



water & forestry

Department:
Water Affairs and Forestry
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: P Venter
Telephone: 012-253-1093
Reference: 6/2/2/6

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 63 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Ms A T Lovemore (DA), is attached for your consideration, please.

Act *Mulhams*
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 23/06/09

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/ AMENDED

B P Sonjica
MS B P SONJICA, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 26.06.2009

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 63

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 8 JUNE 2009
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 1)

63. Ms A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) Whether she is committed to the success of the Harties Metsi a me Remediation Project; if not, why not; if so, how is this expressed in her department's policy;
- (2) Whether any steps have been taken to bring members of the original project team on board to salvage the project; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether remedial action is being taken to improve the operations at the seven waste water treatment plants that feed into the Hartebeespoort Dam; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (1) Yes, I am committed to the success of this high priority programme; it falls well into my Department's policy to address water quality impacts.

The Harties *Metsi-a-Me* Biological Remediation Programme for the Hartbeespoort Dam was conceived between the North West Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment, (NWDACE) and my Department (DWA) and resulted in the North West Environmental Series 5 of a plan called "Hartebeespoort Dam Remediation Plan.

I report with great pleasure that the programme is well established and has aligned itself with Department's goals and more importantly development initiatives of the province.

The key objective of this programme is to address water quality challenges of the Hartebeespoort Dam by implementing Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) principles. The biological remediation strategy includes the improvement of diversity by removing undesired fish species and creating sustainable wetland and shoreline habitats. In parallel, the programme is improving the quality of effluent that is discharged into the Hartbeespoort Dam.

The principles and successes established in the programme will be affected across the entire Crocodile West Marico catchment. These successes will become a blueprint for the effective management of similar eutrophic impoundments in South Africa and possibly in the Southern African Developing Countries (SADC).

- (2) No, the project is implemented by Rand Water and operates under a mandate to fast track the reaching of priority deliverables.

I am satisfied that the programme is on track and has already achieved, above expectation, a positive impact on the Hartbeespoort Dam water body and consequently on the local community. Concerns and challenges with achieving the desired targets for the removal of unwanted fish species are receiving the highest priority. I am confident that these challenges will be addressed before the start of the next peak catch season (September 2009 – March 2010).

- (3) The seven Waste Water Treatment Plants (WWTPs) upstream from the Hartbeespoort Dam form part of my Department's national initiative to upgrade waste water treatment infrastructure. My Department will continue to provide support to the Municipalities to ensure legal discharge limits are maintained. Four of the seven Waste Water Treatment Plants feeding into Hartbeespoort Dam encountered problems for the past few years and did not meet the discharge limits especially Percy Steward and Sunderland Ridge.

With regard to Percy Stuart, remediation measures have been undertaken and the plant is currently operating well within its requirements. Plans for upgrading and increasing the capacity of the plant are underway. Plans are in place to upgrade Sunderland Ridge,

Further work is being undertaken to ensure that the non compliant plant at the Randfontein plant functions efficiently.

The Department is strengthening its regulatory and oversight role, by adopting a risk-based approach. Assessment studies have been finalised in the Hartbeespoort area (and across the entire country) that places each plant on a risk profile. Support and intervention plans are aimed to start at the high risk infrastructure and work its way down to the lower priorities.