

Media Briefing by Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba on the Status of Water Provision in Polokwane

Distinguished Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr David Mahlobo, esteemed MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, Mr Basikopo Makamu, our dedicated Executive Mayor of the City of Polokwane, His Worship Cllr John Mpe, Head of Department of COGHSTA, CEO of Lepelle Northern Water, City Manager of Polokwane and all our stakeholders gathered here today, Members of the media

Good morning, Thobela!

Thank you for your attendance today as we address one of the most pressing challenges our community faces - access to reliable and sufficient water in Polokwane.

Your presence underscores the unity and determination we share in addressing this crisis together.

Today, we confront a stark reality: Polokwane, despite being the capital city of Limpopo, faces severe water shortages. A city that connects our province logistically and culturally, Polokwane deserves better. We find ourselves drawing water from distant sources - the Ebenezer Dam in Mopani and Olifantspoort in Sekhukhune - because our local resources are inadequate to meet our growing needs.

Since 1994, the growth of the city has been nothing short of phenomenal. Yet, this expansion has placed an increasing burden on infrastructure, including vital services such as water provision, healthcare, education and sports facilities. For over a year, we have faced challenges in maintaining a consistent water supply. This situation calls for urgent action, cooperation, and transparency.

We would like to commend the hard work of our task team, comprising the Lepelle Northern Water, the Department of Water and Sanitation, COGHSTA and the Polokwane Municipality. These experts have dedicated themselves to identifying the root causes of our water scarcity and mapping out viable solutions.

Today, as we review the findings and developments since our last meeting on 03 March 2026, I want to highlight key points of progress. Our consolidated report has laid bare the facts:

- The entire municipality requires a staggering 174 million litres per day. Yet, our current sources can only yield 118.15 million litres, leaving us with a significant shortfall.
- In the urban area, where the demand is 99.7 million litres per day, we are failing to meet those needs, with available supplies falling short by nearly 13 million litres per day.

These figures are not merely numbers; they represent families, businesses and lives affected daily. We must address this urgently.

The challenges we face are multifaceted: insufficient water sources, power interruptions, illegal connections and aged infrastructure all contribute to our struggles.

But amid these challenges, we are taking decisive action. We have established a Technical War Room to develop both short-term and long-term strategies to stabilise our water supply.

Moving forward, we will:

- Continue our bi-weekly meetings to assess progress and ensure accountability.
- Finalize and implement a Standard Operating Procedure to enhance coordination and operational efficiency between Lepelle Northern Water and the municipality.
- Improve data collection and sharing to facilitate optimal management of our water resources.

However, we cannot address this crisis alone. I urge each resident of Polokwane to use water sparingly and responsibly. Simple actions - fixing leaks, using water-efficient fixtures and being mindful of our consumption - can collectively make a significant impact.

Moreover, we assure you that the methods we employ here in Polokwane will be shared with other municipalities facing similar water challenges. Our commitment is to ensure that all residents of Limpopo are granted access to clean and reliable water.

As your Premier, I want to reiterate that while today's challenges are daunting, our spirit of cooperation and commitment to action will lead us to a brighter future. Together, we can ensure that every resident of Polokwane enjoys the stability of a reliable water supply.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication as we work towards a sustainable solution for our water crisis. Together, we shall overcome.

Thank you.