

WATER SCARCE AREA SAVE WATER | YONGA AMANZI | BESPAAR WATER

**COUNCIL NEWS
FEBRUARY 2026**



SAVE R QUEUE



**Together,
we can avoid
Day Zero!**

REPORT WATER LEAKS & MISUSE  **WHATSAPP 060 998 7032**

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Knysna

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR'S DESK

A year that calls for purpose, accountability and unity.

Knysna is being tested as we move into the new year. Times like these demand more than plans and policies, they demand leadership that is visible, accountable and firmly rooted in the needs of our people.



Let me be clear: this is not business as usual.

The challenges we face require a different way of working, a sharper sense of urgency and a renewed commitment to service. Every director and senior manager has been instructed to put the people of Knysna first, always. Accountability is not optional. Performance will be measured, decisions will be scrutinised and, where expectations are not met, consequences will follow. Directors and senior managers who fail to deliver, or who do not call or write back to residents, must be reported to my **War Room** at warroom@knysna.gov.za or tel 044 001 2631. Our residents deserve nothing less.

The year ahead will not be easy, but it is full of possibility. If we remain united across communities, sectors and generations, Knysna can emerge stronger, more resilient and more compassionate. A united Knysna can achieve great things; rebuilding trust, strengthening service delivery, protecting our most vulnerable and creating a municipality that works for everyone.

I am continually inspired by the resilience I see in our communities - neighbours supporting one another, organisations stepping forward and residents choosing cooperation over division. That spirit is our greatest asset, and it is what will carry us forward.

As the academic year begins, I want to extend my best wishes to all our learners, students and educators. Whether you are starting school for the first time, returning to university or college, or supporting a learner at home, may this be a year of growth, perseverance and success. Education remains one of the most powerful tools we have to shape a better future for Knysna.

Let us approach the months ahead with honesty, discipline and hope. By working together, holding ourselves accountable and keeping our focus firmly on the people we serve, we can navigate the challenges before us and build a Knysna we are proud to pass on to the next generation. Together, we move forward.

'til next time

Thando Matika, EXECUTIVE MAYOR

FROM THE MM'S OFFICE

The days may still be hot, but the holidays are already a distant memory. As this is our first newsletter for 2026, February is already well underway, and colleagues and staff have been working hard from the very start of the year to keep the organisation moving forward. I extend my sincere appreciation to those who remained on duty and ensured that the organisation continued to function smoothly during the peak holiday period. Your commitment did not go unnoticed.



As we settle back into the year, the work ahead is already in full swing. All directorates are finalising their submissions for the adjustments budget, which will be followed by the development of business plans for the 2026/2027 budget cycle. The 2024/2025 Annual Report has been submitted and is now undergoing its public participation process. Council has also considered the mid-year performance report reflecting progress made during the first half of the financial year. Both documents are available on the municipal website for public review and engagement. We are proud to have achieved an Unqualified Audit result for the 2024/2025 financial year.

While our planning and reporting processes continue, we are also confronted by the reality of exceptionally low rainfall experienced during 2025. This prolonged dry period has had a direct impact on river flows and dam levels, significantly reducing our available water reserves.

I therefore appeal to all residents of the greater Knysna area to make every possible effort to reduce water use. Water is a shared and finite resource, and the risk of Day Zero is real. We can still avert it, but only if we work together. Act responsibly and do your part to protect what we have.

Together, through discipline, cooperation and commitment, we can navigate the challenges ahead.

Kind regards

Dr. Lulamile Mapholoba, MUNICIPAL MANAGER

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Remember to download the Collaborator Citizen Application (Collab App) and to subscribe to the Knysna Municipality channel.



TURNING THE TIDE TOGETHER: KNYSNA'S WATER CALL TO ACTION



Knysna is facing one of the most serious water challenges in its recent history. The **Akkerkloof Dam level is critically low**, rivers are under strain and the margin for error has narrowed to days rather than months. While the declaration of the municipal area as a local disaster underscores the severity of the situation, it also unlocks stronger coordination, faster decision-making and additional support from provincial and national partners.

Teams are working around the clock, drilling, repairing, planning, tankering and monitoring, all with one goal, to keep water flowing for as

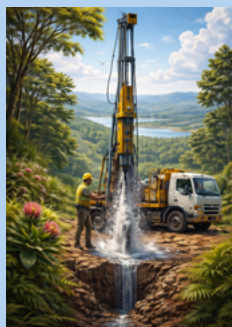
long as possible and to avoid a complete shutdown of the reticulation system. These efforts are substantial, complex and costly, but they are only one side of the solution.

The other side rests with residents and businesses. Current water use still exceeds what the system can safely sustain. Infrastructure can buy time, but only changed behaviour can truly turn the situation around. Every litre saved today directly reduces the risk of water shedding tomorrow and helps protect livelihoods, health services, schools and the local economy.

This is not just a municipal issue, it is a shared moment that calls for collective responsibility, discipline and care for one another.

Current water interventions

- Declaration of the greater Knysna municipal area as a local disaster area, enabling emergency expenditure and access to provincial and national support.
- Implementation of a coordinated Disaster Management Plan with daily oversight through a Joint Operations Centre.
- Recommissioning of the Bigai and Bongani Springs.



- Refurbishment of seven existing boreholes and drilling of seven new boreholes to increase groundwater supply.
- Agreement with PG Bison to access additional boreholes.
- Temporary sandbagging of the Knysna River weir to increase pooling capacity.

- Water tankering directly into purification works, supported by donated tanker trucks.
- Appointment of additional plumbers, meter installers and general assistants to reduce response times to leaks and bursts.
- Replacement of approximately 8,000 bypassed water meters with conventional meters.
- Intensified monitoring of rivers, reservoirs and system pressure.
- Community-based leak repairs supported by local NGOs.
- Ongoing Day Zero contingency planning, including emergency water distribution scenarios.

Understanding Day Zero: what it means for Knysna

Day Zero refers to the point at which the municipal water reticulation system can no longer be safely operated and must be shut down to prevent total system collapse.

It does not mean that Knysna will have no water at all. Instead, it means that taps will run dry and residents will need to collect a limited daily water ration from designated distribution points.

If we reach Day Zero water will be prioritised for essential services such as hospitals, clinics, old-age homes, schools and firefighting. Emergency water will be delivered by tanker, but volumes will be restricted. Queues are likely and daily life will become significantly more difficult for everyone.

Avoiding Day Zero is still possible, but the window is narrow. Infrastructure interventions are buying time, not solving the problem on their own. The single most effective action remains an immediate and sustained reduction in water use across all households, businesses and institutions. Every day that consumption stays above the target level brings Day Zero closer; every litre saved pushes it further away.

Day Zero planning is underway as a responsible contingency, but the shared goal remains clear: to never have to activate it.

Together we can avoid Day Zero.

For additional resources visit our website at www.knysna.gov.za/news/water-dayzero/.



Report leaks and wastage to our dedicated WhatsApp number 060 998 7032.

What every household should do now: water-saving tips

- Limit water use to less than 50 litres per person per day.
- Take short showers and avoid baths.
- Turn off taps while brushing teeth, shaving or washing dishes.
- Flush toilets only when necessary.
- Fix dripping taps and leaking toilets immediately.
- Report visible leaks, bursts or water abuse as soon as they are noticed.
- Use greywater for flushing toilets or watering gardens where allowed.
- Stop all garden watering, car washing and outdoor hosing.
- Do not fill private water tanks with municipal drinking water.
- Connect tanks to roof catchment systems to harvest rainwater.
- Run washing machines and dishwashers only with full loads.
- Encourage guests, tenants and staff to follow the same rules.

With thanks to our partners

We acknowledge and thank the following institutions and partners for their ongoing support and collaboration:

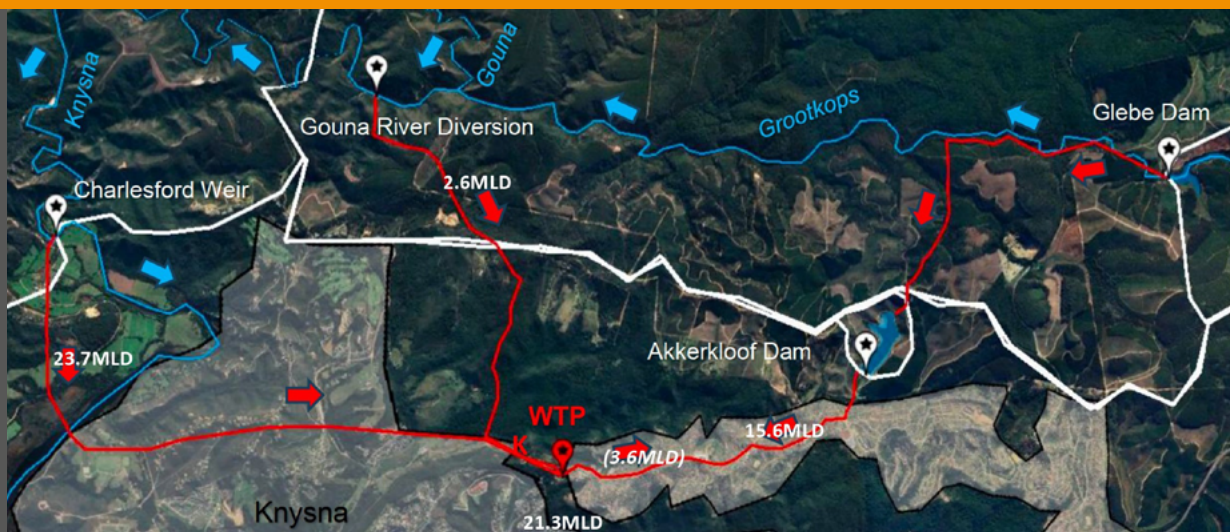
- National Department of Water and Sanitation;
- Western Cape Department of Local Government;
- Garden Route District Municipality and Disaster Management Centre;
- National Disaster Management Centre;
- Breede-Olifants Catchment Management Agency;
- Gift of the Givers;
- PG Bison;
- Knysna Infrastructure Group;
- Asivikelane; and
- Community organisations, churches, schools, ward committees and volunteers.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT KNYSNA WATER SUPPLY

Municipal water supply sources

- Rainfall in the area is variable throughout the year with historical data showing a slight peak during spring.

- There are five main water supply systems serving the municipal area: Knysna, Sedgefield, Karatara, Rheenendal and Buffalo Bay.



- Surface water supply provides most of the water to the municipality and relies on rainfall to keep rivers flowing, to fill dams and reservoirs. The main potable supply is from the Knysna- and Gouna Rivers, which is pumped to the water treatment works. When excess capacity is available, water is also pumped from these to the Akkerkloof Dam. The latter provides storage capacity of more than two months (71 days at 12 MLD), should the rivers run dry. Akkerkloof Dam is thus not the primary source of drinking water to Knysna but a critical part of the system, especially during drought periods.

Knysna system water supply

The Knysna water treatment plant (KWTP) (capacity 21.3 MLD) provides water to ±90,000 people in Knysna (with an increased population in peak season). The KWTP can get water from the Gouna River diversion (2.6MLD max), Charlesford Weir (23.7MLD max assured) and Akkerkloof Dam (15.6 MLD max). Theoretically, 41.9MLD raw water can be supplied to the KWTP, providing redundancy in times of pump failure.

Sedgefield system

This is the second largest system in the municipality and operates independently from the Knysna system. Main supply is via the Ruigtevlei weir on the Karatara River, supplemented by four boreholes. The desalination plant (1.5MLD) at Myoli beach is part of the licensed supply but is not currently operational. The boreholes cannot meet demand when the river flow is too low to allow abstraction.

Water conservation & demand management strategies to reduce losses and non-revenue water:

- bulk water management, assessments, refurbishments & installations;
- water supply zone optimisation;
- pressure management programme;
- leak repairs in general and indigent households; and
- metering and billing analysis.

SMALL CHANGES, SHARED WINS: HOW OUR COMMUNITY IS SAVING WATER

Across Knysna, households and businesses are finding thoughtful, often surprisingly simple ways to reduce water use. These everyday actions may seem small, but together they add up to a powerful collective effort. Here are just a few stories from residents who are adapting with creativity, humour and care for the town we all call home.



Lena (65), Knysna Central

"I really battle with cold showers," Lena admits. "So instead of letting the tap run, I collect the cold water in a basin while waiting for it to warm up. That water then flushes the loo. I still take a very short shower, but nothing goes to waste." For Lena, saving water isn't about comfort versus responsibility. "It's about being mindful. You quickly realise how much water you usually let disappear down the drain."



solution. Many even thank us for it."

Saving water isn't about sacrifice alone. It's about awareness, teamwork and choosing to protect our shared future, one habit at a time.

(*True identities withheld for privacy reasons)



Peter (17), Old Place

"My dad used to shout at me for taking long showers," Peter laughs. "Now we've turned it into a competition." The family times their showers, and whoever uses the least water during the week wins. "The prize is a Coke float on Friday," he says. "Funny thing is, we all end up winning because our water use is way down."



Nomvula (34), small business owner

"We reuse greywater from hand-washing to clean outdoor areas and sweep instead of hosing wherever possible," she explains. "It's changed how we think about water at work and at home. Once you start paying attention, it becomes second nature."

Jonathan (57), local guesthouse owner

"At the guesthouse, we've put clear but friendly signs in bathrooms explaining how guests can help save water," he says. "We also only change towels on request and have fitted low-flow showerheads. Most guests really appreciate being included in the

WHATSAPP CHANNEL

You can now follow the Knysna Municipality WhatsApp channel for important news, updates and other information.

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SUBMIT YOUR METER READINGS EASILY WITH THE MY MUNICIPAL METER APP & WHATSAPP

We encourage all residents to ensure accurate billing by submitting their own electricity and water meter readings using the MY MUNICIPAL METER app.



For enquiries, please contact Enrico Oosthuizen at eoosthuizen@knysna.gov.za or 044 302 6408

Tel +27 (0)44 302 6300
www.knysna.gov.za

