



**Keiskamma and Fish to Tsitsikamma Water Resource Classes, Reserve and RQOs Determination Hybrid Public Meeting  
Venue: Mthatha 10 February 2026**

**Chairperson: Ms. Ndileka Mohapi (DWS)**

**Attendance List:** Annexure I

**Abbreviations:**

- DWS - Department of Water and Sanitation
- DFFE - Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment
- FRAI - Fish Response Assessment Index
- GW - Groundwater
- RQOs - Resource Quality Objectives
- LED - Local Economic Development
- BID - Background Information Document

	<b>DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSES TO ISSUES DISCUSSED</b>
<b>Welcome and introduction</b>	<p>The Chair, Ms. Ndileka Mohapi (DWS), welcomed all attendees and opened the Public meeting for the Determination of Water Resource Classes, the Reserve and Resource Quality Objectives in the Keiskamma and Fish to Tsitsikamma Catchments</p> <p>Ms Mohapi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requested approval for recording the meeting</li> <li>• Requested participants to introduce themselves when asking questions</li> <li>• Asked participants to sign in on the chat with name, organisation and email address for record of those who joined virtually</li> <li>• Noted that agenda and background information document had been shared ahead of the meeting</li> </ul>	
<b>Attendance and apologies</b>	Apologies were noted for the following:	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lucernia Mdluli</li> <li>- Andrew Muir</li> <li>- Heidi Jane Hawkins</li> <li>- Nanilethu Mvumvu</li> <li>- Fanus Fourie</li> <li>- Lebo Matlala</li> </ul>	
<b>Approval and additions to the agenda</b>	<p>The move for the adoption of the agenda was proposed by Mr Sinawo Mqunyana and this was seconded by Ms Nosinodi Ntola.</p>	
<b>Purpose of the meeting and stakeholder involvement</b>	<p>Ms. Mohapi highlighted the purpose of the meeting and highlighted the importance of the contributions of stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform and brief stakeholders on the progress, methodology and key outcomes of the Department of Water and Sanitation’s study to determine the Water Resource Classes, the Reserve and Resource Quality Objectives (RQOs) for the Keiskamma and Fish to Tsitsikamma catchments;</li> <li>• Present the draft Water Resource Classes and associated RQOs for water resources within the study area. An example will be provided for the Buffalo system;</li> <li>• Explain the technical basis and rationale underpinning the proposed classification, Reserve determinations and RQOs;</li> <li>• Highlight the implications of the proposed measures for the protection, use and long-term management of surface water and groundwater resources;</li> <li>• Provide a formal platform for stakeholder engagement, allowing interested and affected parties to seek clarification, raise questions and submit informed comments; and</li> <li>• Invite stakeholder input on the draft surface water and groundwater Reserve gazette templates and the Water Resource Classes and RQO gazette template, prior to their finalisation and publication in the Government Gazette as legally binding documents.</li> </ul>	

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<p><b>Presentation by the Department of Water and Sanitation</b></p>	<p>Mr. Lawrence Mulangaphuma (DWS) presented the background of the study.</p> <p>[Power point presentation is available online at <a href="https://www.dws.gov.za/RDM/WRCS/default.aspx">https://www.dws.gov.za/RDM/WRCS/default.aspx</a> and provided with the meeting minutes].</p> <p>In his presentation, Mr. Mulangaphuma highlighted the legal mandate, definitions, study process, study area, stakeholder engagement process and communication methods, progress and contact details for the study.</p>	
	<p><b>Comments and Questions:</b></p>	<p><b>Responses:</b></p>
<p><b>Points of clarification before the technical presentations</b></p>	<p>OR Tambo District Municipality, LED Department, taking water from Umzimvubu, are there any developments for farming purposes or aquaponics developing in OR Tambo Municipality when water is transported.</p>	<p>Ms Mohapi responded that DWS's role is to advise on what water is available and then stakeholders advised on how the water is used that is available. DWS would see how the water can be allocated to cater for needs of people.</p>
<p><b>Presentations by GroundTruth Project Team</b></p>	<p>Ms. Kylie Farrell presented on Study Area and Approach, Status Quo Summary, Final Integrated Units of Analysis and priority Resource Units.</p> <p>Ms Mohapi provided an interim summary and recap for workshop participants for clarity, and invited questions for clarity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism raised that not all the nature reserves were indicated in the presentation (e.g. Reserves at some of the estuaries such as Hluleka and Silaka) and the Mthatha dam?</li> <li>• OR Tambo Municipality LED – the Pondoland area was mentioned but requested clarity on what area this refers to?</li> </ul> <p>Technical presentations (rivers, wetlands, estuaries and groundwater) were then made by the project team on issues relating to Reserve Determination for Water Resources, Water</p>	<p>Ms Mohapi reassured participants that the presentation is still only providing an overview – not the detail - specific areas will be highlight when Mr Farrell addresses the integrated units of analysis e.g. Mthatha Dam.</p> <p>Ms Farrell also explained that not all the detail would be able to be presented in the presentation at the workshop due to time constraints, but that the BID and presentation would be available to stakeholder on the website for more information.</p>

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	<p>Resource Classes, Proposed Resource Quality Objectives, and example of what you will see in the Draft Gazette for Reserve, Classes and RQOs.</p> <p>[Power point presentation is available online at <a href="https://www.dws.gov.za/RDM/WRCS/default.aspx">https://www.dws.gov.za/RDM/WRCS/default.aspx</a> and provided with the meeting minutes].</p>	
<b>Comments and Questions:</b>		<b>Responses:</b>
<p><u>Rivers:</u></p>	<p>Vusi Mthombeni (AGES omega) - These are excellent assessment results. However, I am concerned with the response components, in this specific case Fish Response Assessment Index (FRAI). Its reliable use in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape is questionable. Other indices are fine, except the FRAI, which can compromise and undermine this excellent work. Please read the peer reviewed literature pasted below that condemns its use in our region <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Helen-Dallas/publication/233759367_Ecological_status_assessmen...">https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Helen-Dallas/publication/233759367_Ecological_status_assessmen...</a></p> <p>Dr Kuriah: There are colours used to illustrate parts of rivers – for example the Mthatha River below the dam – is yellow. Is the</p>	<p>Ms Farrell: FRAI is a published model by DWS and part of the ToR for this study. But recognise why it might not be suitable because of the Orange River fish (yellow fish) that is transferred from Orange into the Great Fish system. These fish species, although indigenous to the Orange River, is not naturally occurring in the Fish system and is seen as alien invasives to this catchment. In the eco-categorisation report these limitations are explained and interpreted. Also took this up with a previous colleague of DWS (Dr Neels Kleynhans), who put together this publication and the model just to get some further insight from him as well and in terms of interpretations from a fish perspective.</p> <p>Ms Mohapi: There is also a need to consider the issues around climate change in terms of its contribution to change in the various habitats and its influence as well to the various species and the roots of migration. Recognise the need to understand these issues better and for some deeper studies for example into tolerance to certain conditions and the changes in the various behaviours and their influence on various species, either fish, micro-organisms etc.</p> <p>Ms Farrell: Colours were just used as easy way of illustrating conditions using colour palate from DWS, thus</p>

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	<p>whole river assessed or only sections. And were you sharing the info you found with relevant authorities for them to look into the findings?</p>	<p>an easy visual way to see the good quality rivers versus rivers that are moderately impacted and where there is a need for some sort of management interventions like those green stars.</p> <p>For Mthatha, only looked at a section just below the dam - identified the river to be in a C category, meaning moderately modified, mostly driven by water quality. Waste Water Treatment Works is the driver behind the water quality. Sediment moving through system is also driving water quality. Interventions can include water treatment and land management therefore aiming for improvement. Recommending a monitoring site just down and upstream of treatment works to monitor changes/improvements.</p> <p>All reports are shared for review with the key stakeholders and when undertaking the two river surveys, DWS regional officials and DFFE and a few other officials were onsite. Stakeholders were provided opportunity to participate in the field assessments.</p>
<p><u>Estuaries</u></p>	<p>Mr Sinawo Mqunyana (DEDEAT - Amathole East London) - Some of the interventions that are proposed are tied to estuary management plans. Who is responsible for developing these plans and when these interventions are developed, are they developed in consultation with the relevant authority so that all the interventions can be tied in?</p>	<p>Ms van Niekerk: Confirmed that meetings were held with relevant stakeholders. It's the province's responsibility to develop and roll them out through the conservation agencies. In the case of the Buffalo, it's national government and because of the ports and it is a fishing hub. The plans are done in collaboration with the municipalities and where possible delegated down to local municipalities. Prioritisation also done in the National Biodiversity Assessment and all the issues were assessed again to see the conditions and management interventions at all 150 odd systems.</p> <p>In the case of the Eastern Cape, Mbashe estuarine management plan and interventions should really be developed through the park authority because it's in a protected area. In the other cases development will be through the province, but the province has many</p>

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		<p>challenges so won't be developing individual plans for all estuarine systems. Only recommended to develop individual plans for some of the larger systems.</p> <p>For smaller estuarine systems overarching management plans or clusters of management plans where similar systems are grouped together to deal with this because there are not a lot of management actions and they're easy to work across the region. There has not been consultation on this yet but there need to be talks around both monitoring and the management plans to get agreement on how to be more strategic and more integrated. There are some communications with relevant people and trying to find ways to accommodate the recommendations.</p> <p>Estuary recommendations were also incorporated in an Appendix in the Draft Eastern Cape Coastal Management Plan to link the DWS study to seamlessly integrated coastal management processes in the province. It also makes it easy for managers to pick up key interventions.</p>
<u>Groundwater</u>	<p>Ms Mohapi requested Robert Schapers (Groundwater specialist on project team) to explain what class one means.</p>	<p>Mr Schapers: We compare that to the table on the right, which is the assigned water quality class based on the South African water quality guidelines. All those values are below the class one limit. Therefore, the overall water quality class for that quaternary catchment will be class I. If one determinant – e.g. electrical conductivity - the ambient there is 120 and for Class 1 it can go up to 150. So, if that was 151, it would move it into Class 2 and then the entire catchment becomes a Class 2.</p>
<u>Final comments</u>	<p>Ms Mohapi recapped on what was covered in presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of scenarios and consequences</li> <li>• Classes and RQOs for each resource (rivers, estuaries, wetlands groundwater)</li> <li>• Gazetting process and template (measurable indicators and observable indicators)</li> </ul> <p>And then opened to final questions or comments:</p>	

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	<p>Ms Nosinodi Ntola (DEADET): It appears we are facing a problem of shortage of water and identified impacts - does DWS have any way of doing awareness and education among communities generally?</p>	<p>Ms Mohapi: The question talks to issues around inter-government organisation and the need to understand responsibilities within the three spheres of government. DWS does do awareness e.g. adverts on TV about dam safety and flooding etc. But there are other awareness raising responsibilities that need to be fulfilled by other spheres of government. DWS manages large infrastructure and therefore awareness relates to that. Local government delivers water to citizens via pipelines where most of the water shortage problems lie and various other challenges e.g. issues around sewerage discharges that don't meet license conditions, and situation of water losses of potable water. Therefore in terms of awareness and education, each sphere of government needs to talk to its area of responsibility. Awareness needs to address specific issues from area to area. Province also has a responsibility to support Municipalities.</p>
<p><b>Way forward</b></p>	<p>Mr. Yakeen Atwaru (DWS) reported that the study has been characterised by a robust stakeholder process, which is now successfully concluded. This meeting marks the end of the technical phase of the study and will now move into the phase of gazetting. This will start with the classes and the RQOs, which will be gazetted for a public comment period of 60 days. Mr Atwaru requested that stakeholders take the opportunity to comment on The Gazette.</p> <p>After the 60-day comment period comments will be captured and presented to the Minister. Once the Minister is confident that the Department has addressed all the concerns, she will give the go ahead to gazette the final classes and RQOs. This will then be followed by a similar process for gazetting of the Reserve.</p> <p>Mr Atwaru reminded stakeholders that the link to the presentations and documents was uploaded in the meeting chat and is also available in the agenda document. He encouraged stakeholders to review the technical information to inform their comments.</p>	

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	He closed the presentation by quoting a proverb, which focuses on inter-generational equity: "We didn't inherit our water from our ancestors, we are borrowing it from our children".	
<b>Closure</b>	The Chair, Ms. Mohapi closed the second Keiskamma and Fish to Tsitsikamma Water Resource Classes, Reserve and RQOs Determination Public Meeting by thanking all attendees for their contributions and confirmed that there was a final meeting on Thursday in Gqeberha.	

## Annexure I: AGENDA



**water & sanitation**

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Determination of Water Resource Classes, Reserve and Resource Quality Objectives (RQOs) for the water resources in the Keiskamma and Fish to Tsitsikamma catchment (WP11354)

### PUBLIC MEETING: MTHATHA

<b>Date</b>	10 February 2026	
<b>Venue</b>	Hotel Savoy and Conference Centre, Mthatha	
<b>Platform</b>	In person	
<b>Time</b>	08h45 for 09h00 to 13h00	
<b>Chairperson</b>	Ms Ndileka Mohapi	
<b>PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC MEETING</b>		
<p>The purpose of the public meeting is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform and brief stakeholders on the progress, methodology and key outcomes of the Department of Water and Sanitation's study to determine the proposed Water Resource Classes, the Reserve and Resource Quality Objectives (RQOs) for the Keiskamma and Fish to Tsitsikamma catchments;</li> <li>Present the draft Water Resource Classes and associated RQOs for water resources within the study area. An example will be provided for the Buffalo systems;</li> <li>Explain the technical basis and rationale underpinning the proposed classifications, Reserve determinations and RQOs;</li> <li>Highlight the implications of the proposed measures for the protection, use and long-term management of surface water and groundwater resources;</li> <li>Provide a formal platform for stakeholder engagement, allowing interested and affected parties to seek clarification, raise questions and submit informed comments; and</li> <li>Invite stakeholder input on the draft surface water and groundwater Reserve gazette template and the Water Resource Classes and RQO gazette template, prior to their finalisation and publication in the Government Gazette as legally binding documents.</li> </ul>		
<b>AGENDA</b>		
08h45	<i>Registration</i>	
09h00	<b>1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION</b>	Chair
09h20	<b>2. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES</b>	
09h30	<b>3. APPROVAL AND ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA</b>	
09h35	<b>4. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT</b>	
09h45	<b>5. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b>	Mr Lawrence Mulangaphuma
10h00	<b>6. PRESENTATION BY GROUNDTRUTH</b>	GroundTruth
	<i>Study Area and Approach</i>	
	<i>Status Quo Summary</i>	
	<i>Final Integrated Units of Analysis and priority Resource Units</i>	

10h45	<b>Tea break</b>	
11h00	<b>7. PRESENTATION BY GROUNDTRUTH: <i>continues</i></b>	GroundTruth
	<i>Reserve Determination for Water Resources (IUA_R02 – Buffalo Systems)</i>	
	<i>Water Resource Classes (IUA_R02 – Buffalo Systems)</i>	
	<i>Proposed Resource Quality Objectives (IUA_R02 – Buffalo Systems)</i>	
	<i>Example of what you will see in the Draft Gazette for Reserve, Classes and RQOs</i>	
12h30	<b>8. DISCUSSIONS</b>	All
12h45	<b>9. WAY FORWARD</b>	Ms Lebogang Matlala
12h55	<b>10. CLOSURE</b>	Chair
13h00	<b>Lunch</b>	

Background Information Document (BID) and reports are on the DWS website:  
<https://www.dws.gov.za/RDM/WRCS/kft.aspx>

**Annexure II: ATTENDANCE LIST**

**PLEASE NOTE** – personal information has been redacted from the attendance list below in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act No 4 of 2013, (POPIA), which came into effect on 1 July 2021.

<b>Organisations in Attendance</b>	
<b>In Person</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
DWS	AGES omega
EDEAT Eastern Cape	DWS
Dept of Agriculture – Land & Soil Mgmt	DWS:RQIS
O R Tambo Municipality – LED	DFFE: Local Government Support
Port St Johns Local Municipality	DEDEAT
University of KwaZulu-Natal/ Water Sisulu University	Interested Party - Bushmans, Kariega, Kowie and Fish Rivers
GroundTruth	Walter Sisulu University
	GroundTruth