

HIGH RAW WATER TURBIDITY FORCES WATER TREATMENT PLANT SHUTDOWN AT HAZELMERE

*Issued by the Corporate Stakeholder Management, Office of the Chief Executive Umgeni Water
Wednesday, 13 April 2022*

High levels of turbidity in water entering the water treatment plant at Hazelmere, in the north of Durban, has resulted in shutdown of the plant. This means that, at this stage, no water is being treated and consequently Umgeni Water, which operates the plant, is unable to supply potable water to eThekweni Metro, iLembe District Municipality and Siza Water.

The water eThekweni Metro receives from the Hazelmere Water Treatment Plant is supplied to consumers in Verulam, Waterloo, La Mercy, Sea Tides and part of Ndwedwe. Siza Water supplies Ballito while iLembe District Municipality supplies Ndwedwe and parts of Groutville with water received from the Hazelmere Water Treatment Plant.

The cause of high turbidity is directly attributed to the continuous and heavy rains received in the catchments of Hazelmere Dam from Friday, 8 April 2022, until Monday, 11 April 2022. This was followed by heavy inflows into Hazelmere Dam, from where the Hazelmere Water Treatment Plant draws its raw water for treatment, through run-off from saturated ground in the dam's catchments. The quality of water from long periods of rainfall and from many catchments is often poor.

The quality of water abstracted and supplied to the treatment plant began deteriorating from Tuesday night as strong inflows into the dam continued. As a precaution, Umgeni Water began reducing production of potable water.

A decision was taken on Wednesday to completely stop production in order to prevent the possibility of water that is not compliant with SANS 241: 2015 reaching Umgeni Water's customers for distribution to consumers. SANS 24: 2015 regulates drinking water quality to ensure it is safe for consumption; Umgeni Water subscribes fully to SANS: 241 and, as a mandatory requirement, ensures that the potable it produces at all of its plants is fully compliant.

Work began on Wednesday to flush the process units so that Umgeni Water is able to produce water that meets SAN 241: 2015 standards. Once this has been completed, production of potable water will begin again, after which supply to customers will resume. The reticulation systems that enable supply to consumers takes a while to recover.

Umgeni Water wishes to assure its customers and consumers that there will no delays in completing the work required to fully restore production. An apology is also issued for inconvenience caused initially by reduced production and supply of potable and the temporary termination of production that was imperative to ensure full compliance with SANS 241: 2015.