



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL
AFFAIRS MRS EDNA MOLEWA, AT THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH
OF THE INTEGRATED INYAKA WATER SUPPLY SCHEME AND THE
NATIONAL WATER WEEK 2014, SIDLAMAKHOSI VILLAGE SPORTS
GROUND, BUSHBUCKRIDGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA
PROVINCE**

17 MARCH 2014

Programme Director

The Premier Mr David Mabuza

MP's, MEC's, MPL's present amongst us

District and Local Mayors

Board members of represented Water Boards in our midst

*Acting Director-General of the Department of Water Affairs and Senior Managers of the
Department*

Senior Managers of the represented Municipalities

CEO's and Executive Managers of the Water Boards

Representatives of the media

Our respected community of Bushbuckridge

*It is once again a great honour for me to be amongst this community of Bushbuckridge.
We are here again to take forward our promises as we continue as a collective of
government, National, Provincial and Local, to ensure that the people of South Africa
access the basic services as a right duly and correctly enshrined in the Constitution.*

We are here in Bushbuckridge for two reasons particularly this time around. We have finished a great deal of work on the Inyaka Integrated Water Supply Scheme which we are unveiling today, as well as the very important matter of launching our annual National Water Week 2014, scheduled for 17 – 23 March 2014.

It is important to indicate that when we were here last year for the sod turning event, we impressed upon our officials at all levels with the able assistance of the Premier, the need to do our work with speed whilst not sacrificing diligence and attention to detail. Whilst appreciating that the normal processes to get such a scheme as this up and running would normally take longer than half a year, we needed to express the fact that the need for potable water within reasonable distances for our communities is more important.

We appreciate the fact that the now completed Integrated Inyaka Water Supply Project consists of the Inyaka Water treatment Works Phases 3 & 4, the Acornhoek Bulk Water Pipeline, as well as water reticulation projects to fifteen (15) villages. These fifteen villages are now additional to the fifty-eight (58) that were being supplied from the treatment works prior to the completion of phases 3 and 4 of the project. I believe it is work well worth applauding as it has brought access to basic services closer to the people. Is it the best that we can do? Have we achieved all that we set ourselves out to do? NO.

Premier, what is vital to note is that due to the work that has been done to bring this facility to its design capacity, we now have a more reliable and consistent water supply as reported by the Bushbuckridge Water Board and the Municipality, this in the existing areas of water supply. This has thus sought to address the long-standing challenges of water rationing within Bushbuckridge.

The mandate of the Department of Water Affairs and the sector as a whole is to ensure the security of water supply to the country. The Constitution enjoins us to ensure that everybody and all other strata of society receive the requisite amount of water in the shortest distance possible, such water also being safe for use.

As far as this region is concerned, this work is still on-going. What we are here to do in particular is to celebrate the delivery to those areas that have been serviced thus far. Further we are here to prove to those people in the outstanding areas that we are making progress, and this progress is towards bringing them also into the area that will be, in good time, receiving the same services as those that are recently reticulated.

Over a good period of time, this area has received its water from the Inyaka Dam as its primary source; we are glad to announce that with the inclusion of the supply from the recently upgraded Inyaka Water Treatment Works, which we gladly unveiled earlier, now supplying an extra 75 megalitres per day (ML/d) the area has had an increase to a

total of 118,9 megalitres per day. This is made up of input of 75 MI/d from Inyaka, 27MI/d from Hoxani, and the remainder of 16,9MI/d from other smaller Treatment Works in the area.

We are well aware that we still have a backlog of water supply even with the work we are unveiling today. We do want to emphasise that we are also aware that even as we continue with the work of constructing bulk and reticulation infrastructure, the demand for raw water abstraction and treated water production will also grow exponentially, more so over the next five years. This increase in demand will be driven primarily by the need to meet the current water services backlog, improving level of service as well as the associated urbanisation of some of the current rural town of Acornhoek, Mkuhlu and Bushbuckridge itself.

We are glad to also indicate that the Thulamahashe line that has a demand for 32MI/d will now receive supply from this Inyaka Water Treatment Works. the Thulamahashe Bulk Pipeline will eventually supply 44 villages from the area of Dwarsloop to Hlalakahle around Gottenburg. As I indicated earlier, part of our message today is to inform those still outstanding of our plans. In this instance, the work on reticulation has covered 29 of the 44 villages in the area. For the remaining 15 villages, the reticulation work is currently underway. The completion date is scheduled for end of May this very year. Therefore we envisage that by this winter all the 44 villages to be serviced by this bulk pipeline will be receiving such a service.

Premier, this means we might have to return to Thulamahashe then to ensure that what we are saying will have happened by the time we are envisaging.

Ladies and gentlemen, the investment made towards the completion of phases 3 and 4 of this project was R482.57 million. It will serve a population of around 850 000 people. There were a total of 423 jobs created with 76 women amongst these. A total of 270 people were trained in the process.

We are also acutely aware that the water extraction within the Municipality exceeds the requirement. This implies that there are definite water losses within the system that lead to such over-extraction. Premier I believe this is an issue that needs critical attention from the leadership in the area. The DWA in the region is available to assist in ensuring that such unnecessary losses are curbed thus ensuring that the security of water supply is more assured.

*As I said earlier, this event seeks to also raise the issue of our annual National Water Week for 2014. We celebrate this Week this year under the theme: **“Celebrating 20 Years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development”**. As a sector we have made great and necessary strides towards ensuring that in this twentieth year of*

our democracy, we support a sustainable, peaceful and vibrant democracy by ensuring security of water services and supply to the country.

As a department we must carry out our mandate of ensuring availability of bulk water supply to the nation. We also have a duty to support and assist the provincial and particularly the local government in ensuring access to water services is not compromised. It really was not an easy task to move from an average of 59% access to potable water in 1994 to the current rate of beyond 95%. We had to work hard together with our communities to be able to reach such proportions.

We have all the different role-players in the sector pulling together in the common purpose of service to our people. We have also in the process created harmonious and complementary working relations with our neighbouring countries with whom we share water courses. We know that water knows no boundaries, therefore the relations and agreements we have with our neighbours in the region, particularly Lesotho, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe in relation to the optimal use and conservation of our water courses have really over time proven worth much, much more than their weight in gold.

Water is a scarce resource. We as a country are in the unenviable position of being one of the thirty driest countries in the world, with our below world average rainfall. We have to and must conserve this resource even more than what everyone else can and does. This is why we take the issues of pollution so seriously. This also speaks to the matter I was addressing this past Friday when we showed again as government our seriousness in tackling issues like Acid Mine Drainage (AMD). On Friday we inserted the R319 million rand pumps into the Central Basin shaft. These pumps once operational at the end of April 2014 will ensure that AMD in the Central Basin remains below the Environmental Critical Level thus protecting not just our environment but more importantly our precious water courses.

Throughout this week of 17 – 23 March we will be carrying all sorts of messages on all communication platforms to ensure that National Water Week 2014 remains top of mind. The people of Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga must realise that as government we take their plight seriously thus the decision to come and spread our message first and mainly in their midst.

*We will continue to tell our good story, the story of **“Celebrating 20 Years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development”**.*

I THANK YOU.

