



MEDIA STATEMENT

VAAL RIVER SYSTEM UPDATE 2: Fifth sluice gate opened at the Vaal Dam as inflows increase rapidly, low lying communities warned of possible riverbanks overtopping

06 April 2025

Due to the rapid increase of inflows into the Vaal Dam, a **fifth sluice** gate has been opened at 10h00 this morning to manage water levels that has increased overnight as a result to the ongoing rainfall in the Vaal River catchment.

This is 24 hours after the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) opened the fourth sluice gate at the Vaal Dam.

The water storage levels at the dam stood at 108% yesterday, but as of this morning the levels had risen to 109%. The outflows at the dam will increase from 550 cubic metres per second (m^3/s) to just under 700 m^3/s . The inflows into the dam have increased since this morning from 1000 m^3/s to 1200 m^3/s by midday.

Bloemhof Dam storage levels have also risen from yesterday's 103% to 107% this morning, and water releases will be staggered incrementally from the current 1000 m^3/s to 1 100 m^3/s at 10am; 1 200 m^3/s at 12h00; 1 300 m^3/s at 14h00 and the last increase at 16h00 to 1 400 m^3/s .

The increased outflows from Vaal Dam are expected to reach the Vaal Barrage in about 6 hours and Bloemhof Dam in 3 to 4 days and will result in water levels rising in both the dam and the river, overtopping the riverbanks.

Due to increased water releases by the five sluice gates, there might be a possible overflowing at the riverbanks downstream and this will affect infrastructure built in lower lying areas within the 100-year floodline.

People living within the high floodline of the Vaal River downstream of the Vaal Dam and the Bloemhof Dam should evacuate and move to a safe area, and remove valuable equipment, movable infrastructure and livestock.

At Grootdraai Dam located in Mpumalanga in the Upper Vaal River Catchment, upstream of the Vaal Dam, one sluice gate remains open to enable water releases. The Dam is currently sitting at 102%.

The Department is implementing these necessary controlled water releases at the dams as part of dam safety precautions to safeguard the infrastructure.

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DWS is continuously monitoring the water levels in the Vaal River System. Through various platforms, the department continuously shares hydrology reports and provides regular updates regarding the water levels in the dams, with recommendations in order to provide early warnings in case of flooding.

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Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

For more information, contact Wisane Mavasa, Spokesperson for the Department of Water and Sanitation on 060 561 8935/ mavasaw@dws.gov.za.

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