



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### **DWS takes public education on water conservation to school learners in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality**

**26 February 2026**

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) recently engaged the community of Mashonamini in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality in a public education awareness campaign to educate members of the community about water conservation and the protection of water supply infrastructure.

A comprehensive public education awareness campaign took place on 23 February 2026, and targeted learners in three schools in the area.

The educational campaign commenced with a school awareness programme at Pensele and Londhidha primary schools and learners, educators and other officials were taught about the importance of saving water and protecting public water infrastructure, especially from vandalism. Officials engaged learners through interactive discussions, encouraging them to adopt responsible water-use habits from a young age. Simple actions, such as closing taps properly, reporting leaks, and avoiding wastage, were highlighted as meaningful steps toward preserving this scarce resource.

The school awareness programme continued at Madzuma High School, and high school pupils were encouraged to act as ambassadors of water conservation within the school and the broader community. The session emphasised the critical role young people play in promoting sustainable water practices and discouraging destructive behaviours. The learners were also introduced to career opportunities in the water and sanitation sector.

The last leg of the public education awareness campaign involved a community engagement where community members were reminded of the importance of water conservation and the protection of water supply infrastructure. The community members were also educated of the negative impact and damaging effects of infrastructure vandalism, which includes illegal connection on reliable and sustainable water supply. Members of the community were also encouraged to fix leaking pipes as they waste a lot of clean and precious water. Water saving strategies and tips were also shared with the community.

In outlining the purpose of the public education awareness campaign, Ms. Zanele Mhlanga from DWS Mpumalanga emphasised the importance of community participation. "Awareness is the first step toward change. When communities understand the value of their water resources and infrastructure, they become active partners in protecting and preserving them for future generations", she stated.

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In engaging the audience, Mr. Jan Mabena from DWS Head Office used the water and sanitation business chart to explain the water cycle to ensure that the community understand water and sanitation value chain so as to appreciate the value of water services and the related costs of delivering clean, safe water to communities. He further encouraged the community to be responsible citizens and use water wisely and sparingly.

Mr Mabena further highlighted the importance of Water Resource Management, stating, “effective water resource management is the backbone of sustainable development. When we protect our water sources and use them responsibly, we are investing in the health, growth, and future of our communities.”

Ms. Lucia Dooka, also from DWS Head Office reinforced the importance of responsible water use, reminding learners that South Africa is a water-scarce country. She added, “every drop we save today secures our future tomorrow. Water conservation is not a choice; it is a responsibility we all share.”

During the community engagement, community members raised their issues such as lack of reliable water supply and the pollution of streams and rivers. It was not all about complaining as the community members appreciated the municipality in its efforts to connect them. The community members also encouraged each other to fix their pipes and prevent water wastage and losses through leaks. They thanked the Department and the municipality for the educational awareness and the report back in terms of the pipeline and water supply issues.

In his address, Ward Councillor, Mr Bio Mpangana expressed gratitude to the officials of DWS and the Municipality. “We sincerely thank Department of Water and Sanitation and Bushbuckridge Local Municipality for recognising the communities facing water shortages. Your efforts to engage, educate, and provide solutions show a true commitment to improving the lives of our residents.”

Residents were urged to take collective responsibility for protecting water resources and infrastructure by conserving water, preventing pollution, reporting illegal connections and vandalism, and educating others. Through these efforts, communities can help secure a reliable water supply and sustainable water resources for current and future generations.

**Themba Khoza**

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