

Day Zero in water stricken Mandela Bay

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8 Sep 2020

The water situation in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality has reached a crisis and prompted the city to finally declare it Day Zero.



Residents fetch water from a truck on Jongilanga Street, KwaNobuhle, on Sunday. There is more demand than water to go around. Photo: Thamsanqa Mbovane

The area gets its water from five dams – Kouga, Churchill, Impofu, Groendal and Loerie. The combined dam levels are below 19% of their capacity, according to the latest press release from the municipality.

Water provision to residents and businesses has been intermittent for about two years with some areas experiencing total water cuts for days at a time. The city says drought is to blame.

Water is being trucked to the areas with the worst outages, after taps ran dry for six days in KwaNobuhle.

Mayco member for infrastructure and engineering Mongameli Bobani said: “We are experiencing water outages especially in the western suburbs, northern areas and Uitenhage. We are on Day Zero because we are using more water than we actually have in our dams. Currently, our consumption of water is 290 million litres per day while we are supposed to use

268 million litres a day or less. The rain is not falling enough, making our dams drier each day.”



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7 Sep 2020



Bobani urged residents to use water sparingly.

He said: “There should be more residents having water supply this morning [Sunday] and it is expected that Westering, Linton Grange, Parts of Lorraine, Kabega Park and Hunters Retreat in Port Elizabeth will have water supply at low pressure.”

Bulk municipal water truck drivers were hard at work over the weekend as they were delivering water while hundreds of people have been battling to cook, bath or wash their dishes and clothes. Township salons, spaza shops, churches and taverns have struggled to keep functioning. A tavern operator in Motherwell said he is forced to close until he can buy a Jojo tank.

On Sunday Clemence Chimbwanda, who was driving a yellow water tanker in KwaNobuhle, told GroundUp he started delivering water at 7am, and he keeps going until 7pm. He said there were five trucks in KwaNobuhle, with capacity varying from 12,000 to 15,000 litres. The trucks were stationed at Nhanhanha, Bantom and Mabandla Streets, while another was stationed at Holomisa area.

He said Jongilanga Street had about 100 houses and residents emptied the 7,000 litres he brought them within an hour.

Chimbwanda only fills containers of five to 20 litres, as pouring in smaller containers spills and wastes water.

The informal settlement of Bobani Village had water at its standpipe taps, but Vazi and Kiva informal settlements were left stranded without water.

Sonela Sowazi, a Vavi resident, said, “We are in big trouble.”

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