



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### Deputy Minister Mahlobo intervenes to address water challenges in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality

24 December 2024

The Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, David Mahlobo, has reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to addressing water challenges and ensuring a reliable water supply for communities in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality (BLM), in Mpumalanga.

This follows a virtual meeting that was convened by Deputy Minister Mahlobo on Monday, 23 December 2024 with key stakeholders, including the Executive Mayor of BLM, Cllr Lydia Moroane; the Executive Mayor of Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Cllr Terrence Shabangu; and representatives from the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA) and other sector departments.

The meeting focused on addressing the pressing water supply challenges in Violet Bank and Shatale, where community members raised concerns about irregular water supply caused by pressure and valve operation issues. Additionally, challenges related to a dedicated line and reservoir for Violet Bank were highlighted as critical areas requiring intervention to improve water provision.

During the meeting, the municipality provided a detailed briefing on the measures already taken to address these issues following a community engagement that was held on 04 December 2024. To resolve the intermittent water supply challenges, the following resolutions were agreed upon:

1. **Deployment of a Dedicated Network Operator:** A dedicated operator will manage the reservoir and network systems to ensure consistent water delivery.
2. **Upgrading Shatale Water Treatment Works:** As a long-term solution, the ongoing upgrade of the Shatale Water Treatment Works will be prioritized to serve Shatale and surrounding areas.
3. **Construction of Water Reticulation at Majembeni:** This project will connect a dedicated water line requested by the community to improve supply.

Furthermore, the municipality committed to ongoing engagement with the community throughout the implementation of these resolutions and pledged to provide regular updates on progress. Community cooperation and patience were requested to allow for the effective implementation of these measures.

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Meanwhile, Deputy Minister Mahlobo emphasised that addressing the water challenges in Bushbuckridge is a top priority and provided additional guidance to ensure sustainable solutions. The municipality, supported by DWS and other stakeholders, was advised to:

1. Confirm raw water availability through the catchment agency and explore additional allocations from Inyaka Dam.
2. Enhance water conservation and demand management programs.
3. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the water network systems, from bulk infrastructure to household connections, to identify areas for optimization.
4. Build capacity through increased human resources, provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and maintenance of key repair stock materials to improve response times.
5. Strengthen community engagement on water usage and address broader issues affecting residents.
6. Refurbish existing boreholes and install new ones in areas lacking water supply or reticulation networks.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo also tasked the Technical Team with developing a detailed action plan to address water challenges comprehensively within the municipality. The plan will outline specific measures to ensure reliable water delivery to all affected areas.

"Ensuring a reliable water supply is not just a necessity but a fundamental right for our communities. The Department of Water and Sanitation, alongside other stakeholders, remains steadfast in its commitment to providing the necessary support and oversight to the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality," said Deputy Minister Mahlobo.

The Department of Water and Sanitation will continue to work closely with the Department of Cooperative Governance (COGTA), Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Inkomati Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA), and other key stakeholders to monitor progress and ensure improved water service delivery to the communities of Bushbuckridge.

**END**

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