



INTERNET ARTICLE

OUR WATER, OUR HERITAGE

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The protection of cultural and natural heritage is fast becoming an essential part of people's lives around the world; the same must be true for us as a country. Different cultures, tribes and populace feel it is of great importance to protect and nurture their heritage and heritage sites for the sake of not just themselves as the current generation but for the their children and generations to come.

The month of September stands out in the South African calendar as it is Heritage Month. As such celebrations across South Africa are just a reminder of how our diversified nation values its multiple kinds of heritage. The protection and conservation of water and its natural sources need to be viewed in this light.

Water is part of our heritage. It is after all the centre of our existence, hence the famous expression "Water is Life". The dread that society has of a possibly culture-less and heritage-less generation in the future should drive society into instilling cultural and heritage values in their children. The very same dread should also be a driving force behind practicing all measures necessary for water conservation and protection.

South Africa is a water scarce country and one of the thirty driest countries in the world. The country stands a chance of suffering a huge setback in the near future as far as water availability is concerned if the citizens do not take it upon themselves to teach one another, but most importantly the younger generation, the significance of using water sparingly.

Water management should not and cannot be a one sided responsibility solely on the shoulders of government. All stakeholders need to be active participants, a collective venture which would include all communities and government working hand in hand, ensuring that such water woes never reach our shores.

As a people we need awareness that simple every day wrongs like flushing pills, powder medication or other drugs down the toilet are some of the things that people do without thinking; worse still is the illogical pouring of oil, grease or cleaning detergents down the sink.



water & sanitation

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These actions contribute highly to water contamination and pollution. They are acts that can easily be avoided if citizens discipline themselves and teach their children the importance of or respect for water.

The government through the Department of Water and Sanitation has made great strides in ensuring natural water resources protection and water demand management. The department spends millions of rand each year in building water treatment plants, building, expanding and refurbishing dams and water reservoirs in a bid to capture, save and utilise this precious resource optimally.

The inevitable ageing of water infrastructure poses a huge threat to distribution of water amongst South African citizens. The Department of Water and Sanitation is duly set on aiding local municipalities to eradicate such backlogs that exist and ensure water supply to the areas that were previously disadvantaged.

At the moment, an amount of about R165 million is allocated for water related education projects aimed at enlightening communities on numerous ways to conserve water. The national War on Leaks and Adopt-a-River campaigns, to name but a few, are some of the projects the government has initiated to curb water losses and wastages, whilst equally educating people on ways to utilize water efficiently.

The nation is thus encouraged to stand united and fight against unnecessary water losses and abuse of natural water resources. This will ensure we continue to have enough water for future generations.

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