



**MINISTRY  
WATER AND SANITATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

---

**SPEECH BY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION,  
HONOURABLE PEMMY MAJODINA ON THE OCCASION OF  
BUDGET VOTE**

National Assembly, Parliament of South Africa (9 July 2025)

Honourable Speaker;

Cabinet Colleagues;

Deputy Ministers of Water and Sanitation, David Mahlobo and  
Sello Seithloho;

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee of Water and Sanitation;

Honourable Members of Parliament;

Director-General and Senior Managers of the Department of  
Water and Sanitation;

Leadership of our Entities: Chairpersons, Members of the  
Boards, CEOs, and Senior Executives;

Leadership of various stakeholders in the sector and civil society;

Fellow South Africans

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In his State of the Nation Address delivered on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February this year, President Cyril Ramaphosa said: “...***an urgent priority is to ensure a secure and reliable supply of water across the country ... Many people in our cities, towns and villages are experiencing more and more frequent water shortages as a result of failing water infrastructure...It is impossible to live without water and it is impossible for the economy to grow without water.***”

The President declared water as our immediate crisis and made a firm and unequivocal commitment for government to take a series of decisive actions to resolve the water crisis.

Perhaps at this point, we must restate the point that as a national department, we are responsible for bulk water supply and water resources. Municipalities are responsible for reticulation and ensuring that water reaches the homes of residents. It is important for Honourable Members to understand the value chain of water provision so that they can properly guide members of the community whenever issues of water are raised in their constituencies.

## 2. WATER AND SANITATION INDABA

Madame Speaker, you will recall that we held a Water and Sanitation Indaba on **27 and 28 March 2025**, which was attended by delegates from national government and national

entities, provincial government, the municipalities which are water services authorities, SALGA, the private sector, and water and sanitation experts.

The Indaba unanimously agreed on a set of practical resolutions related to delivery or implementation models. The following are the five pillars identified:

- Increasing investment through financing options
- Ensuring the financial viability of the sector;
- Enhancing and strengthening technical and operational capacity and efficiency;
- Building partnerships through building water sensitive and resilient communities;
- Fighting criminality and corruption in the water and sanitation sector.

The full declaration and resolutions can be accessed on the department's website.

### **3. IMPROVING MUNICIPAL WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES**

Madame Speaker, it has become clear that the bulk of our challenges lie with water services at municipal level, some of which emanate from lack of technical skills and resources required to meet people's needs. In this regard, we continue to work with local and provincial governments to address these challenges.

As Minister, I convene regular meetings with Premiers, MECs for COGTA, Executive Mayors and Water Boards to collectively respond to the challenge of debt owed to water boards by municipalities. The problem of water debt, which is about R24 billion, is detrimental to water security in the country as well as reliability of services.

I am happy to inform the House that our engagements with provincial and local government are bearing fruit. Today, Mangaung, Johannesburg and Tshwane no longer owe water boards. Sadly, many municipalities are still failing to honour their debts. As a result of these debts, 18 municipalities will have their quarterly equitable share allocation withheld by National Treasury this month. The allocation will be paid to the municipalities in tranches depending on them paying their current invoices from the water boards.

Based on the Blue and Green Drop reports, 105 out of the 144 water services authorities are experiencing a water service delivery crisis. These municipalities are unable to discharge their constitutional responsibilities in a number of areas, including basic service delivery and the management of critical infrastructure such as water treatment plants and waste water treatment plants.

### **3.1 Causal factors**

Many of the challenges of water supply are man-made and must be confronted. These are organised criminality, water tankering

and extortion mafia, vandalism of critical public infrastructure, poor reticulation, corruption, poor financial management, poor revenue management, escalating debt in the water sector, poor billing system, illegal connection, over consumption, high non-revenue water, infrastructure decay, lack of maintenance, non-payment for services, governance instability and poor enforcement of by-laws. Most of these challenges fall within the purview of municipalities.

### **3.2 Remedies**

In this regard, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on water, chaired by the Deputy President, recently instructed DWS and COGTA to develop a joint programme to provide intensive support to these municipalities. This joint programme has been developed and is under implementation.

As the Ministry, we expect all water services authorities to reduce demand, through reducing leaks, awareness campaigns and stakeholder engagements aimed at behaviour change, water restrictions and tariffs, and technical interventions such as flow restrictors and pressure management. All water users must pay for services, insource water tankers, and endeavour to enter into partnerships with the private sector, to draw on private sector finances and skills. In addition, municipalities should prioritise the filling of key technical positions such as process controllers, artisans, scientists and engineers.

We are supporting municipalities to derive optimal benefits from partnerships with the private sector. In this regard, the department has established the Water Partnerships Office (WPO), which has developed national programmes designed to standardise and streamline private sector participation in municipal water and sanitation services. The programmes include municipal non-revenue water, water re-use, wastewater treatment, non-sewered sanitation and seawater desalination.

We have come to the conclusion that, in order to arrest and reverse the decline in municipal water and sanitation services, reforms are required at municipal level. In this regard, we shortly be tabling the Water Services Amendment Bill to Parliament. The Bill will clarify the roles and responsibilities of water services authorities and water services providers and require municipalities to appoint water services providers with a minimum level of capability. These reforms form part of the second phase of Operation Vulindlela which was announced by the President recently.

We will also be tabling **the National Water Amendment Bill** which will enable the achievement of greater equity in water use allocation.

Madame Speaker, last year, I stood before this House to deliver my maiden Budget Speech. We identified three key priorities over the current term of this government:

Firstly, we said we would ensure that there is timeous investment in additional water resource infrastructure to capture the remaining 25% of our exploitable surface water resources. In this regard, we are making good progress with the full establishment of the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency, which will enable increased financing of national water resource infrastructure. The Act was passed by Parliament last year, and we are on track to have the Agency fully established during the course of next year, pending the passing of a technical amendment bill to enable the Agency to be listed in Schedule 2 of the PFMA. The full establishment of the NWRIA is also one of the reforms in the second phase of Operation Vulindlela.

However, we have not been waiting for the establishment of the Agency to increase investment in national water resource infrastructure. In the meantime, the TCTA has been raising finance from the private sector and development finance institutions for a range of projects, including the second phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which is being fully financed by borrowing. Other projects, such as the uMkhomazi project in KwaZulu-Natal, are being partly financed by government and partly financed by borrowing. The Infrastructure Fund which was established by the President has been assisting the Department to put in place such blended finance projects.

Secondly, we identified a need to diversify the water mix and increasingly make use of other sources of water, including increased sustainable use of groundwater, seawater desalination, and water reuse. In this regard, the department is providing funding for groundwater projects through its grants in many different municipalities including in the Dr Ruth Sekgomotsi Mompoti District Municipality in the North West, Outdtshoorn Local Municipality in the Western Cape, Dikgatlong Local Municipality Khathu, Tsantsabane and Calvinia in the Northern Cape and Thaba Chweu in the Free State.

In addition, our Water Partnerships Office is assisting various water services authorities to put in place partnerships with the private sector for waste water reuse projects, including for the Umhloti, Umkomaas, Northern and Kwa-Mashu waste water treatment works in eThekweni; the Olifantsfontein and Waterval waste water treatment works in Ekurhuleni; the Rooiwal waste water treatment works in Tshwane; the Sebokeng waste water treatment works in Emfuleni; the Pelsvale waste water treatment works in Rand West City; the waste water treatment works in Outeniqua; and the waste water treatment works in George.

More municipalities are starting to develop seawater desalination projects, including Overstrand, Saldanha Bay and the City of Cape Town in the Western Cape, the City of eThekweni in KZN, and Ndlambe municipality in the Eastern Cape.



Thirdly, we made an undertaking to continue to monitor the implementation of more effective water conservation and demand management programmes to bring our water consumption per capita levels in line with, or below, the international average, and to ensure that industries use water as sparingly as possible.

In this regard, we established the Platform for a Water Secure Gauteng (PWSG) and the Platform for a Water Secure eThekweni (PWSeT), which brings together government, civil society, business and sector experts, to coordinate efforts to reduce average consumption of water in Gauteng and eThekweni.

Our No Drop Programme assists municipalities to identify what they need to do to reduce leaks in their distribution systems. We are currently undertaking detailed No Drop assessments of all water supply systems in all water services authorities. We will be issuing a progress report in December this year and a full No Drop report in December 2026.

We also made a commitment to continue unblocking stalled projects and to accelerate their implementation. In this regard, I am pleased to give a progress report to the House:

## **4. NATIONAL WATER RESOURCE PROJECTS**

### **4.1 Completed projects**

#### **Hazelmere Dam**

On the 25th of October 2024, the Ministry commissioned the R865 million project to raise the wall of the Hazelmere Dam, which is now the world's highest Piano Key Weir dam, after the dam wall was raised by 7m. The additional water will contribute to addressing the increased demand for potable water in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, iLembe District Municipality and KwaDukuza Local Municipality.

The department has also completed the construction of seventeen houses which were handed over as compensation and resettlement to fifteen families that were affected by the raising of the dam. This formed part of the expropriation of thirty four properties that were affected. The houses were completed at a cost of R40m in July 2025, and handed over to the families.

## **4.2 Projects under construction**

### **Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase 2**

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase 2 (LHWP-2) mainly consists of the construction of Polihali Dam and a gravity tunnel connecting it to Katse Dam in Lesotho. It is jointly being implemented by Lesotho and South Africa and will augment the Integrated Vaal River System which supplies water to Gauteng as well as parts of Mpumalanga, Free State, North West and the Northern Cape.

Construction is currently approximately 50% complete. The project is planned to be completed by 2029 at a cost of

approximately R53 billion. The project is fully funded off-budget through the TCTA. The loans will be services using revenue from the sale of water to municipalities, irrigators and industrial users.

### **Raising of the Clanwilliam Dam Project**

The project entails the raising of the existing Clanwilliam Dam wall by 13 metres, the relocation of a section of the N7 directly affected by the raised dam wall and the raising of the secondary provincial roads affected by the Full Supply Level (FSL) in the dam basin. The project result in additional water for irrigation, domestic and industrial use for Clanwilliam and surrounding areas in the Western Cape. The project will also address dam safety and dam stability issues.

Construction is currently underway through the Department's internal Construction Unit. The project is approximately 40% complete, which includes significant progress on the emergency works to address the dam safety and stability issues. The project, which is fully funded from the fiscus, is estimated to be completed by October 2028 at an estimated cost of R7 billion

### **Raising of the Tzaneen Dam Project**

This project entails the raising of the existing Tzaneen Dam wall by 3 metres to address water shortages in Tzaneen and surrounding areas in Limpopo. It is also being implemented by the Department's internal Construction Unit. The scope of the

work includes the demolition of the top of the existing spillway, the construction of a labyrinth spillway and other minor works.

The construction of the raising of the dam wall is approximately 46% complete. Once completed, the storage capacity will be increased from 157.3 million cubic metres to 193 million cubic metres. The project is estimated to be completed by March 2026 at an estimated cost of R760 million. It is fully funded by the fiscus.

### **Mzimvubu Water Project**

The project entails the construction of Ntabelanga Dam and associated works on a tributary of the uMzimvubu River to provide additional water for irrigation and domestic use in the eastern region of the Eastern Cape. The storage capacity of the completed Ntabelanga Dam will be 490 million cubic metres.

The project is being implemented by the Department's internal Construction Unit, in collaboration with the TCTA. The construction of access roads is currently 89% complete and overall progress on the project is approximately 8%. The department has completed the design of the dam; obtained a Licence to Construct from the Dam Safety Office; has started site clearance and is currently gearing itself for commencement of construction of the construction of the dam wall. The estimated

completion date is 2030 at a cost of R8.1 billion. The project is fully funded from the fiscus.

### **Mokolo and Crocodile River (West) Water Augmentation Project – Phase 2A**

The purpose of the second phase of the Mokolo and Crocodile River (West) Water Augmentation Project is to transfer water from the Crocodile River (West) to the Lephalale area to meet the water requirements of domestic, commercial and industrial users in the area, primarily Eskom's Medupi and Matimba power stations.

Funding for the project has already been secured. It is a blended finance project, with part of the funding from the fiscus, but most of the required funding has been raised by the TCTA in the financial markets.

The construction contractor has been appointed and construction is planned to commence in August 2025. This project is due for commissioning in 2029 at an estimated cost of R12.4 billion.

## **4.3 Projects under design**

### **Coerney Dam Project**

The project entails the construction of a new 4.7 million cubic meter earth fill embankment dam and associated works to provide additional balancing storage, in addition to the existing Scheepersvlakte Balancing Dam, for water transfers to the

Nooitgedacht Water Treatment Works which serves Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.

This project will improve water security to Nelson Mandela Bay by stabilizing the transfers from the Orange River to the Sundays River via existing canals. The project is in the design stage, with an estimated construction completion date of 2029 at a cost of approximately R612 million. Funding for the project has been secured from the fiscus.

### **Zalu Dam Project**

The project involves the construction of a large storage dam on the Xura River and water distribution infrastructure. It will supply water for domestic use and irrigation to the town of Lusikisiki and surrounding villages in the Eastern Cape.

The design work is currently underway by the Department's Internal Engineering Services. Once completed, the storage capacity of Zalu Dam will be 17.3 million cubic metres. The project is estimated to be completed by 2029 at a cost of approximately R957 million. Funding has been secured from the fiscus.

### **Foxwood Dam Project**

The project entails the construction of a large storage dam on the Koonap River at the Foxwood site outside the town of Adelaide in the Eastern Cape, an abstraction system, a pump

station and a pipeline, to pump water to the existing water treatment works, and associated irrigation infrastructure to augment the water supply to Adelaide and to provide reliable bulk water supply for new irrigation development for resource poor farmers.

The project is currently in the design stage. Once completed, the storage capacity of Foxwood Dam will be 55 million cubic metres. The project is estimated to cost R2.2 billion and estimated to be completed by 2029. Funding has not yet been secured for this project, and the Department will be applying to the Budget Facility for Infrastructure in National Treasury for funding for this project.

### **Nwamitwa Dam Project**

This R3.8 billion project involves the construction of a large storage dam with a gross storage capacity of approximately 187 million cubic metres on the Great Letaba River downstream of the confluence of the Nwanedzi River. The specific objectives of the project include meeting the projected growing primary water requirements, preventing further degradation of the riverine ecosystem and ensuring sustainable availability of water supplies to the irrigation sector where there are resource poor farmers.

**The designs are complete.** The Department has requested the TCTA to investigate the feasibility of partially or fully funding this project off-budget, based on off-take agreements with irrigators.

If partial funding from the fiscus is required to make the project viable, the Department will again apply to the Budget Facility for Infrastructure in National Treasury for such funding.

### **uMkhomazi Water Project**

The uMkhomazi Water Project aims to increase the amount of available water in the uMngeni System by 55% to meet the water requirements of eThekweni, Msunduzi and uMgungundlovu municipalities, whilst also augmenting water supply to Ugu, Harry Gwala and iLembe. The project consists of a large new dam with a storage capacity of 251 million cubic meters and 40 km of tunnels and pipelines.

The relevant municipalities have entered into offtake agreements with the uMngeni-uThukela Water Board and the TCTA, which provide commitments to purchase the water from the project, which in turn has provided the security required to enable the TCTA to start the process of raising funding on the financial markets for the project.

Design work for the dam and conveyance infrastructure is currently underway. This project is due for commissioning in 2032 at an estimated cost of R27 billion.

### **Cwabeni Off-Channel Storage Dam Project**

The Cwabeni Off-Channel Storage Dam will improve water supply to the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast region and augment



water supply to the Mhlabatshane supply area of the Umzumbi Local Municipality.

The project consists of a new dam with a storage capacity of 15.5 million cubic metres and associated works. Design work is underway. The project is due for commissioning in 2030 at an estimated cost of R1.8 billion. The project will be financed through borrowing by the uMngeni-uThukela Water Board. The loans will be paid off using revenue from the sale of water from the Dam.

### **Stephen Dlamini Dam Project**

The Stephen Dlamini Dam will supply additional water to domestic and commercial users in the Harry Gwala District Municipality. The project consists of a new dam with a storage capacity of 9.8 million cubic metres and associated works. Design work is underway and the project is due for commissioning in 2030 at an estimated cost of R795 million. uMngeni-uThukela Water Board will also raise the funds required for this project on the market.

### **Berg River - Voëlvlei Augmentation Scheme**

The Berg River-Voëlvlei Augmentation Scheme aims to increase the amount of available water in the Western Cape Water Supply System. This project, which involves the construction of abstraction works and conveyance infrastructure, is planned for completion in 2028 at an estimated cost of R1.2 billion. Similarly

to the uMkhomazi project, offtake agreements have been signed with irrigators and the City of Cape Town, and the TCTA will raise the required funding for the project on the financial markets, on the basis of the signed off-take agreements. The TCTA is in the process of designing the infrastructure.

## **5. GRANT-FUNDED WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES PROJECTS**

I am pleased to announce that in this financial year, 110 bulk infrastructure projects across all provinces will be funded through the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant. The projects are at various stages of implementation. The Water Services Infrastructure Grant will be used to fund 391 projects, all currently at various stages of implementation, with 163 of them planned to be completed in the current financial year.

I will now highlight some examples of these projects.

### **5.1 KEY GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS**

#### **Eastern Cape**

We will continue with the R792 million Ngqamakhwe Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme, Phase 5A, which will supply water to 78,000 people in 120 rural villages. The project is currently under construction, at over 40% progress, to be fully completed by June 2027.

Another major project is the R423 million Ndlambe project, which includes a borehole field, reverse osmosis plant, and two water

transfer systems. The project is under construction, is 81% complete, and is scheduled for completion by the end of 2026. This project will benefit over twelve thousand households in Port Alfred and Alexandria.

We handed the completed Klipplaat Water Treatment Works to Dr Beyers Naude Local Municipality in November 2024. The plant is part of the Ikwezi Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme which was funded by the department through a grant of R67 million. It will supply water to over nine thousand people in Klipplaat and Jansenville.

We also handed over a commissioning certificate of the upgraded Mount Ayliff Water Treatment Works (WTW) to Alfred Nzo District Municipality in December 2024, funded to through an allocation of R370 million and intended to serve about 38 000 people.

We further handed over the completed Kirkwood Bulk Water Supply to Sundays River Valley Local Municipality in April 2025, which was funded to a value of R35 million, providing potable water to approximately seventeen thousand people in Kirkwood town and the townships of Moses Mabhida and Bergsig.

In addition, we handed over phase 2 of the James Kleynhans water treatment works extension in September 2024, which doubled the supply of potable water to the town of Makana.

## **Free State**

As Honourable Members are aware, the maintenance work at the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) tunnel in Clarens, Free State, has been successfully completed. The closure was planned from October 2024 to March 2025. The maintenance work performed by TCTA on Delivery Tunnel North was completed on 19 March 2025. The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority completed all the work on the Lesotho side and started to fill the tunnel with water on 8 May 2025. Flow of water returned to South Africa on 23 May 2025.

The department, through its Water Services Infrastructure Grant, availed R22.4 million for the refurbishment of boreholes to the local municipalities of Dihlabeng and Nketoana to ensure consistent supply of water to the high lying areas affected by the closure. In Kgubetswana (Clarens), 12 boreholes were drilled and another two refurbished. In Mamafubedu (Petrus Steyn), 15 boreholes were refurbished, and in Petsana (Reitz), 10 boreholes were drilled and equipped. The Clarens Water Treatment Works was also upgraded from 1 to 4 megalitres of water per day to supply water to the community of Clarens and its surroundings. The boreholes and upgrade of the Clarens WTW ensured that there was a sustainable water supply to the communities during the Lesotho Tunnel closure.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2025, we handed over Phase 1 of the 33 km Welbedacht Pipeline Project which was completed by Vaal Central Water Board at a cost of R585 million. The Welbedacht

pipeline will ensure a more sustainable water supply for Mangaung.

The second phase of the project will consist of a 71.3km pipeline at a cost of R1.6 billion. It is anticipated that the second phase will commence in August 2026 and be completed in August 2031. Funding is still to be raised for the second phase. The Department and Vaal Central Water will work with the Infrastructure Fund to apply to the Budget Facility for Infrastructure for partial funding for the project, and the remainder of the funding will be raised in the markets by Vaal Central Water. The loans will be serviced from revenue from the sale of water, which will be underwritten by an offtake agreement between Vaal Central Water and Mangaung Municipality.

The department, through the Vaal Central Water Board, will continue to support Maluti-a-Phofung and Matjhabeng Local Municipalities with a range of projects.

R2.4 billion was allocated to Maluti-A Phofung. The projects include refurbishments and upgrades of important water and wastewater treatment works and related infrastructure to address the dire state of water and sanitation infrastructure in the municipality. The Department has successfully completed the refurbishment of the Fika-Patso Water Treatment Works at R46 million, to improve water quality in the area of Qwaqwa.

R3.5 billion was allocated to the Matjhabeng Local Municipality. The refurbishment and upgrading of 14 sewer pump stations and 30km outfall sewer lines has been completed. Furthermore, two Wastewater Treatment Works, namely Kutloanong WWTW and Thabong WWTW are planned to be completed in this current financial year.

Furthermore, in Kestell, Extension 5, the Department has refurbished a non-functional water reticulation system to ensure reliable water supply to the area. To ensure sustainable raw water supply to Harrismith during the winter period, when the Wilge River experiences low flow levels, the Department upgraded the Nuwejaar Spruit Pumpstation and associated works at an estimated cost of R32 million.

## **Limpopo**

The department will continue to accelerate implementation of a range of major water services projects. For example, on the R4.8 billion Giyani Water Project, the bulk pipeline from Nandoni Dam in Vhembe to Nsami Dam in Giyani, as well as the upgrading of the Giyani Water Treatment Works, have been completed. The current focus is now on working with the Mopani District Municipality for the bulk reticulation and yard connections to households in fifty-five villages, while at the same time adding a further 10ml/day of treatment capacity to the municipality's Water Treatment Plant.

To date, 23 villages have been connected and are receiving water, with the remaining village in phase one to be completed by the end of July 2025. Reticulation to the thirty-one villages as part of phase two will commence this financial year and be completed over the next two years. The reason for staggering the project over two phases over several years is due to the limited amount of funding available through the Water Services Infrastructure Grant, which has to be spread across the whole country.

In addition, Lepelle Northern Water is implementing the R18 billion Olifants Ebenezer project, which will provide additional water to Polokwane, Seshego and surrounding areas. For Phase 1A, which is estimated at about R1.4 billion, the refurbishment of pipelines and pump stations is nearing completion. This phase is fully funded and will continue this financial year, with the focus on the upgrade of two water treatment works.

Subsequent phases of the project will involve the construction of bulk water supply pipelines from Ebenezer Dam and Olifantspoort Weir to Polokwane. The planning has been finalised and the process of raising the funding with the assistance of the Infrastructure Fund will start imminently. This project will benefit approximately 370 000 households within Capricorn District Municipality, Polokwane City, Mopani District Municipality and Sekhukhune District Municipality.

## **KwaZulu-Natal**

In Zululand District Municipality we are accelerating the R4.9 billion Mandlakazi Bulk Water Supply Scheme to ultimately provide water to over 33 000 households in the Zululand District Municipality as well as uMkhanyakude District Municipality, including the Jozini, Big 5 Hlabisa, uMhlabuyalingana and Mtubatuba Local Municipalities. The project consists of the installation of almost 60 km primary and secondary bulk water pipelines, upgrading of pump stations, construction of various reservoirs, augmentation of the Mandlakazi Water Treatment Plant, as well as reticulation to households.

To date most of the bulk pipelines have been completed, with the exception of a pipeline bridge and the N2 road crossing. The storage tank to supply some communities in Hlabisa has also been recently completed and is undergoing commissioning. However, for the system to provide the required flow, the construction of the permanent abstraction works and upstream bulk pipeline is most critical. These projects are currently being prioritized and planned for completion by November 2026.

Through the uMngeni-uThukela Water Board, we are also supporting the uMkhanyakude District Municipality, which was placed under Section 139, with the implementation of water infrastructure projects that will provide water to villages in Jozini LM, uMhlabuyalingana LM, Mtubatuba LM and Big 5 Hlabisa LM. This is being done through a Section 63 Intervention, estimated at R1.3 billion, which will conclude in September 2027. Currently we are implementing 22 projects through the water board, with



approximately R400 million spent to date. The uMngeni-uThukela Water Board is also closely monitoring the developments of the Mandlakazi Project, which will ultimately augment the supply in uMkhanyakude in Zululand District Municipality in order to align plans.

During the last financial year, the department successfully assisted Ugu District Municipality with R150 million for the municipality to implement various projects to replace and refurbish pipelines, refurbish bulk meters and chamber valves, as well as mechanical and electrical equipment to reduce water losses. This was done as part of the Water Conservation and Water Demand Management Programme.

## Mpumalanga

During the current financial year, the department will complete implementation of the R2 billion Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme, which entails the construction of bulk pipeline from Loskop Dam, various pump stations, reservoirs and water treatment plants to supply 54 193 households in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality in Mpumalanga and Moutse village in Elias Motsoaledi Municipality in Limpopo. The project is currently at 78% overall physical progress.

The Department will also complete implementation of the various water and sanitation Ministerial Intervention projects at Lekwa Local Municipality in Mpumalanga, with a total project cost of R350 million. These projects include the refurbishment of

Standerton Water Treatment Works, construction of a 5 megalitre clear water underground reservoir, remedial works to water and sewer infrastructure in Extension 8, refurbishment of four sewer pump stations, unblocking of sewers and water conservation and demand management. To date, 12 out of the 15 projects have been completed. The remainder of these projects will be completed by March 2026.

The Department has allocated funding for the upgrading of the Ermelo Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) to 18 ML/day, in order to curb ongoing pollution into the Vaal River at Msukaligwa Local Municipality in Mpumalanga. This is the point where the Vaal River originates, and the appointment of a contractor for the commencement of the works has been finalized.

In addition, the Department is intervening in Emalahleni Local Municipality in Mpumalanga as per the call by His Excellency the Honourable President Cyril Ramaphosa during the April 2024 Presidential Imbizo, and the project is at the procurement stage for a contractor for the rehabilitation of bulk water infrastructure, with a total project cost of R252 million over this financial year and next financial year. The aim is to improve the infrastructure condition and subsequently improve water supply in Emalahleni.

## **Gauteng**

Rand Water continues to assist Emfuleni Local Municipality and Midvaal Local Municipality with a range of projects to address the sanitation crisis in the Vaal. This includes the unblocking of

sewage pipelines, replacing collapsed sewage pipelines, repairing and refurbishing pumpstations, assisting the Emfuleni Municipality to restore its operation and maintenance functions, as well as upgrading the capacity of the wastewater treatment works in the area. The total investment is estimated at R4.7 billion over the multi-year implementation.

For sustainable water and sanitation services in Emfuleni the Minister of Finance and I have approved a partnership between Rand Water and Emfuleni Local Municipality in the form of a Special Purpose Vehicle that will be the Water Services Provider in Emfuleni on a long-term contract, which the aim of improving revenue collection, management, operation and maintenance of water services in Emfuleni.

The Klipdrift Water Treatment Works is being upgraded to boost water supply to Hammanskraal, with Modules 1 and 2 completed by June 2025. Once Modules 3 and 4 are finished by September 2025, capacity will reach 50 megalitres per day, benefiting nearly 50,000 households across 15 wards. The Hammanskraal projects, including the City of Tshwane's Rooiwal WWTW refurbishment and upgrade are progressing, driven by strong collaboration between national, provincial, and local government partners.

## **North West**

Last month, we handed over the refurbished Boitekong Sewer Pump Station and Outfall Sewer in Boitekong in Rustenburg

Local Municipality, North West province. R133 million was allocated by the department towards this project as part of accelerating access to water and sanitation services in the province. The project will reduce frequent blockages in the system and improve the quality of sanitation services in Boitekong, Freedom Park, Meriting and Seraleng.

Operation Bulela Metsi will continue to be implemented this financial year. It involves a range of water and sanitation projects across the province. In the current financial year and over the MTEF, R4.6 billion has been set aside in DWS grant funding for the programme, with a further R11.8 billion required over the next 7 years.

Operation Bulela Metsi has resulted in the acceleration of implementation and completion of water and sanitation projects in the province, benefiting communities across all ten municipalities that are water services authorities.

## **Northern Cape**

We completed the Calvinia Bulk Water Supply in the Namakwa District and handed over the site in February 2025. This project augments the current supply to the community of Calvinia by means of groundwater from two new wellfields that were developed. We invested R281 million and the project has improved the water supply to about 9680 people or 2 500 households.

In October 2024, we also completed the refurbishment and upgrade of the existing Water Treatment Plant in Douglas, in the Siyancuma Municipality, to improve the water quality and supply, which was not meeting standards. The project cost R28.8 million and benefitted the whole population of Douglas (over 22 000 people).

The department is providing funding to Sol Plaatje Local Municipality for its R2.7 billion integrated water supply project. The scope of work includes water conservation and demand management, installation of zonal bulk meters, replacement of old asbestos cement pipelines, upgrading of water treatment works, upgrading of pumpstations, and construction of additional water storage facilities. The project began in 2023, is currently approximately 12% complete and is planned to be completed in March 2030. Work-packages are in various implementation stages, aiming to benefit 74,330 households in the Sol Plaatje municipality.

## **Western Cape**

The George Local Municipality has been allocated R1.1 billion to implement the George water supply security project. The scope of works includes the upgrade of two water treatment works and the construction of new reservoirs and pipelines.

Implementation started in March 2021, the project is approximately 80% complete, and is scheduled for completion in December 2025. The project will benefit the town of George, with

over 295,000 households. The aim is to improve the green drop status and ensure that there is a reliable water supply.

## **CONCLUSION**

In his State of the Nation Address, the President said: *“We will expand our support to municipalities that require assistance, drawing on the lessons of the Presidential eThekweni Working Group”*. Our department is co-chairing the water and sanitation workstreams of both the Presidential eThekweni Working Group and the newly established Presidential Johannesburg Working Group, together with the Ethekeweni Department of Water and Sanitation and Johannesburg Water, as well as local representatives of civil society and business. The workstreams are monitoring implementation of the Water and Sanitation Turnaround Plans, which were adopted by the Councils of the two metros. In eThekweni, some progress has started to be made in reducing non-revenue water.

Honourable Speaker, the challenges that confront us are immense and, at times, overwhelming. However, we have learned over the last thirty years never to surrender nor despair in the face of difficulties, for we know that no matter how monumental and intimidating, no challenge is insurmountable. We must draw courage and inspiration from the fact that, as a nation, we have conquered many obstacles together before, we have weathered many storms and overcame countless challenges.

We call on all sectors of society, the private sector, traditional leaders, civil society and communities to join hands with government in its ongoing efforts to expand access to water and sanitation services in the country.

Together, we must make a solemn pledge that we will never consider our freedom fully achieved until all South Africans are able to access adequate water and dignified sanitation services. This, we must do as part of living up to the ideals of our Constitution.

Water is Life. Sanitation is Dignity! Failure is not an option.

**Ndiyabulela! I thank you! Ke a leboga!**