

Water restrictions lifted on sub-systems within Algoa water supply system

The Department of Water and Sanitation has lifted the water restrictions on the Kouga/Loerie Sub-System and Groendal Sub-System due to improved storage levels in the dams.



Image source: Eranda Kumarapperuma – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

Announcing the lifting of water restrictions for some sub-systems within the Algoa Water Supply System in the Eastern Cape, the department said the recent rainfall has brought significant relief from the protracted period of drought experienced in the Algoa Bay region, with a significant recovery in dam levels to the extent that Kouga Dam recorded its first spilling since 2015.

“This catchment is of strategic importance to the western parts of Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, Kouga Local Municipality as well as the agricultural sector in the Gamtoos Valley,” the department said.

According to the department report, in week 19 (15 May 2023), the Algoa Water Supply System recorded an accumulative storage level of only 13.3%, with Kouga Dam at 14.57%, Churchill Dam at 24.4%, Groendal Dam at 17.03%, and Impofu Dam at 6.79%.

“The latest records of this system’s recovery show that the accumulative storage has reached 70%, with Kouga Dam at 101.42%, Churchill Dam at 100.93%, Groendal Dam at 101%, and Impofu Dam at 24.37%. It is anticipated that Impofu Dam’s levels will increase over the next few days since it will benefit from the spilling from Churchill Dam.

“The department’s Water Resource Management Planning processes are based on hydrological trends, hence there will be continuous monitoring of the accumulation of rainfall-generated run-off throughout the remainder of the hydrological year (period of monitoring) in this catchment,” the department said.

The department has also noted experts warning that there are indicators of a strong El Niño developing which could coincide with warmer temperatures and lower rainfall across South Africa (CSIR, 2023).

Since the full impact of the anticipated El Niño effect is not known, the department said it is reluctant to confidently declare that the protracted drought period has ended.



Vaal River System stable, water users urged to adhere to water restrictions

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“The analysis over a longer period will provide for a more accurate climate and hydrological trend. This analysis will enable a decision to be made in November regarding the annual restrictions to be imposed on the region.

“However, in the meantime, the hydrological recovery of the Algoa water supply system has allowed the department to favourably consider the upliftment of the restrictions for the area. This relaxation of water use will contribute to the economic recovery in the domestic, agricultural, and industrial sectors in the area,” the department said.

Reviewed restrictions are as follows:

- The water restriction on the Kouga/Loerie Sub-System and Groendal Sub-System has been lifted due to improved storage levels in these dams, up until the next decision date (November 2023).
- Restrictions in the Kromme Sub-System, comprising of Churchill and Impofu dams and upstream catchment remain in place until the next decision date (November 2023).

The department emphasised that water users are required to continue using water responsibly and not to exceed water use abstraction allocation volumes.

It also encouraged the general public to continue conserving water and report water leaks.

“The Algoa water supply system is still under threat of a growing demand that exceeds the yield, which implies that consumption levels are higher than the natural replenishing ability of the water resource system. The sensitive nature of this water supply system demands the cooperation of the collective community dependent on this water resource, to continue using water sparingly,” the department said.

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