



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Long-term water conservation the only solution**

KNYSNA – DESPITE recent rains in the Garden Route, Knysna Municipality is still asking all residents to make an effort to use water wisely, implement conservation measures and adhere to municipal water restrictions.

Knysna Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans urges: “The recent rains, or any rains for that matter, will not resolve our water situation. I ask all residents to continue using water sparingly. Treating water as the precious, limited resource it is must become a way of life – not only in Knysna, not only in South Africa, but globally.

“Our consumption is still high and it is vital that our consumption is curbed so that our water reserves can be replenished. Although we have seen some positive results due to our Water Awareness Campaign, as a town Knysna has not reached our consumption target of 8 megalitres per day, which includes the 2 megalitre allocation for business use. This equates to 85 litres per person per day.

“We have seen better results in Sedgefield, with consumption at 2 megalitres per day, while the target is 1,9 megalitres. A big thumbs-up to residents of Sedgefield for coming together and showing us all what can be done.”

While the rivers are full and flowing, Knysna has a total water pumping capacity of 9,9 megalitres per day augmented by other sources to  $\pm 10,6$  megalitres. Our current consumption stands at 12,3 megalitres. This means the off-channel (not situated on an actual river) Akkerkloof dam, the town’s main reserve, is slowly emptying. The geography of the region limits the catchment area that feeds Knysna’s storage capacity.

“We need to bring the level of consumption down to below our pumping capacity,” says Mayor Wolmarans, “in doing so the Akkerkloof dam (currently at 34% capacity) and the Glebe dam can be refilled. When these dams are full, it gives the town a buffer of three months, instead of a few weeks as is the situation at present.

“This is the most viable approach over the short term while council investigates and implements longer-term solutions which would include the construction of another dam, a pipeline and groundwater extraction.”

Apart from the Water Awareness Campaign, which is aimed to inform, educate and motivate, the municipality has approved budget for a Leak Repair Programme in the outer suburbs. Water leaks can be reported to 044 302 6331.

“We have serviced the reverse osmosis plant and although it is operational it is not yet at full capacity. After the new inlet system has been completed in the next month or two, the plant will contribute another 2 megalitres to the system” says Mayor Wolmarans.

“This would even-out supply in regards to demand, but not contribute to the replenishment of our reserve storage – the need to conserve water and reduce consumption would thus remain.

“I am excited to reveal that in the coming weeks we will publish a comprehensive guide explaining Knysna’s water system and infrastructure. We are also considering an incentive programme where we will identify the most conscientious users and reward them accordingly. Watch the press for further developments and information.

“We will continue with internal campaigns in the municipality and introduce educational sessions with all stakeholders – schools, crèches, businesses, institutions, etc.

“It is, however, clear – we need to institute further punitive measures on consumers who are using too much water and have made no effort to reduce use. To the few culprits out there – consider this your final chance to make a positive change. Ideally we would like to see consumption levels of around 15 to 20 kilolitres per household per month.”

The water restrictions in place require residents to only water their gardens at dusk between 18:00 and 19:00 on designated days: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays for houses with even numbers, and Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays for houses with odd numbers.

Residents are further encouraged to only use tap water for domestic consumption, not for the filling of swimming pools.

**ENDS**

**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](mailto:communications@knysna.gov.za)