



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: S Maphangula
Telephone: 082 805 9424
Reference: 6/2/2/6

MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2714

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 3 DECEMBER 2021
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 31)

2714. Mr M S F de Freitas (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

- (1) With reference to the various water cuts that took place in Johannesburg throughout 2021, what interventions has his department made in this regard, including (a) mechanisms, (b) processes and (c) procedures that have been implemented to avoid future water cuts?
- (2) what (a) investigations have been undertaken by his department or under the authority of his department into the issue of water cuts, (b) are the relevant details of the reports that were produced for each specified investigation, (c) are the names of the persons who undertook the investigations and (d) were the start dates and end dates of each investigation;
- (3) what (a) findings, outcomes and recommendations were made for each investigation, (b) mechanisms, processes and procedures are in place to ensure that the respective recommendations are planned, actioned and monitored and (c) are the timelines, time frames and deadlines for each recommendation in each investigation?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

- (1) Upon receipt of complaints from residents of the City of Johannesburg and media reports, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) referred water cuts complaints to the City of Johannesburg and Rand Water for corrective action. Rand Water made some changes

to improve water supply into the Palmiet system from other pumping systems and we are currently monitoring the impact on their reservoirs due to the changes”

(2) Investigations were conducted by Rand Water and the and it was established that water purification plant was forced to shut down on 29 April 2021 due to fire under the ESKOM line. As a result, water levels in the Brixton, Hurst Hill and Crosby storage complex dropped to low levels, and the system took time to recover. Under normal circumstances, Rand Water supplies these reservoirs with a minimum flow of 2 500 kl/hour from their Commando Road meter, which is then supplemented from Stafford at a rate of just over 3 500 kl/hour. Johannesburg Water manages to maintain the three (3) reservoir complexes at a combined average capacity of 50%. However, since the incident of the 29 April 2021, a number of issues impacted on the flow specifically from Commando Road, as follows:

- Stage 2 load shedding schedule implemented by ESKOM/City Power from 16 May 2021 to 18 May 2021 had adverse effect on the system, the storage was compromised, and recovery was very slow.
- On the 18th of May 2021, Rand Water undertook a pre-isolation shutdown at Eikenhof Pumping Station to prepare for the replacement of the G34/Q2 isolation valve. During this pre-isolation shutdown, a power failure was experienced at the Vereeniging Water Treatment Plant which affected supply to the Hurst Hill system.
- Power failure on 23 May 2021, further worsened the situation, especially for the Brixton Reservoir and Tower as both ran dry due to power failure and the inability of Johannesburg Water to pump water from Crosby Reservoir.
- This was further negatively affected by power failures from 29 May and 30 May 2021 at the Eikenhof Rand Water pumping station.
- Rand Water's Eikenhof Pumping Station was shut down for two hours on 05 June 2021 to enable City Power to fix an electrical fault on the power line, a setback that negatively impacted recovery. The water supply system recovered slowly during the day due to high water demand.

The initial water outage was reported by residents of Linmeyer in 07 July 2021. The matter related to the Rand Water Palmiet Pump station failure. The failure of the pump station reduced pumping capacity to a number of reservoirs which form part of the Palmiet pumping system. One of these reservoirs was the Rand Water Meyershill Reservoir situated in South Hills Johannesburg. Johannesburg Water has a pump station which is pumping water from the Rand Water Meyershill reservoir into South Hills water tower and supplies the areas of South Hills, Risana, Linmeyer and Tulisa Park and surrounding areas with water.

Due to the Palmiet pump station failure the Meyers Hill reservoir levels dropped to a level of 6%. When the levels of the reservoir dropped below 25%, Johannesburg Water could no longer pump water into the tower without damaging the pumps thus resulting into water supply interruption.

The second water outage reported on 28 August 2021, related to the Rand Water Meyershill Reservoir being almost empty following a power failure at the Zuikerbosh purification works the previous week. This impacted the Palmiet pumping system and the majority of the reservoirs on that system were negatively affected. The system has since recovered.

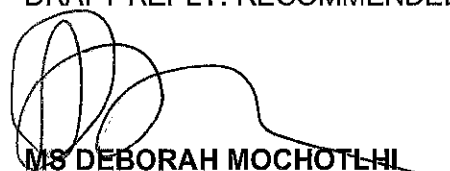
- (3) It was established that water supply interruptions in the City of Johannesburg resulted from a power failure or load shedding. It was also established two of Rand Water purification plants namely, Zuikerbosh and Vereeniging; as well as two major pumps stations (Palmiet and Eikenhof) supplying large parts of the City had also been affected by power failure.

Following the investigations, Rand Water implemented a 54-hour shutdown to do maintenance on their raw water pipes at the Vereeniging purification works from the 15 to 17 November 2021. The line was commissioned fully on 17 November 2021, with the works back at full capacity on 18 November 2021. Once the works were in full production; Rand Water increased its pumping capacity at Eikenhof pump station on 19 November 2021.


During this period, Johannesburg Water only received 75% of water supply which resulted in some of the reservoirs running at low levels. The Brixton/Crosby reservoirs took a strain in the process, with Hurst Hill running dry. The City of Johannesburg did not provide interim measures to supply water to affected areas during the outages. However, both Crosby/Brixton and Hurst Hill reservoirs recovered, and normal supply was restored to affected areas by 19 November 2021.

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DRAFT REPLY: RECOMMENDED/ NOT RECOMMENDED/ AMENDED


MS DEBORAH MOCHOTLHI
ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 15/12/2021

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED/ AMENDED


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION
DATE: 28/01/2022