



MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS responds to public comments regarding proposed regulations for the management and control of its Dams and surrounding state-owned land under its control

21 May 2026

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is appreciative to all interested and affected parties for the extensive public participation and constructive inputs received on the *Proposed Draft Regulations for the Management and Control of Government Waterworks and Surrounding State-Owned Land* during the public consultation period that closed on the 15th of April 2026.

Among the concerns raised by stakeholders are the impact on existing general access for visitors, provisions relating to the development and implementation of Resource Management Plans, and the rights of private landowners where the Department has servitude of storage to impound the water of the dams, and the provisions in the draft regulations related to gill nets.

The Department is currently working through the extensive comments received and will be reviewing the draft regulations to ensure clear, practical regulations to enable continued safe activities on Departmental dams whilst supporting and growing tourism, hospitality and economic activities in and around its dams and on the land that it owns and controls.

Based on the comments and inputs received to date, it is foreseen that amendments to the regulations will be substantial and that a further round of public consultation will be required. Current approved Resource Management Plans (RMPs) in place and that were in the process of being implemented, including the RMP for the Vaal Dam, are being placed on hold and will be reviewed once the regulations have been finalised to ensure alignment with the updated Departmental Land Lease Policy governing state land under its control and these Regulations. The role, scope, and application of Resource Management Plans will also be addressed in the review of the draft regulations.

The Department has also received substantial public comment regarding the authorisation and use of gill nets within Government Waterworks. Following consideration of stakeholder concerns and the potential environmental and safety implications associated with gill net usage, the Department intends to prohibit the use of gill nets in the next revised draft of the Regulations and provisions will be subject to the next round of consultations.

The Department remains committed to a transparent, inclusive, and consultative regulatory development process. In this regard, DWS will undertake additional and more comprehensive stakeholder engagement informed by the additional registered stakeholders during the next phase of consultations to ensure that all interested and affected parties have a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the finalisation of the Regulations.

The Department once again thanks all stakeholders and members of the public for their valuable participation and continued interest in the responsible management, protection, and sustainable use of Government Waterworks and surrounding state-owned land. The purpose of any consultation process is to ensure that stakeholder concerns, recommendations, and technical inputs are carefully considered before Regulations are finalised.

Once the Department is in a position to publish the revised draft regulations a media statement will again be done on dates and venues of consultations.

Issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation

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