

Stop polluting our rivers

During and beyond Covid-19, good water quality for everyone in SA is vital. The good state of our rivers, streams and wetlands is critical for a water-secure SA.

If we do not take a stand, follow the good example laid by our forebears such as Nelson Mandela and make a difference in our community, our future will be doomed before it even begins. For us to have clean water coming out of our taps, it begins with each one of us changing our behaviour.

The government acknowledges that access to water for everyone has not yet been achieved and there are still people in villages who draw water from rivers for human consumption. Yet still, there is a worrying tendency of dumping diapers, animal skins, plastic and raw sewage into our rivers. In 2016 the department of water & sanitation linked its “clear rivers” campaign to the month of July, named Mandela month, to raise awareness about the importance of keeping our rivers and streams clean and healthy.

Although “clear rivers” is a community-based programme, department staff will be spending their 67 minutes and more in collaboration with communities cleaning rivers and wetlands as their contribution to taking care of their environment.

The objective of the campaign is collaborative effort and active engagement with communities on protecting our water resources. Please, people, don't throw things into our rivers and streams. And if you can find the time and energy, join our campaign and help clean a stream this month.

— **Lameki Jumba**, Eastern Cape department of water & sanitation