



30 January 2023

MEDIA STATEMENT

WATER SUPPLY CHALLENGES AS A RESULT OF POWER FAILURES AND HIGH WATER CONSUMPTION DURING THE HEATWAVE

Rand Water's maximum water treatment capacity of our purification plants (Zuikerbosch and Vereeniging) is 5 000 Mega litres of water a day. From our water purification works, we pump purified water to our pumpstations (Eikenhof, Mapleton, Palmiet and Zwartkopjes) that further pump water to a total of 59 water storage reservoirs in our distribution network from which municipalities receive water to distribute to its residents.

The total reservoir storage level on 08 January 2023 was at 76%. This level started to significantly decline from 09 January 2023 due to high water abstraction by municipalities in our reservoirs. The situation was exacerbated by power supply failures that affected Zuikerbosch purification plant and Eikenhof pump station on 13 January 2023. The power outage incident lasted for a period of six hours and affected Zuikerbosch pumping station at its Engine Room 4 which supplies almost 40% of Rand Water's capacity. This affected pumping to our pumpstations that feed water into reservoirs. Power outage at Eikenhof booster station affected the system for a period of 3 hours making it impossible to feed water into the reservoirs. Rand Water's system is extremely sensitive to any power outage and may take a minimum of 4 hours to recover after an outage. The reservoir storage level had as a result dropped to 63% when the system recovered.

The drop in water storage level in the reservoir resulted in Rand Water requesting municipalities to reduce their consumption to retain as much water in the reservoirs and ensure the system does not drop to a point of crushing and almost impossible recovery. This, however, did not assist in that high-water abstraction continued dropping the reservoir storage levels further. The water storage in the reservoirs then stabilised around 30%. However, at this low level there were other reservoirs that were significantly impacted to be below 15%. When some of Rand Water reservoir levels are below 15%, the municipalities start experiencing inadequate to no supply to high lying areas in their networks. Rand Water continued engaging with its customers via the meetings and formal letters to request them to monitor water consumption in their respective areas and effect the necessary measures to manage high water consumptions during the heatwave.

On Sunday, 29 January 2023 at 04h30, Rand Water Eikenhof booster station experienced yet another power failure which affected water pumping from this station. This incident caused a further depletion of Rand Water's reservoirs levels leaving some reservoirs at 0% storage level.

Rand Water is completing its generator installation project aimed at reducing the power outages. However, generator capacity will not cover all Rand Water sites. Power outages remain one of the biggest threats to the stability of Rand Water's networks as it affects continuous water supply to municipalities.

Rand Water systems have started stabilising pumping at maximum capacity. Full recovery, however, will be dependent on less frequent power failures. In the meantime, Rand Water urges all consumers to use water wisely to assist in the system full recovery.

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