

Bay's water crisis worsens

By [Auyile Mngxitama-Diko](#)

28 Feb 2017

Nelson Mandela Bay is on the brink of being declared a disaster area, with the city's overall dam levels sitting at a combined capacity of 49%, despite strict water restrictions being in place.



© grandeduc – [123RF.com](#)

The municipality's executive director of infrastructure and engineering, Walter Shaidi, raised the alarm, saying that the metro's water crisis was worsening by the day and would continue if there was no drastic intervention.

"Our dam levels are now at 49%. As soon as we go under 40%, we are going to be declared a disaster area," Shaidi said.

"We have to cut our usage. Our target for this municipality is to use 250-megalitres a day but we are using between 290 and 303ML. We are way over," Shaidi said.

The latest dam level figures published on the municipality's website show a total combined capacity of 49.71%.

The city's political head of infrastructure, engineering and energy, councillor Annette Lovemore, said earlier this month that should the overall average dam levels drop below 50%, the municipality would be forced to implement tougher water restrictions.

On Friday, councillors scrutinised the municipality's 2015-16 annual report at a municipal public accounts committee meeting, and complained that the targets set by the city to reduce water losses were unrealistic.

DA councillor Morne Steyn said while he commended the efforts by the city to reduce losses, they had to set higher targets.

"We sit with a crisis here. Setting a target of [reducing losses by] 1% and saying you overachieved is not right," Steyn said.

"I cannot say this target is realistic. We need to relook and put viable realistic targets on the water losses," he said.

DA councillor Charles Garai said the city was definitely not winning the war on water losses.

"I was informed that many RDP houses do not have meters and some are bypassing the meters," Garai said.

Shaidi said the city was losing about 21% of its water due to leaks and other water that is not billed.

ANC councillor Mbulelo Gidane said the issue of targets should be escalated to the city manager's office.

"We are in a crisis here with water losses in this city," Gidane said.

"This matter must be taken to the city manager to deal with in light of what Dr Shaidi is telling us about the dams."

Shaidi said the extra money that was allocated to the city through the adjustments budget would make a difference with fixing water leaks, and hopefully reduce losses in the city.

Source: Herald