low Flow of Greater Knysna Rivers and the low level of the Akkerkloof Dam, the Municipality implemented Level 3 Water Restrictions on Monday, 20 March.

After reassessing the water usage in the Greater Knysna, the target usage rate for Knysna of 8MI/day has been raised to 10M/day. Sedgefield's target of 1.9MI/day remains the same.

"I am extremely proud of Greater Knysna residents who immediately heeded the warning of our waning water source and started applying water saving methods. Knysna residents reduced their water usage of 12.4MI/day to 11.32MI/day and Sedgefield dropped their usage below the target rate of 1.9MI/day and used a mere 1.67MI/day. Their previous week's usage was 2.2MI/day," Johnny Douglas, Knysna acting municipal manager said.

Soon after Level 3 Water Restrictions were announced, many residents suggest that the Municipality runs both the Knysna and Sedgefield Desalination Plants at full capacity to augment the water supply. To this Douglas responded: "Residents must understand that running these plants are extremely costly. Currently we supply water to our residents at a cost of R10.92/Kl, but the income received for the same amount of water is a mere R7.45/Ml. Should we now run both plants 24/7 at exorbitant cost, this cost will need to be carried over to the users," explained Douglas.

In the knowledge that not only Greater Knysna but the Western Cape and South Africa is a water stressed area, several steps have and are being taken by the Knysna Municipality to ensure the water security of Greater Knysna.

"We have already investigated further water resources such as a pipeline between Knysna and Bitou. We further envisage another storage dam in Rheenendal. The Glebe Pumping Scheme was successfully upgraded in 2015/16 and the first phase of the Charlesford Scheme upgrade has also been completed," said Douglas

The Municipality is in the process of appointing 27 Water Ambassadors from the Community Working Programme database. These ambassadors will be deployed within the wards to identify water wasters, identify water and sewage leaks, educate community on saving water efficiently as well as identify illegal dumping.

Historically the Northern Areas and some outlying rural areas, such as Rheenendal, were never charged for their water usage. It was perceived that the amount of water used / lost did not warrant the expense of approximately R22m to install water meters.

Today however, the cost of water supplied to those areas far outweighs the cost of putting in special Water Management Devices and it is noted that these proposed devices will have a positive effect on Greater Knysna's high water consumption.

"We are also removing all redundant standpipes (taps) in the outlying areas and ensuring that all water leaks are repaired," added Douglas.

The municipality is further investigating the possibility of increasing the capacity of the Charlesford Water Scheme. This R100m project is currently in progress with the first phase (2016/2017) costing R31m completed. The funding is complemented by the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG)."

In closing Douglas appealed to the public to work together in saving South Africa's most precious natural resource, water. "In the words of Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon: 'Water is central to the well-being of people and the planet. We must work together to protect and carefully manage this fragile finite resource'.

"I can see that our residents are very aware of the need to save water, and I thank each and every one for the efforts they are making to save water."

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