



INTERNET ARTICLE

Minister Majodina confident that the maintenance work at the Lesotho Highlands Water Project tunnel will be completed within six months schedule

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Water and Sanitation Minister, Pemmy Majodina has expressed her confidence that the maintenance work currently underway at the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) tunnel in Clarens, Free State, will be completed within the scheduled timeframe of six months. Minister Majodina and Deputy Minister Mahlobo were on an oversight visit to the Ash River Outfall in Clarens over the weekend to assess progress on the work currently underway at the tunnel.

Minister Majodina and Deputy Minister Mahlobo were accompanied by Deputy Minister of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation, Seiso Mohai, Free State Premier Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae, and Free State MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Saki Mokoena, as well as the Executive Mayor of Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality.

The maintenance and refurbishment of the 37 kilometres water tunnel is still ongoing since its closure on 31 October 2024, and the repair work on the South African side is undertaken by Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA), while Lesotho Highlands Development Agency (LHDA) carries out the tunnel maintenance work in Lesotho, focusing on the transfer tunnels at the Muela Hydro power station.

The repair work in the tunnel included mechanical, electrical, civil and general works as well as repairing of water ways steel linings to protect the corrosion of the tunnel. The main construction work currently underway on the South African side is the painting of the inner side of the tunnel. There is however a slight delay on the maintenance work undertaken by LHDA, but their work programme indicates that they will complete their work on 28 March 2025.

Minister Majodina has lauded the progress on the South African side and indicated that Lesotho is also equally committed to finish the maintenance work of the tunnel within a stipulated timeframe, despite the challenges they are facing.

“I am satisfied that the maintenance work has advanced very well on the South African side, and I know that our counterparts in Lesotho are doing everything they can to ensure that we meet the deadline set for 31 March. We know that the contractors here appointed by TCTA to carry out the maintenance work are within the schedule. They have done an exceptional job even in difficult situations of rain and mist, which interfered with their work. However, they have





pulled through and I would like to extend my gratitude to the work that they have done up to date,” said Minister Majodina.

Minister Majodina also inspected the Clarens Water Treatment Works which has been upgraded from 1 to 4 megalitres of water per day to supply water to the community of Clarens and the surrounding. The outcome of the upgrade is to ensure smooth provision of water in the area. The upgrade is currently at 70% and is expected to be completed by June 2025.

The supply of raw water from Townlands storage dam in Dihlabeng Municipality, which abstracts water from the Little Caledon River (a tributary to Caledon River) and is filled with water from the LHWP tunnel. However, the dam levels have deteriorated due to the tunnel closure and exacerbated by a high-water demand over the festive season.

However, the Department of Water and Sanitation, through its Water Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG), has availed funds for the refurbishment of boreholes to the local municipalities of Dihlabeng and Mafube and Nketoana to ensure consistent supply of water to the high lying areas of Kgubetswana (Clarens), Mamafubedu (Petrus Steyn), Petsana (Reitz), and Namahadi (Frankfort). The boreholes ensured that there is sustainable water supply to the communities.

Sanku Tsunke