



Knysna

Municipality || Munisipaliteit || uMasipala

inclusive || innovative || inspired

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo: Immediate

DATE: Tuesday 27 January 2026

Knysna is working hard to avoid Day Zero as intensified interventions take effect

Knysna Municipality has significantly intensified its water security interventions as part of an ongoing, coordinated effort to avoid Day Zero and to stabilise the municipal water system amid sustained pressure on water supply. While infrastructure interventions are being accelerated, the most immediate and effective way to stabilise the system remains responsible water use by all residents, businesses and visitors.

A range of operational, technical and planning measures are currently underway, supported by daily coordination through the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) and close collaboration with provincial and national departments. These efforts are further supported through ongoing technical assistance and coordination with the Western Cape Department of Local Government.

Knysna Executive Mayor, Cllr Thando Matika, said the municipality is deploying every available resource and exploring all possible interventions to safeguard Knysna's water supply. "We are facing one of the most challenging water periods in recent years, but Knysna is working around the clock to protect its water supply. Every current intervention is aimed at buying us time, strengthening infrastructure and reducing demand. However, the success of these efforts ultimately depends on how responsibly every resident and business use our available water," he said.

Operational capacity strengthened

The municipality has deployed additional human resources to improve response times and reduce losses within the system. Five additional plumbers have been operational since 19 January 2026, supported by six water meter installers deployed from 15 January 2026. A total of 30 general assistants are being phased in, with 10 already on duty since 23 January and a further 20 having commenced duty during the course of this week.

In addition, 1 000 new conventional water meters have been ordered, scheduled to be installed on arrival.

Infrastructure and supply interventions

Critical infrastructure projects are progressing despite tight timelines. The borehole refurbishment tender closed on 16 January 2026.

A completed business plan for alternative pumping from the existing Charlesford and new Salt River pumping schemes, linked to a R20 million funding request from the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), is now awaiting an implementation framework from the department.

Water Conservation and Water Demand Management implementation funding was confirmed on 24 January 2026, and a service provider has been appointed. A handover meeting has taken place to finalise the SLA and refine the scope of work.

Reservoirs, rivers and system monitoring

Overall reservoir levels remain healthy, although any reservoir dropping below 60% is being supplemented with tanker support. The continued decline in the Knysna River flow is being closely monitored, while sandbagging at the Knysna River weir has temporarily extended holding capacity by several additional days. At the time of writing (26 January 2026), the Akkerkloof Dam water level equates to less than three weeks' supply at current consumption levels.

No major pipe bursts were reported over the past weekend. Residents are reminded that leaks and bursts must be reported on 060 998 7032.

Daily Professional Team Technical JOC meetings have been in place since early January. The broader JOC has met twice daily for the past three weeks, now meeting every second day since 26 January 2026.

Water tankering and emergency augmentation

An SLA has been concluded with PG Bison, enabling water to be tankered directly into the Water Purification Works from 22 January 2026. Four 30 000-litre trucks, donated by Gift of the Givers, are currently in operation as part of this initiative.

Overall, five water tankers are active, with approximately 730 000 kilolitres transported since Friday. Current logistical constraints limit further scaling of tankering operations, which is why demand reduction remains critical. Technical teams, supported by engineers from the Department of Local Government, are assessing alternative methods of introducing water into the system.

Water from the Knysna Mosque borehole is also being tankered to the Water Purification Plant, while debris removal and de-silting operations at the balancing dam are underway to improve pumping efficiency.

Demand reduction remains critical

The municipality has noted that the current seven-day average consumption of 10 megalitres per day exceeds the required target of 8 megalitres per day. Community-based teams, including Asivikelane, continue to assist with fixing small leaks, particularly in informal areas.

"Infrastructure interventions can only take us so far," Mayor Matika emphasised. "Significant further reductions in daily consumption are essential. If residents and businesses substantially reduce usage from current levels, Day Zero may still be avoided."

"This is a shared responsibility, and every litre saved matters."

Day Zero planning underway

As a responsible contingency measure, comprehensive Day Zero planning is ongoing. Daily water requirements are estimated at 10 megalitres, with emergency tanker provision projected at 5 megalitres per day.

The municipality is in the process of reprioritising its budget to focus additional resources on water security and continues to communicate daily with residents on practical water-saving measures.

“We urge all residents, businesses and visitors to not only continue using water sparingly, but to actively attempt to significantly reduce daily consumption,” Matika concluded. “Full compliance with existing water restrictions must become our new normal as the town works collectively to avert Day Zero.”

Find water saving tips, water restrictions and additional resources at <https://www.knysna.gov.za/news/water-dayzero/>

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