

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 840

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840. Mr L W Greyling (ID) to ask the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry:
(Interdepartmental transfer on 06/06)

Whether her department took any action in the past year with regard to the rivers and streams flowing through the Cape Peninsula; if not, why not; if so, (a) what action, (b) in respect of which (i) rivers and (ii) streams and (c) with what result?

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REPLY:

- (a) Yes, the DWAF has taken action with regard to rivers and streams flowing through the Cape Peninsula. This action was focused on raising awareness and collaborative efforts with the Provincial Department of Local Government and Housing (PDLGH) and the City of Cape Town (CCT) to find solutions within the constraints that exist. However, in future the focus will be more strongly on regulation and enforcement, in line with zero tolerance of pollution.
- (b) (i), (ii) and (c) The actions taken are stated below and linked to specific rivers and streams where appropriate and also indicate what results were achieved.
- DWAF has engaged with the City of Cape Town (CCT) over the past number of years regarding the need for upgrading and expansion of the Waste-Water Treatment Works (WWTW) within the Cape Peninsula. This has led to the CCT embarking on a programme to upgrade and extend the Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTWs) to improve the quality of the final treated waste-water and also to accommodate the additional sewage inflow from new developments. This will improve the water quality of most rivers throughout the Cape Peninsula. Looking at the average compliance with effluent water quality for 18 of the CCT WWTWs since the beginning of 2006, excluding marine outfalls, gives us a compliance rate of 88% (*According to DWAF's monitoring*).
 - DWAF's Water Services has also been engaging with the CCT and making money available through the Masibambane programme to assist with the eradication of bucket sanitation systems in formal areas and to provide basic services to all people within the Cape Peninsula. The eradication of bucket systems was achieved before the end of last year, 2007, within the target set by our National Government. The eradication of bucket toilets results in a reduction of serious health and environmental risks. In the Western Cape 4 600 bucket toilets were eradicated at the cost of R57 million. This has resulted in improved living conditions for the recipients as well as some improvement in the river water quality.

- DWAF, together with the Scientific Services branch of the City of Cape Town has been monitoring the Rivers in the Cape Peninsula on an ongoing basis as part of the River Health Programme. This entails monitoring of the ecosystem health as well as water quality. Results of the monitoring are reported in a colourful and accessible format, prepared through the CSIR, for the Diep, Hout Bay, Lourens and Palmiet River Systems and published in 2003. A further Report for the Berg River System was published in 2005 and for the Greater Cape Town's Rivers in 2004. The latter report covers the Sand, Zeekoe, Silvermine, Else, Krom, Schusters and Bokramspruit in the Southern Peninsula area. The Central area around Cape Town centre included the Hout Bay, Liesbeeck, Black, Kromboom, Vygekraal, Elsieskraal and Salt River systems.
- These reports will be updated in due course as part of the Berg Water Management Area Report. These reports are extended to providing a Status Report on the State of Health of the River, indicating areas needing attention and amelioration. The reports reflect on what action have been taken and are very useful in raising awareness of the need to clean up the river systems and improve catchment management.
- DWAF together with CCT and other stakeholders including civil society organisations, schools and the broader public have participated in river clean-up campaigns in the Liesbeeck River. There are excellent examples of organisations such as the Friends of the Liesbeeck River actively encouraging the protection and enjoyment of "the water environment" and the aesthetic service it provides.