



MEDIA STATEMENT

Kouga Dam operating safely amid high inflows due to above normal rainfall in the catchment

7 May 2026

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) notes the public concerns regarding current water levels at Kouga Dam, which are at approximately **120,6% of storage capacity** following recent high inflows.

As at the morning of **7 May 2026**, peak outflows at Kouga Dam are estimated at **2 491 cubic metres per second (m³/s)**, equivalent to a **1 in 50-year (2% probability) flood event**. These outflows are **well within the dam's design and operational capacity**.

Kouga Dam is a **72-metre-high double-curvature concrete arch dam** equipped with an **uncontrolled spillway** and **two radial gates**. The spillway is able to discharge more than 6 100 m³/s of water before overtopping the non-overspill crest, which is more than double the current outflow.

The reservoir provides flood attenuation, allowing large volumes of inflow to be temporarily stored, thereby reducing downstream flood peaks. The Department confirms that **Kouga Dam is performing exactly as designed** and remains structurally safe. Even in the unlikely event of overtopping, the integrity of the dam would not be compromised.

At present, **the radial gates are not being operated** as a precautionary measure due to the presence of **Alkali–Aggregate Reaction (AAR)** in the concrete (i.e swelling of the concrete). Operating the gates under these conditions may create challenges in safely closing them, potentially resulting in permanent loss of storage capacity. The uncontrolled spillway is adequate to safely pass current and anticipated flows, making gate operation unnecessary, which is about 15% of the overall discharge capacity.

Public Notice

Residents and communities **downstream of Kouga Dam** are advised to remain cautious, as river levels may rise above normal flood lines during spilling. The Department continues to **closely monitor inflows, reservoir levels, and the dam's structural behaviour**.

The Department reassures the public that **Kouga Dam remains safe, stable, and fully operational**, and that all necessary measures are in place to protect downstream communities.

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Update on the Algoa Water Supply System

The other dams in the Algoa Water Supply System have also made a huge upsurge in the last 48 hours to almost full recovery with notable increase on Churchill Dam at 115%, Impofu Dam at 92%, Loerie dam at 119% while Groendal Dam sits at 72% as at midday today. The System had experienced a significant decline in surface water storage level to 35.6% recorded as at 4 May 2026.

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