



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### **Department of Water and Sanitation engages emerging farmers on water use licenses**

29 August 2022

The Director Proto CMA in the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Gauteng, Dr Konanani Khorommmbi said that there is still confusion in the agriculture sector about the need for water-use licences, specially the emerging farmers.

He made this statement during a Water Licensing Session with emerging farmers stakeholder engagement held at Robala Lodge in Phuthadijthaba on Thursday, 25 August 2022.

The purpose of the session was to educate potential applicants at Maluti A Phofong Local Municipality about water use and different permit types, explain the 90-day WULA and appeal period, including the different phases and requirements for current and potential water users, and to communicate the responsibilities of potential applicants in the application process.

Dr Khorommmbi emphasised that obtaining legal authorisation as a water user allows a farmer to strengthen the risk profile of his or her business, as it may become difficult to sell or redevelop the property if the entity is not fully compliant with the National Water Act (NWA).

The NWA mandates the Department of Water and Sanitation to protect, manage and control South Africa's water resources.

"We had previously committed to speed up the provision of water use licensing. The department has been able to speed up the provision of water use regulatory regime to give effect to the 90-day turnaround time with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2021," he said.

Accelerating the E-WULAAS process is at the heart of the Department's strategy to promote growth.

He pleaded with the stakeholders to be patient with the department as the revised timeframes for finalising the water use licence applications aims to ensure that DWS is an active and responsible participant within the economic and social sector.

Mr Thulani Maphalala, a farmer from Intabazwe in Free State, said that as upcoming farmers were suffering from paying huge debts for water that they were not even consuming on their farms.

"When you issue the water licence, it already has the quantity of water consumption, but practically, you would find that you don't use that water, but you are liable for it,



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even if you do not use it. We find ourselves paying these amounts. It's like paying for one commodity twice, and it becomes practically impossible to settle", Maphalala said.

Mr Arant Molekoa, another farmer from Masechaba Farming, said it was time the department implemented water allocations to farmers.

"We are farmers, we live with farm dwellers and we also have farm schools. If we have drought, we are the ones who suffer. We would like to open swimming schools and swimming areas for public use in our areas," Malekoa said.

**KHULEKANI NGCOBO**

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