



Knysna

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Knysna Municipality urges urgent water conservation amid continued dry weather conditions

Knysna Municipality has issued an urgent appeal to all residents, businesses and visitors across Greater Knysna to drastically reduce water consumption, as early indicators point to a dry summer season. Municipal Infrastructure data paints a concerning picture for both Sedgefield and Knysna.

“With the Swartvlei Estuary mouth closed, saline water is migrating towards the Karatara weir. Should this contaminate the abstraction pool, and the river remains low, we will not be able to produce potable water from this source,” explained Knysna Executive Mayor Thando Matika. “Three of the six boreholes drilled to service the Sedgefield area during the drought of 2008 are currently operational. Pumps should be installed at two of the remaining boreholes by 30 November. The last borehole had to be abandoned as it produced saline water.”

The Akkerkloof Dam, Knysna’s main storage facility, currently stands at approximately 27% capacity, equating to just 17 days of water storage, while the Glebe Dam adds a further eight days. The Knysna River, one of the town’s primary raw water sources, is running extremely low and pumping operations have already been reduced to specific intervals to protect infrastructure and conserve remaining resources.

Recent rainfall patterns have been well below the long-term average, with August 2025 recording only 5mm at the Knysna Water Treatment Works, the lowest on record for that month. According to the South African Weather Service, rainfall for the Garden Route region is predicted to be approximately 26% lower than average over the summer period.

“The situation is serious, and it requires every one of us to act responsibly,” said Matika. “We must all recognise that water resources are under pressure and everyone’s cooperation is vital in helping us manage this period of low rainfall. We are intensifying water restrictions, exploring all available supply options and accelerating conservation efforts. However, these measures will only succeed if our community works together to use water sparingly.”

To ensure water security, the municipality is considering the following urgent measures:

- water restrictions remain in place across the Greater Knysna area;
- investigating the reactivation of the Knysna Reverse Osmosis Plant, which has been in preservation mode since 2022;
- optimising existing pumping schemes to capture rainfall during brief wet spells;
- exploring groundwater sources and potential off-take agreements with local landowners;
- consulting with Cape Nature regarding the rules and potential consequences of opening the Swartvlei mouth; and
- expanding the public water conservation campaign to reach households, businesses and tourism operators ahead of the festive season.

To ensure compliance, municipal Law Enforcement Officers will be conducting regular inspections to identify non-compliance with water restrictions. Offenders will face fines in accordance with the municipal by-laws. Residents are urged to report any water abuse or illegal connections by sending a WhatsApp message to, or calling, 060 998 6808.

“This is not about panic — it’s about preparedness. Our town has faced drought before, and we overcame it through cooperation, innovation and community spirit. We can and must do the same again. Every drop counts,” Matika concluded.

Residents are reminded that under the current restrictions, municipal water may be used only for essential household purposes. The use of potable water for gardens, car washing, or filling

of pools is strictly prohibited. The municipality's technical teams will continue to monitor water systems daily and respond rapidly to leaks and bursts to minimise losses.

Knysna Municipality thanks residents for their continued understanding and cooperation as the region faces another challenging dry season.

For further updates and practical tips on saving water, please visit <https://www.knysna.gov.za/live-here/utility-services/water-services/> or contact the Water Helpdesk at 044 302 6331.

ENDS

Knysna Municipality Communications Department
P O Box 21, Knysna. 6570. Western Cape. South Africa
Tel +27 (0)44 302 6300 (switchboard) or 302 6430 (direct)
E-mail communications@knysna.gov.za