



INTERNET ARTICLE

Deputy Minister Sello Seithloho concludes Clear Rivers Campaign in Mpumalanga, reaffirms ongoing commitment to river clean-ups

30 July 2025

Deputy Minister Sello Seithloho officially concluded the 2025 Clear Rivers Campaign with a hands-on clean-up at the tributary of the Klipspruit in Lynnville, Emalahleni Local Municipality, on Saturday, 26 July 2025.

The Deputy Minister was joined by Mpumalanga Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) MEC Speedy Mashilo, the Executive Mayor of Emalahleni Local Municipality, Cllr Vusi Nhlapho and enthusiastic community members, all united by a shared goal to protect and restore local water resources. Their participation underscored strong intergovernmental and community support for the campaign's objectives.

Although the campaign formally ends in July, Deputy Minister Seithloho reaffirmed that protecting South Africa's rivers and tributaries is a year-round responsibility. He called for river clean-ups to become a regular practice, embedded in community culture and supported by local government structures.

The Clear Rivers Campaign is a flagship initiative by the Department of Water and Sanitation aimed at mobilising communities, government and civil society to clean up watercourses and raise awareness about the importance of protecting South Africa's scarce water resources. The theme for the 2025 campaign was "South Africa is a water-scarce country – clean up and protect our water resources."

Recognising the link between environmental health and public wellbeing, the Deputy Minister urged for greater public education, especially in schools, so that future generations understand the importance of water conservation. He stressed that individual behavioural change, supported by civic awareness, is key to reversing pollution and preventing further damage to the country's limited water resources.

Support from provincial and municipal leadership further amplified the call for sustainable action. The MEC for CoGHSTA encouraged the strengthening of municipal by-laws to address illegal dumping, while the Emalahleni Municipality pledged ongoing backing for community clean-up groups and environmental initiatives.

"The state of our rivers reflects the state of our society. We cannot wait for government alone to intervene. I urge every community member to take ownership of their environment and every municipality to actively enforce by-laws that deter

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illegal dumping. Let us work together, not just in July, but throughout the year, to keep our water sources clean and our future secure,” said Deputy Minister Seitholo.

He further emphasized the importance of public education. “We must have programmes that go to schools to teach young children of the importance of not littering. We must tell them that the water that comes out of their taps is dependent on the quality of the water in our rivers, streams and dams, It is our responsibility to pick this baton and deliver this civic education to our schools and the municipalities across the country must be able to support such initiatives because that is the only way we are able to be water secure”.

The Department of Water and Sanitation remains committed to supporting these efforts, working alongside all spheres of government and civil society to foster a culture of environmental stewardship. As the 2025 Clear Rivers Campaign draws to a close, the message is clear: South Africa’s rivers must be protected every day, not just in July.

Themba Khoza

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