





OPINION:Operations And Maintenance Crucial For Sustainable Quality Water Supply

FEATURED General



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Water is life, and the provision of quality water that meets the required standards is important for a healthy society. After all, access to water is a human right therefore people must be reliably provided with clean and healthy water in a sustainable manner.

In order to ensure the provision of safe and quality water to communities, it is important to have the right, effective and efficient infrastructure. This then calls for the water supply infrastructure to be always in good condition to deliver quality services, which in this case is clean quality water.

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To effectively supply sustainable quality water to communities requires proper operations and maintenance of water supply and delivery infrastructure. Proper operations and maintenance is critical to ensure that the water supply operations run smoothly from the source to the tap of the end user. Proper operations and maintenance prevents unnecessary breakdowns and ensures that infrastructure breakdown challenges are swiftly addressed thereby preventing communities being denied the source of life. This, then calls for water services authorities and providers to prioritise operations and maintenance of their water supply infrastructure and invest accordingly.

Proper operations and maintenance is also critical to prevent the unnecessary loss of this precious water through leaks. Proper operations and maintenance will ensure early leak detection and the speedy fixing and repairing of the damaged infrastructure ensuring all people have access to quality water. Leaks waste a lot of precious water and also compromises the water quality as they allow pollution to creep into the pipelines, therefore they must be identified early and repaired to ensure the reliable supply of quality water to communities.

Proper operations and maintenance saves money and prevents the loss of precious water. Lack of operations and maintenance leads to regular infrastructure breakdowns and failures which cost a lot of money to fix in an emergency. Lack of proper operations and maintenance leads to high levels of water losses which translates to revenue losses for the water services authorities and providers.

Directly linked to operations and maintenance is the employment of qualified personnel. The correct and suitable skills are required to ensure proper operations and the sustainable supply of quality water to communities and water users. Qualified and suitably skilled personnel will prevent unnecessary infrastructure breakdowns as they will ensure proper operations and maintenance of the water supply leading to sustainable and reliable supply of quality water to communities.

Proper operations and maintenance coupled with the appointment of qualified personnel is important to prevent the pollution of water resources by making sure that waste water treatment plants are properly functioning and don't lead to sewer spillages that have a negative impact on the quality of water. Pollution does not only pose a threat to water quality but it also poses a threat to water supply security as it reduces the amount of water fit for use. Pollution of water resources basically translates to the loss of precious water.

As much as proper operations and maintenance, and the appointment of qualified and suitable skills is critical, the public also has a role to play in ensuring the reliable supply of quality water to communities. Community members must prevent illegal connections and vandalism of the water supply infrastructure. The public must also help to prevent sewer spillages and overflowing manholes by not putting foreign objects in the sewer systems.

South Africa is a water scarce country therefore we all have a role to play in ensuring reliable and sustainable quality water supply for the current and future generations through our positive and responsible actions and behaviour. As responsible citizens, we must report all bulk line leaks and other challenges to the relevant authorities and at the same time ensure that all the water and sanitation infrastructure in our households is working well, starting by fixing all leaks, protecting and preventing infrastructure vandalism, and become ambassadors of water conservation to ensure continuous and sustainable quality water supply to communities.

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