



BUSHMAN'S RIVER MOUTH / BOESMANSRIVIERMOND

Ratepayers' Organisation / Belastingbetalersorganisasie
(BRRAG)

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Water - Our most precious resource

The availability of water, particularly in this part of our country, has become a serious major concern for us all.

Due to the ongoing drought, the large underground borehole supply at Diaz has become so depleted that it only provides brack water. The boreholes at Diaz used to yield 2 million litres of water per day. But now the yield has reduced to 800,000 litres per day: and so the aged Reverse Osmosis plant at Bushman's continues to provide a life-line of desalinated water to the communities of Bushman's, Kenton-on-Sea, Marselle, Klipfontein and Ekuphumleni. Out of season, water availability runs at about 1,6 m litres a day, with usage at about 1,5 m litres per day from these two sources.

The Albany Coast Water Board applied to Water Affairs for a grant of R 4m to refurbish the desalination plant, but the amount given was R 2.4m. This work is programmed to begin in mid January 2010 and should be completed by the end of March 2010. Once the works are completed, the desalination plant will produce 1.9m litres of water per day. This will be enough to comfortably meet normal demand, and the boreholes can be used to supplement supply in peak periods and in emergencies.

Pending the refurbishment, the workings of the reverse osmosis plant have been "tweaked" to improve output. Old boreholes behind Bushman's which ran dry about a year ago have also been reopened and are presently yielding water. Currently, together with water harvested from the boreholes at Diaz, the total yield is approximately 1,8 m litres per day.

During the holiday season, the increase in the demand for water is expected to rise to a peak of about 2,5 million litres per day. There is expected to be a shortfall of at least 700 000 litres a day in the peak season. The reservoirs, which hold 9 million litres, are presently being kept full. To prevent them running dry in the peak season, which will result in chaos, it may be necessary to cut off water for a maximum of 2 days a week.

The times fixed for cut off by Ndlambe Municipality are:

Daily from 20H00 to 05H00

Sundays 12H00 to Mondays 12H00

Wednesdays 12H00 to Thursdays 12H00

"We make the difference / Ons maak die verskil"

Committee: Lötter Wepener (Chairperson), Sheila Swanepoel (Vice Chairperson), Fanie Venter (Treasurer), Wendy Grove (Secretary), Stompie Bellingan, Corris Krogscheepers, Pieter Mouton, Andrew Murray, Ian Smith, Bill Northrop, Anton Vosloo

Please ensure that you have stored emergency water before these times.

Water restrictions are in force. This means: no washing of cars or boats or any use of a hose pipe. No watering of gardens. Failure to observe these restrictions could result in prosecution. Please use water carefully.

Because more water has to be pumped through the desalination plant to compensate for the drop in yield from the boreholes, and as this must be pumped at 60 bars pressure, electricity consumption by the Water Board has increased dramatically. In addition, with the steep increases in electricity tariffs in 2008 and 2009, the cost of producing water in this area has increased enormously. Increases in water charges for the past several years have been running well below inflation. Because of this, and the increased costs referred to above, you should prepare yourselves for a huge increase in water charges in the next financial year, commencing in July 2010.

There is currently a proposal under consideration that Albany Coast Water Board to be absorbed into the Amatola Water Board who will probably eventually be responsible for water provision in the entire Eastern Cape. Our local Water Board is in favour of this amalgamation for various reasons. Amatola have the capacity, the infrastructure and the competent qualified personnel, but not least of all is that Amatola have under their control various dams containing vast amounts of spare water.

How will this course of action benefit the residents of the Ndlambe Municipal area?

It is proposed to bring water from dams near Keiskammahoek by pipeline to Port Alfred and down the coast to Kenton, Bushman's and as far as Alexandria. The time-scale for this exciting new water availability is 2013. This water supply will be cheaper than desalinated water.

As water consumption inland continues to increase, the long term plan is that inland water be retained for inland use, and all coastal areas will be supplied by desalination plants from the infinite source offshore. It may even become necessary to meet increasing inland demand by piping desalinated water inland

Sheila Swanepoel on behalf of BRRAG

With sincere thanks to George Poole for his technical input.

4 December 2009.