



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

Dear Rhodes University community

The level of available water in the dams supplying the Waainek water treatment plant (which supplies treated water to the western half of the City) has been widely reported. The University has been working with and alongside Makana Municipality for many months to mobilise resources and to plan for the time when the water availability in Settlers and Howieson's Poort Dams is exhausted. This includes representations at Ministerial level and the establishment of partnerships with the Presidential Infrastructure Co-ordinating Commission (PICC) and the relevant provincial government departments.

A municipal Water Crisis Disaster Management Plan will shortly be released which informs the University's water crisis plan. Once the municipal plan has been released, it will be circulated widely.

The essence of the municipal plan is as follows:

1. The remaining supply of water in Settlers and Howieson's Poort dams must be eked out for as long as possible. The current water demand MUST be significantly reduced to provide time for the preparation of the James Kleynhans water treatment plant.
2. Strict water restrictions have been imposed (50 litres per person per day) to achieve the demand reduction.
3. Once Settlers and Howieson's Poort Dams run dry, the entire city will be dependent upon water supplied by the James Kleynhans water treatment plant (which draws water from the Glen Melville Dam).
4. The current output capacity of the James Kleynhans water treatment plant is 10 megalitres per day, whilst the current city-wide demand is 22 megalitres per day. The need for the demand reduction is obvious.
5. This 10 megalitres per day will be delivered on a rotational basis to areas of the city on a two-day on/two-day off cycle. The details of this rotation will be contained in the municipal plan.

Based on the existing water outage protocols and plans developed during the 2013 water crisis, the University is in the process of implementing the following measures to comply with the need to significantly reduce water usage:

1. Smart water meters are being installed in all of the residences. The meters are programmable, and once the water volume allocation has been provided, the valve will shut off (residents will need to self-regulate to ensure that no more than 10l is used per shower and that there is no excessive or wasteful laundry usage). Upon completion of the installation in the residences, the various sports ablution areas will be addressed similarly.
2. All residence students will be provided with basins to be used for the collection of shower water. This grey water will be used for the flushing of toilets in the residences. The supply of municipal water to the residence toilets will be shut off.
3. Drinking water will be available in the Dining Halls – residence students will be provided with water bottles to replenish from the tanks to avoid the proliferation of plastic water bottles.
4. P-mats will be installed in all urinals on campus and automatic water flushing will be reduced.

5. Unnecessary crockery and cutlery (eg, side plates & saucers) will be withheld in the Dining Halls, and plates will be wiped with paper before washing to reduce water usage.
6. Cleaning services will make greater use of chemical sprays to reduce water usage for the cleaning of ablution areas
7. Borehole water will be made available to the rest of campus for the flushing of toilets, depending on the location of ablution areas. Where possible, the supply of municipal water to ablution areas will be shut off. An additional water tanker is being procured to transport “non-drinking” water.
8. Drinking water will be made available at various points across the non-residential areas of campus.
9. Repair of campus water leaks has been given top priority.
10. Use of borehole water for the watering of grounds and gardens has been judiciously reduced.
11. Fire emergency contingencies have been put in place, and have been communicated to our insurers.
12. Washing of windows and vehicles has been halted.
13. Updated awareness-raising material is being printed and will be distributed across campus.
14. Engagements with experts who were involved in the Cape Town water crisis (CTC water management specialists, University of Stellenbosch, and provincial water experts) continues.

Details for the implementation and operationalisation of these measures will be released shortly.

Borehole water

Last year, the university borehole water was tested by an accredited laboratory in Cape Town as we had hoped that this water could be purified using the peroxification methodology. Unfortunately the very high levels of iron and manganese contamination precluded this. At the same time however, we learned that the Municipality was also exploring the purification of ground water, and we agreed to pool our resources. Initial discussions have been held, and further input from the Municipality is awaited. We have offered to make University expertise and resources available.

I would like to appeal to all staff and students to do their part in conserving as much water as possible, whether on campus or at home.

What can you do?

If you are unsure of how you can help positively impact the water situation, here are a few points:

1. Ensure you are complying with your 50 litre daily limit – please see the Water Rationing poster at: <http://www.makana.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/infographic-copy.pdf>.
2. Print out a few copies of the Water Rationing poster and Water Alert posters (<http://www.makana.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/poster-english-copy.pdf>, <http://www.makana.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/poster-xhosa-copy.pdf>) and put them up around your offices, bathrooms, foyers, communal rooms etc. Please only print what is necessary.
3. Spread awareness about the water crisis to your colleagues, friends, students, and neighbours. If you need to refer them to the municipality’s official stand on the matter, you can direct them to: <http://www.makana.gov.za/water-crisis/>
4. Report water leaks immediately.
5. Innovative and cost-effective ideas and suggestions for further water savings are encouraged and can be sent to s.gangiah@ru.ac.za for re-direction.

The Communications Division will embark on a campaign that will ensure regular communications about the water situation including dam levels, water rationing, water-saving tips, shut down schedules, and Rhodes University water usage and savings over time.

As remarked by the Minister of Water & Sanitation during his recent visit, we are directly experiencing climate change here in Makana. Whilst we continue to hope for rain, the long term forecast is not great. However, we are in the fortunate position that we have the Glen Melville Dam supplied by the Fish River scheme. Great efforts are being made at various levels to complete the project to increase the treatment capacity of the James Kleynhans water treatment plant – until then a concerted City-wide effort and commitment to achieving the restriction targets is needed.

Dr Iain L'Ange

Executive Director: Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

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