



MEDIA STATEMENT

Update water supply interventions underway in Maluti A Phofung

For immediate release

19 October 2023

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality and Vaal-Central Water Board, which has been appointed as an Implementing Agent by the department, have been working tirelessly to address water challenges currently facing the Harrismith area in Maluti a Phofung as a result of the low flows in the Wilge River catchment.

Currently water is being pumped from the Badenhorst farm dam which has a capacity of 160 mega litres (ML). This dam is able to augment the Wilge River in times of drought and water is being pumped at 60 litres per second which equates to 5ML per day. It should be noted that this is a temporary solution and according to calculation the water should be able to supply for a duration of 20 days. The Maluti A Phofung LM is also supplying residence with water through the use of water tankering.

The outlet of the Sterkfontein Dam has been closed off for maintenance and refurbishment work, consequently water cannot be released through the outlet works as per normal. In the meantime, water is released into the Nuwejaarspruit via the siphon system over the dam wall that supplies the Sterkfontein Water Treatment Works (WTW). The siphon has spare capacity to feed excess water into the Nuwejaarspruit and 10km downstream to the Nuwejaarspruit Pumpstation (PS).

Water is being pumped from the Nuwejaarspruit PS across a watershed to the Wilge WTW. This is the primary supply system to Harrismith and Intabazwe when the Wilge River runs dry.

Work is underway to install a temporary emergency pump upstream of the Nuwejaarspruit PS and connect it to the rising main from pumpstation to the Wilge WTW. The pump inlet will be mounted on a float below the water surface and will deliver 7,5M³/day which is approximately 60% of the average annual demand of Harrismith and Intabazwe, if operated for 24 hours continuously.

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The weir in the Nuwejaarspruit that was damaged by flooding and the pumpstation vandalised in 2021 is currently undergoing reconstruction and refurbishment and will only be serviceable in February 2024. Water restrictions will remain until the refurbished Nuwejaarspruit PS is operational in February 2024.

It should also be noted that the runoffs from weekend rainfall have brought the level in the Wilge up by 100mm. Although this is not a substantial increase, the rains bring reprieve to the area of Maluti A Phofung.

On the morning of 19 October 2023 water flowing through the treatment plant for processing was measured at 267 litres per second. The whole Harrismith is getting water through the Bersig reservoir. Greater Harrismith including the surrounding areas namely, Intabazwe and Lotusville are now getting water as per normal. The teams are still on the ground monitoring the situation.

Residences are still requested to continue to use water sparingly and repair leaks in the household. Every drop counts.

END

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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