

Outage hits local water supplies

Dams' capacity 'in good shape'

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DESPITE heavy rains, some Durban residents are experiencing water shortages after a lengthy power failure affected a primary reservoir.

The level of Reservoir 3, in Durban Heights, dropped severely after a seven-hour power outage on Saturday.

"This outage prevented the supply from Wiggins Waterworks from starting up, thus creating the additional demand on Durban Heights Reservoir 3. However, the municipality is working on the problem," said eThekweni Municipality's deputy head of water and sanitation, Ednick Msweli.

Msweli said areas that experienced water shortages were being assisted by water tankers provided by the municipality.

"Field staff have been dedicated to co-ordinate these efforts until the situation has stabilised," he said.

Meanwhile, Thys Badenhorst, director of water sector support at the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry's Durban Office, said other dams were in good shape and the latest analysis showed that Durban would make it through

next year's winter season without any water restrictions.

He said the report – which he had received last month – indicated very good rainfall distribution on the Umgeni system, but meteorologists have warned of below average rainfall between January and April next year.

"When we compare the safety volume of water that we could provide and the demand for water that is out there, the total demand is a long-term problem while the short-term problems could easily be overcome.

Language

"Water conservation language should be spoken by everyone because even if the rainfall is good, there is never time to relax," Badenhorst said.

He added that if the rainfall continued steadily, the three major dams – Midmar, Albert Falls and Inanda – would overflow by the end of the season.

"Between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, we should keep an eye on Midmar Dam because if it drops, it means that the other two dams are low. The northern and southern parts of KwaZulu-Natal have not received a very good rain-

fall over the past three months compared with these area."

Shami Harichunder, spokesman for Umgeni Water, said the dams in the Mgeni System were at present at "excellent water capacity" levels.

Albert Falls Dam and Midmar Dams were nearing capacity at 97 percent and 96 percent respectively, while Inanda, Mearns and Nagle were overflowing. He explained that as Mearns flowed into the Midmar Dam, the latter was expected to reach capacity within the next two days.

President of the KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union, Robin Barnsley, said they were happy with the moisture, but crop farmers had been experiencing problems because of a lack of heat.

"Crop farmers have been complaining that they are not receiving sufficient sunshine. They require a balance between rain and sunshine. Their spraying programmes and fertiliser applications cannot be maintained.

"The way the rain is falling is creating challenges. The southern and the midland parts of the province have had good rainfall, while the northern part has been on the dry side," he explained.

