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Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



INTERNET ARTICLE

Deputy Minister Mahlobo calls for communities to safeguard water infrastructure

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Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, David Mahlobo, has called on residents across the country to safeguard the water infrastructure in areas where they reside as a measure to assist government to ensure water security through the implementation of water projects.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo spoke sternly at a community engagement session on Friday, 27 September 2024 in Alice, where he joined the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nobuhle Nkabane to handover the R130 million Alice Water Treatment and the University of Fort Hare's Wastewater Treatment Works Expansion Projects.

This came as the University of Fort Hare initiated the upgrade of the Alice Water Treatment Works (WTWs) and the flow rate increase from an average of 6,5 megalitres per day to 12 megalitres day. This resulted in the total water storage capacity increased from 11.28 megalitres to 17.48 megalitres.

The initiative was sparked by the treatment and storage capacity of the WTW which far exceeded the demand which had significant negative impact to both the Alice town and the University.

The University then approached the Amathole District Municipality, as the Water Services Authority, to solicit its plans to address the unreliable supply in the area and to also meet its additional requirement as additional student residential accommodation was needed.

The Amathole District Municipality advised the Fort Hare University that the upgrade of the Alice Water Treatment Works was set to start in 2024\25 budget cycle due to over commitments in its Infrastructure Capital Programmes.

This then prompted the Fort Hare University to approach the Department of Higher Education and Training to bridge the upgrades of both the Alice Water Treatment Works and the Wastewater Treatment Works in order to unlock further development of student accommodation

The request was endorsed by former Minister Blade Nzimande, and it culminated into the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Fort Hare University and Amathole District Municipality.

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The MoU then set wheels in motion which resulted in the two projects effectively implemented and handed over by the current Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nkabane and Deputy Minister Mahlobo.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo has endorsed the University's initiative and praised the swift response by the Department Higher Education and Training.

“As the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, we fully encourage and support such initiatives as undertaken by the University and our sister department. Water is a source of life and all of us should work together to ensure that we safeguard this precious resource. Any initiative that strives to ensure water security will always get the support of the Ministry of Water and Sanitation,” said Deputy Minister Mahlobo.

“While we welcome collaborative work; we also call community members to play their significant role in ensuring that they safeguard water infrastructure. It cannot be correct that the vandalism of water infrastructure still happens in communities,” he emphasised.

The two projects are aimed at addressing water treatment and wastewater management at the University and are collaborative initiatives of the University of Fort Hare, Amathole District Municipality and Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality.

Lebogang Maseko

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