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Water tanks to bring relief to impoverished communities

THIS year will go down in the history books as a year of trials and tribulations for South Africa and the rest of the world.

Who could have anticipated that one day our nation will wake up in a different world where citizens are locked up in their homes with economic activities at a standstill due to Covid-19?

By now the infections from Covid-19 have risen in the Western Cape, the second hardest hit province. Is there hope or despair? The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has heeded the call by President Cyril Ramaphosa that government departments implement co-ordinated interventions to flatten the curve of Covid-19 infections.

In an effort to curb the spread of Covid-19 in the Western Cape, the DWS has commenced distribution

of 537 water tanks to the metro and district municipalities across the province.

The distribution of water tanks is a short-term relief measure to minimise the spread of the infection with special emphasis on hot-spot areas that do not have running water. The distribution of the water tanks will further alleviate the plight of rural communities who walk long distances to fetch water.

The DWS as custodian of water resources and sanitation has an obligation to ensure sustainable water supply to communities, especially densely populated informal settlements.

To date close to 100 water tanks have been delivered across the province, and more tanks are to be delivered and installed in the coming days.

During our visit to Brickfield

informal settlement in Paarl, I was touched by the way the community is receiving the roll-out of water tanks.

Safety measures will be taken that will ensure delivery of safe drinking water close to consumers. Tankers will be cleaned to meet the health and hygiene guidelines from the World Health Organisation before water is put into the water tanks.

DWS appeals to communities to engage in good hygiene practice including washing of hands with soap as this has been proven to minimise the spread of infections.

We are aware that we have responsible citizens who will not only safeguard the water infrastructure provided, but will also take extra care in using water sparingly.

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