



INTERNET ARTICLE

Deputy Minister Seitholo Welcomes Progress at Percy Stewart Wastewater Plant but Urges Faster Action to Combat Water Pollution in West Rand

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Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, Sello Seitholo, has welcomed significant improvements at the Percy Stewart Wastewater Treatment Works in Mogale City but stressed that urgent action is still needed to improve wastewater treatment standards and curb pollution affecting rivers and communities across the West Rand.

DM Seitholo made the remarks during a high-level oversight visit and stakeholder engagement held at the Cradle of Humankind on Monday, 25 May 2026. The engagement formed part of the Department of Water and Sanitation's ongoing efforts to strengthen municipal wastewater management, improve regulatory compliance, and protect critical water resources.

The meeting brought together Executive Mayors from Mogale City, Merafong City and Rand West City municipalities, alongside senior departmental officials and technical experts, to assess the state of wastewater infrastructure and review Green Drop compliance performance across the region.

Addressing stakeholders, Seitholo expressed concern over the scale of wastewater pollution entering South Africa's water systems.

"For the life of me, I could not reconcile myself to the idea of 1 500 million litres of raw sewage, not per month, but per day, going into water systems," he said.

He warned that ongoing pollution poses serious risks to public health, aquatic ecosystems, local economies and downstream water users, while also undermining efforts to restore and protect the country's water resources.

During the engagement, officials presented Green Drop assessment findings which revealed persistent challenges across several wastewater treatment facilities. Ageing infrastructure,

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inadequate maintenance, equipment failures, vandalism, theft, financial constraints and shortages of technical skills continue to hamper municipal wastewater operations.

According to the latest assessment, Percy Stewart Wastewater Treatment Works achieved a Green Drop score of 68%, while Flip Human Wastewater Treatment Works scored 64% and Magaliesburg Wastewater Treatment Works recorded 49%.

The Department also highlighted ongoing enforcement actions against non-compliant facilities, including directives issued under the National Water Act and legal proceedings in cases involving persistent pollution and operational failures.

Following the stakeholder engagement, DM Seithloho conducted an inspection of the Percy Stewart Wastewater Treatment Works, where rehabilitation efforts have yielded noticeable improvements. Officials reported progress in restoring key treatment processes, upgrading electrical infrastructure, improving effluent quality and installing standby generators to strengthen operational reliability.

A new chlorine dosing system aimed at reducing E. coli levels and enhancing effluent disinfection is expected to be fully operational by the end of June 2026.

While welcoming the progress, Seithloho emphasised that further upgrades remain necessary.

“There are major improvements that have been made in most parts of the wastewater treatment works, but there is more to be done to bring the treated effluent to the required standards,” he said.

He noted that poor-quality effluent continues to threaten sensitive downstream environments, including the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, the Crocodile River and Hartbeespoort Dam.

Municipal leaders acknowledged the challenges facing wastewater infrastructure and committed to accelerating efforts to improve compliance and operational performance.

Mogale City Executive Mayor Lucky Sele said the municipality remains committed to restoring compliance and improving Green Drop performance.

“We have worked tirelessly to bring the plant to functionality, and we hope that in the next Green Drop evaluations, we will be able to do better as the City,” he said.

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The Department reaffirmed its commitment to supporting municipalities through programmes such as the Water Services Infrastructure Grant and Municipal Infrastructure Grant to rehabilitate ageing wastewater infrastructure and improve service delivery.

The oversight visit concluded with a collective commitment from government and municipal leaders to accelerate infrastructure upgrades, strengthen maintenance and operational capacity, and reduce pollution impacting the region's water resources.

As rehabilitation efforts continue, the improvements at Percy Stewart Wastewater Treatment Works provide encouraging signs that sustained investment, effective management and stronger oversight can help restore wastewater treatment performance and safeguard water quality across the West Rand.

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