

# Phalaborwa

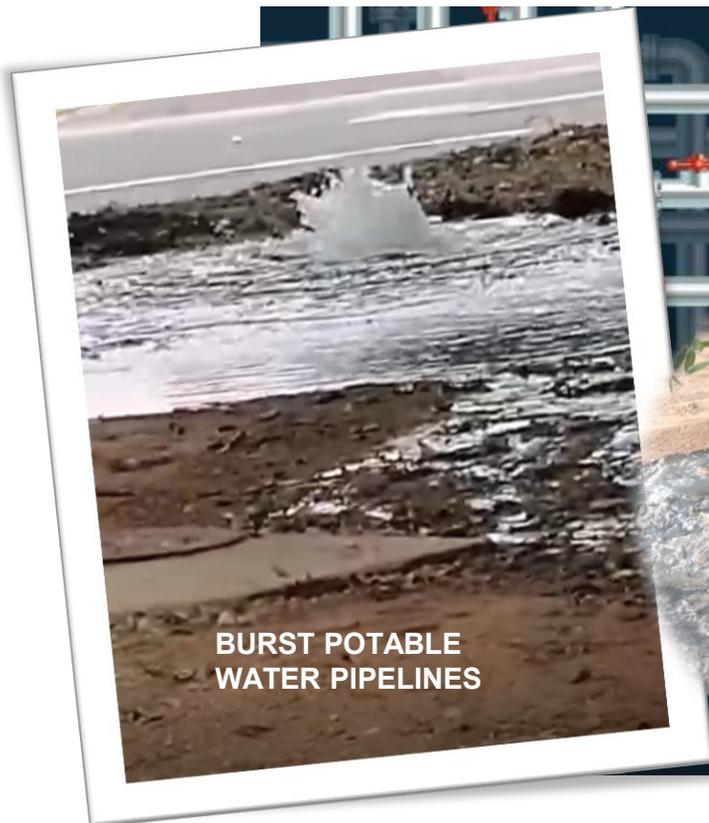
## Water and Sanitation Statistics Report

(2024)

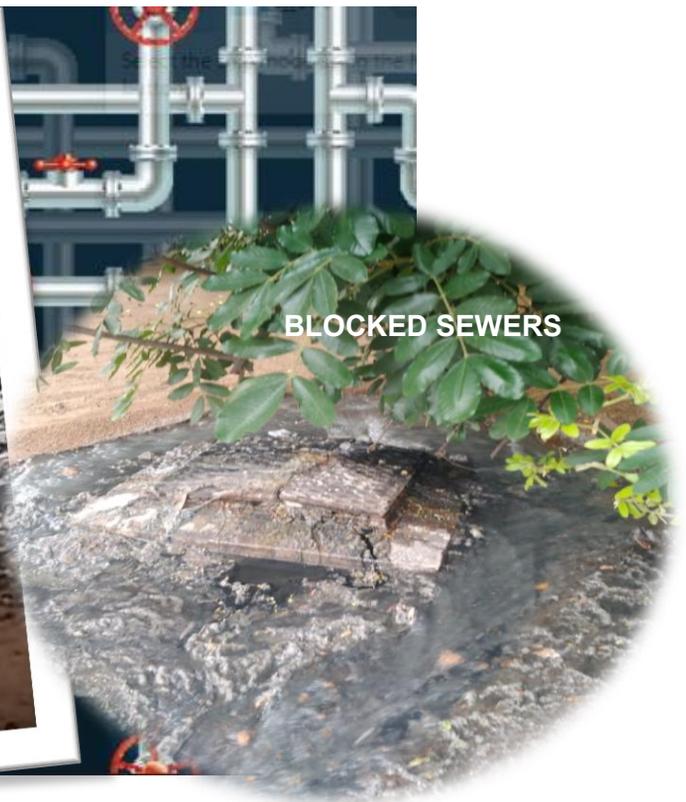


**LET'S CHANGE  
BA-PHALABORWA**

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**BURST POTABLE  
WATER PIPELINES**



**BLOCKED SEWERS**



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# SUMMARY



Systemic failures, gross municipal neglect, aging infrastructure, and inadequate emergency response have left the Ba-Phalaborwa community without reliable access to clean water or functional sanitation.

While residents face regular disruptions to essential services, the municipality continues to operate reactively, carrying out short-term fixes without resolving the underlying problems. Infrastructure continues to weaken, and the same streets experience the same failures again and again. Meanwhile, no permanent solutions are implemented.

Sewage continues to contaminate residential areas, businesses, flow through stormwater drains, and enter protected environments, including the Kruger National Park and the Massingir Dam in Mozambique. This is not new - it has been happening for years.

## **Infrastructure Collapse and Neglect:**

The town's water and sewer networks, over 50 years old, are collapsing under population growth and development. There is no long-term maintenance strategy, and poor coordination leads to persistent outages, faulty valves, and unaddressed leaks.

## **Frequent Water Outages:**

Daily water shedding by Lepelle, aging infrastructure, load shedding, and power failures have left entire extensions without water for weeks or even months. The absence of backup power at reservoirs exacerbates the problem.

## **Sewage Pollution and Environmental Damage:**

Raw sewage flows through homes, businesses, streets, and into local rivers. The Tshutsi River, once seasonal, now carries a constant stream of untreated sewage into the Olifants River, through the Kruger National Park, and into Mozambique's Massingir Dam.

## **August 2024 Water Contamination Incident:**

A major potable water contamination event led to illness, business shutdowns, and environmental harm. Despite confirmed sewage in the drinking water, the municipality failed to notify or protect the public.

## **Illegal Water Theft:**

Extension 5 has become a hotspot for unregulated water extraction from hydrants, causing infrastructure damage, water wastage road degradation, and increased crime.



### **Valve Tampering:**

Deliberate valve bypasses have restricted water flow to specific areas, yet municipal action remains absent.

### **Service Delivery Failures:**

There is still no after-hours or emergency response team. Water and sanitation teams refuse to work outside standard hours, leaving residents without support during nights, weekends, and public holidays.

### **Economic and Tourism Impact:**

Contaminated dams and streams, foul odours, and service unreliability have driven businesses to close and tourists away, damaging Phalaborwa's already fragile economy.

### **Annual Water Testing (2024):**

Testing confirmed that natural watercourses remain heavily contaminated with E.coli and coliform bacteria, while reservoir water, though fit for consumption, shows elevated chlorine - likely a reactive measure to the August incident. Cholera tests were carried out at specific locations, all of which returned negative results.

### **Worst Affected Areas:**

Numerous areas experienced prolonged outages - some for up to 28 days - due to valve closures, poor coordination, and unresolved repairs.

Let's Change Ba-Phalaborwa (LCBP) has documented these ongoing failures and continues to demand accountability.

The statistics in this report speak for themselves.

Without urgent intervention at provincial or national level, the town faces a worsening collapse of public health, environmental safety, and economic viability.



# INTRODUCTION

**Let's Change Ba-Phalaborwa (LCBP)** is a non-profit, non-political, community-based and volunteer organisation established to protect, promote, advocate for, and advance the best interests of the Ba-Phalaborwa community in relation to municipal service delivery, governance, and development. As a registered NPC (Non-Profit Company) and recognised stakeholder, we are dedicated to addressing the collapsing state of municipal infrastructure, failures in sustainable service delivery, and deficiencies in the governance of the Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality (BPM) and other organs of government, particularly regarding local government affairs that directly affect the people of Ba-Phalaborwa.

**Our mission is simple:** to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for all residents of Ba-Phalaborwa. We strive to create a thriving community where residents enjoy reliable municipal services, transparent governance, and sustainable development opportunities. By empowering the community and working with various stakeholders, we aim to improve municipal service delivery, governance, and development for the community.

We have consistently engaged with both the Mopani District Municipality (MDM) and Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality (BPM) in efforts to address these challenges, but both municipalities have closed their doors to us, hindering progress. In response, we have escalated our efforts and requested intervention from several key organisations, including the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the Public Protector, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGHTA), and the Provincial Premier.

**To hold those responsible accountable**, we have laid **criminal charges** against both the BPM and MDM municipalities, as well as the municipal managers and the water manager in their personal capacities under the following sections:

- Sections 49(1)(e) and (f) of NEMA
- Section 151(1)(d), (i) and (j) of National Water Act
- Sections 24 and 152(1)(b) and (d) of Constitution

These charges were originally filed with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and later transferred to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS). Following extensive investigations and the collection of key evidence, the case docket is now under review by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) in Polokwane. However, no court date has been set, and further developments remain pending.

**Constitutional Violations:** The municipality is in breach of the following constitutional provisions:

- Section 152 – Objects of Local Government
- Section 153 – Developmental Duties
- Section 10 – Human Dignity
- Section 24 – Environment



As part of our commitment to ensuring clean water for our community, we partnered with WaterCan, which is affiliated with OUTA (Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse), to conduct annual water testing for the past three years. While our reservoir water has been deemed safe for drinking, all our freshwater streams have been found to be contaminated with high levels of E.coli and coliform bacteria. These streams flow into the Tshutsi tributary, which then enters the Kruger National Park and eventually reaches the Massingir Dam in Mozambique. The Tshutsi tributary, which only flows during the rainy season, has been a constant flow of sewage since 1998, contributing to a long-standing environmental and health risk in the region.

We have **partnered with AfriForum SA**, who have appointed their lawyers, Hurter & Spies Attorneys, to work closely with LCBP in **preparing a case against NERSA (National Energy Regulator of South Africa)** for failing to act decisively under the Electricity Regulation Act, No. 4 of 2006 (“ERA”), particularly with regard to its regulatory responsibilities.

Communication with Lepelle Northern Water has been severed by both municipalities, further complicating our efforts to resolve the ongoing water crisis and other infrastructure issues in Phalaborwa.

Let's Change Ba-Phalaborwa remains resolute in our mission to advocate for the community and drive the necessary changes to ensure sustainable service delivery and accountable governance. We will continue to pursue all available avenues - legal, administrative, and collaborative - to ensure the well-being of the Ba-Phalaborwa community and hold those in power accountable for their failures.

**Our vision is clear:** a thriving Phalaborwa where residents benefit from excellent municipal services, transparent governance, and meaningful development opportunities. We believe in the power of the community, and through persistence and collective action, we are confident that we can secure a brighter, more prosperous future for Ba-Phalaborwa.

We manage several WhatsApp groups subscribed by approximately 2,000 residents, community organisations, and businesses. These platforms help log service delivery complaints and receive updates from Ward Councillors, filling the communication gap left by the municipality.

The information presented in this report is extracted from our [Service Delivery Incident Register](#)

# CRUCIAL NOTES



1. The 560mm bulk potable pipeline burst in March 2023 and was subsequently decommissioned in June 2023. This pipeline traverses a servitude area under PMC's jurisdiction. Subsequent investigation revealed that PMC had been depositing magnetite in this vicinity, directly over the pipeline. The 560mm pipeline remains decommissioned until the dispute between Lepelle and PMC is resolved. LCBP was advised in 2023 that the 546mm and 560mm pipelines were included in the Mopani 2023/24 IDP and budget for repairs; however, to date, nothing has been done.
2. In both water and sanitation matters, the situation is worsened by the ongoing blame game between Mopani District Municipality (Water Services Authority) and Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality (Water Services Provider). Neither takes ownership or responsibility. Instead, they consistently shift blame to each other and to Lepelle Northern Water (Bulk Water Supplier).
3. Our water supply is severely affected during power outages and load shedding due to the lack of backup power at any of the reservoirs.
4. None of the reservoirs are equipped with air-release valves, resulting in residents being charged excessively for air rather than actual water consumption.
5. Lepelle enforces daily water shedding by switching off the transfer pumps to the water towers from 22:00 to 03:30 to allow the reservoirs to replenish overnight. Additional water shedding may occur during the day when reservoir levels are low due to issues at the Plant.
6. Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality has acknowledged that our water and sewerage infrastructure is over 50 years old. A severe lack of maintenance—including bush clearing, replacement of corroded pipes, and proper repair of previously damaged areas—has resulted in root damage, recurring leaks, and unattended sewage spills. In the absence of appropriate repair materials, maintenance teams often resort to makeshift solutions such as bicycle tubing (as frequently observed by councillors and residents), which causes unnecessary repair delays, prolonged water outages, and the formation of large, hazardous potholes.
7. A significant contributing factor to persistent leaks is the maintenance team's apparent inability to resolve problems correctly the first time. Too often, teams must return to the same site to redo previous work—sometimes multiple times at the same location.
8. Numerous damaged valves around town also contribute to water outages, as they remain closed or are only partially open. In some instances, valves have been bypassed using 20mm pipe, severely restricting the water supply to residents in the vicinity.
9. The local population continues to grow significantly and expand, but the water and sewerage infrastructure has not been upgraded accordingly. This is especially concerning given the ongoing development of informal and illegal student accommodation blocks. In many cases, single-family homes with three to four bedrooms have been subdivided or extended significantly to house between 15 and 20 students. These developments proceed without proper town planning or building approvals, placing extreme pressure on water and electricity systems. The outdated sewer system is now unable to cope with the increased volume—made worse by the flushing of foreign objects such as nappies, sanitary towels, and newspapers.



10. On numerous occasions, the Water Manager has instructed Lepelle to shut off the main reservoir valve during repairs, rather than isolating the specific street valve. This is either due to damaged street valves or a lack of knowledge regarding which valves supply the affected areas. As a result, large sections of the town are left without water unnecessarily, instead of only the affected streets.
11. The municipality frequently opts to unblock sewer drains rather than addressing the root causes, resulting in recurring blockages.
12. There is a notable lack of urgency in responding to sewage spillages—some of which remain unattended for months or even years—leading to severe fly infestations. In all cases, none of the affected areas are disinfected. Once the spillage dries, sewage residue is left around the manhole, covering pavements and road surfaces.
13. **Water leaks further contribute to mosquito breeding, a serious concern given that Phalaborwa is located in a malarial zone.** Once repairs are completed, the area is left in disrepair. Pavements are not restored, excavated trenches are left open or uneven, and where tarred roads are dug up to access pipes, they are not re-sealed—further worsening the already severely potholed roads.
14. While the municipality’s response times showed slight improvement earlier in 2024 compared to 2023, the latter part of the year has seen a regression. Repairs are increasingly failing, resulting in recurring water leaks and sewage spills.
15. Sewage from the CBD and surrounding areas is flowing into stormwater drains, contaminating the dams located between Bush Villas on Kruger and Sefapane Safari Lodges. This poses a serious threat to the local tourism industry. Water tests conducted by the lodge confirm the contamination — see [Contaminated Tap Water](#) for the results.
16. The incident register clearly shows that the helpdesk is not functioning as intended. The same issues are reported repeatedly over days, weeks, months, or even years, with new reference numbers issued each time—yet without resolution. Notably, the call centre is unavailable after hours, on weekends, and during public holidays. In contrast, the electrical team continues working beyond regular hours, with a standby team available for after-hours, weekend, and public holiday call-outs. However, they face persistent challenges, including limited access to essential equipment—such as backhoe loaders, cherry pickers, generators, and lighting—and a shortage of spare parts. By comparison, the water team refuses to work after 16:00, on weekends, or on public holidays. As a result, residents experiencing water outages are frequently left without supply until the next business day—often the following Monday—causing unnecessary hardship and delays in service restoration.
17. The Mopani District Municipality allocated only R1 million for sewerage system maintenance in the 2024/2025 IDP budget—an amount intended to cover the entire Ba-Phalaborwa region. No budget provision was made for critical infrastructure upgrades, pipe replacements, or system expansion—whether for water or sewage.
18. The Municipal Manager was suspended in September 2024 due to a security tender scandal and resigned in October 2024 following a failed appeal.
19. In October 2024, the Water Manager, Gift Hlungwani, resigned citing stress.



20. Sewerage pump stations currently non-functional:

- Molengraaf Pump Station
- 7 SAI Army Base Pump Station
- Potgieter Pump Station (adjacent to the Department of Labour): sewage has been deliberately diverted past this towards Bosveld Phosphate. It then flows into the Selati River, thereby still entering the Kruger National Park—albeit not via the Tshutsi River.

21. The manhole in Soetdoring Street, in the greenbelt area between Essenhout and Soetdoring Streets (more or less behind 19 Soetdoring and approximately a 300m walk up from Masorini Total Garage at the culvert), does not have a cover. This manhole overflows often, and the sewage from here flows directly into the stream. Forty houses in this vicinity are constantly affected by the horrific stench.

22. There is a hidden pipe that the municipality installed at Action Auto/Masorini Total Garage to prevent sewage from flowing into the road on 23 April 2023. The sewage was diverted into the stream at the bridge in Koper Street. The drain at Masorini Total continues to block due to fat from the OK Mini kitchen.

23. Almost every servitude, bush, greenbelt area, and vacant plot in Phalaborwa town has become an illegal dumping site. This includes the dumping of building rubble, garden waste, and household refuse—unfortunately including disposable nappies. The municipality continues to ignore and violate the very by-laws it is mandated to uphold on illegal dumping.

These issues are systemic, not incidental. The data presented here is not a list of isolated events; it represents deep-rooted governance and regulatory failures.

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



While the issues highlighted above are prevalent throughout the town, this report delves into the areas most severely impacted during 2024. The incidents detailed in this section represent some, but not all, of the worst affected areas. They have been selected to illustrate the severity and range of issues faced across Phalaborwa.

This section outlines the locations most severely impacted throughout 2024, based on incident reports and community submissions. These areas experienced prolonged service failures, recurring disruptions, and structural deficiencies without lasting resolution

## 1. 18 Gelderland Street Low Water Pressure (Since April 2023):

Residents of 18 Gelderland Street have been experiencing very low water pressure since April 2023, attributed to an issue with the valve. Water Manager Gift Hlongwane visited the site multiple times in 2024, yet the cause of the low water pressure remains undetermined.

## 2. Town North Reservoir Transformer Vandalism and Power Issues (February 2024):

On 3 February, the transformer at the Town North reservoir was vandalised, resulting in a power outage that left the pump inoperable. A bypass was opened, and water restoration began at 17:16, but at extremely low pressure. By 21:00, Lepelle informed the Councillors that the pump could not operate with 380V electricity and was switched off to protect the equipment. On 4 February, the bypass was reopened, but the lack of sufficient voltage meant the water pressure remained low, and high-lying areas were left without water for two days. At 11:36, Lepelle clarified that the power supply required was 550V, and the municipality's transformer at 380V could not adequately operate the pumps. A new transformer was procured and installed by PMC electricians, and water supply was restored by 19:30. However, during the period between 5 and 12 February 2024, maintenance at the Lepelle plant, a power outage in Ward 12, and extended loadshedding led to dangerously low reservoir levels, resulting in severe water interruptions. Particularly affected was 19 Knoppiesdoorn Street, where residents were without water from 3 to 29 February, a total of **26 days**.

## 3. Hardekool, Maroela, Tambotie, and Boekenhout Streets Water Outage (June 2024):

In June, residents of Hardekool (including Bougainvilla Park Old Age Home), Maroela, Tambotie, and Boekenhout Streets experienced a 5-day water outage due to a valve closure. The water team had been working on a sewerage drain at the intersection of Boekenhout and Tambotie Streets but neglected to reopen the valve after completing the work. Bougainvilla Park Old Age Home faced an additional 2-day water outage, resulting in a total of **7 days** without water for the elderly residents.

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



## 4. Water Supply Disruptions - July 2024

### 4.1. Ext 1 Incident:

From 5th to 18th July, residents experienced severe water supply disruptions, very low water pressure or no water at all. This problem was caused by closed valves and a faulty valve in the water supply system.

#### **Affected Area:**

Kiaat, Hall, Palm, President Nelson Mandela, Danie Van Wijk, and Sealene Streets

#### **Details:**

- **5th July:** Valves were closed to repair a water leak at the corner of Danie Van Wijk and Kiaat Street.
- **8th July:** Repairs to the leak were completed, but the valves remained closed, leaving the water supply in the affected areas non-existent.
- **9th July:** After the valves were reopened, only a trickle of water was provided to the affected areas. It was later discovered that a faulty valve was contributing to the issue.
- **17th July:** The faulty valve was repaired, and the valves were finally reopened, restoring the water supply to residents after **14 days** of disruption.

### 4.2. Ext 2 Incident:

From 3rd to 30th July, residents experienced extended water supply disruptions, mainly due to issues with valve and reservoir closures and repairs.

#### **Affected Area:**

Woyer, Drommedaris, De Freyn, Gelderland, President Burger, President Kruger, Stavenisse, and Haarlem Streets

#### **Details:**

- **3rd July:** Valves were closed to repair a leak at the corner of President Kruger and Stavenisse Streets. However, once repairs were completed on 4th July, the water team did not reopen the valves.
- **4th July:** Additional valves were closed to repair two water leaks; 11 Woyer St and on the corner of Drommedaris and Woyer Streets. Again, after completing the repairs, the valves were not reopened, and no water was restored to residents.
- **6th July:** Further repairs were made to a leak at 17 De Freyn Street, but once again, no water was supplied to residents, despite assurances from the water manager that the valves were open.
- **7th and 8th July:** Poor coordination from the water manager led to the closure of both the Town North and Ext 8 & 9 reservoirs, leaving Ward 12 without water.
- **8th July:** Repairs to the leak at 11 Woyer Street were completed, but the water team did not reopen the valves.
- **9th July:** Despite assurances from the water manager, the water supply to Woyer Street was minimal, as the valves were only partially opened due to further repairs required on the leak at the corner of Drommedaris and Woyer Streets.

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



- **18th July:** Repairs at the corner of Drommedaris and Woyer Streets were finally completed, and a small section of the pipeline was replaced. The new section was sealed with clamps. However, after completing the repairs, the valves were not reopened. The newly fitted pipe continued to leak after the team left the site.
- **30th July:** Repairs at the corner of Drommedaris and Woyer Streets were completed properly, and the valves were opened, finally restoring water supply to residents after **28 days** of disruption.

## 4.3. Ext 3 Incident:

From 3rd to 30th July, residents experienced extended water supply disruptions due to a combination of valve and reservoir closures, repairs, and delays in the water manager's oversight of the situation.

### Affected Area:

Gelderland, President Kruger, Harris, Kotze, Max Ruh, and Stavenisse Streets

### Details:

- **May:** A fire hydrant valve between 75 and 77 President Kruger Street started leaking.
- **3rd July:** Valves were closed to repair the leaking fire hydrant valve between 75 and 77 President Kruger Street. The valve broke during the closure attempt, further delaying repairs. The water team inserted a pipe to drain the manhole and reroute the water away from the area.
- **4th July:** Although the team had rerouted the water, the valve closures did not stop the leak, and the situation worsened when the front yard of 77 President Kruger Street flooded due to poor pipe positioning.
- **5th July:** Repairs on President Kruger Street were halted as the team moved on to other repairs. The water team did not return to the site, leaving the leak unresolved, further delaying water supply to residents.
- **7th and 8th July:** The water manager's coordination challenges led to the closure of both the Town North and Ext 8 & 9 reservoirs, unnecessarily leaving Ward 12 without water.
- **7th July:** A water team from Tzaneen was contracted to do the repair work.
- **8th July:** Despite the installation of a new pipe to replace the broken fire hydrant valve, water remained unavailable due to the closure of incorrect reservoirs and valves.
- **9th July:** Despite assurances from the water manager that the valves were open, residents were still without water.
- **30th July:** After **28 days** of disruption, additional valves were finally opened, restoring the water supply to the residents.

## 4.4. Ext 4 Incident:

From 11th July to 30th July 2024, residents in these streets experienced extended water supply disruptions due to a combination of valve and reservoir closures and repairs, compounded by delays in the water manager's response to the situation.

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



## **Affected Area:**

Grey, Janssens, Grosvenor, Van Der Stel, De La Fontaine, Woltemade, Sigfried Annecke

## **Details:**

The initial issue began when various valves were closed for leak repairs. However, after the repairs were completed, these valves were never reopened, leaving sections of Extension 4 without access to water. Compounding the problem, the TN reservoir was closed for fire hydrant repairs in President Kruger Street, further limiting the water supply.

- **30th July:** After **20 days** of disruption, the opening of additional valves, finally restoring the water supply to residents.

## **Conclusion:**

Across all four incidents, the common factor is the water manager's difficulties in effectively coordinating repairs. Issues such as delayed valve reopening, poor communication, and challenges in managing repairs resulted in prolonged water disruptions.

## **5. Maroela Lodge Farm and Ingwe Park Lodge Water Shortages (August 2024):**

Residents reported experiencing very low water pressure or no water at all for the past five months, despite multiple reports to the municipality. Since January 2024, residents received water only three nights a week, at extremely low pressure, and had no running water on most days. The residents at Maroela Lodge Farm and the Ingwe Park Lodge (Lapa side) had been without water for the entire year due to a damaged valve, which had been left partially open with multiple illegal connections discovered by Lepelle Northern Water in January 2025. It is believed that the valve had been in this state since 2022/2023, leaving residents without a proper water supply for almost **three years**.

## **6. Valve Tampering (December 2024):**

### **Affected area:**

Water Disruptions in Knoppiesdoorn, Geelhaak, Koorsboom, Combretum, Kierieklapper, and Bosvliet Streets

LCBP has identified a significant issue regarding water disruptions in this area, which is experiencing severe and ongoing water supply interruptions. The concern centers around a valve located at 22 Knoppiesdoorn Street.

On 29 December, a resident provided a photograph of the valve, which appears to have been bypassed using a 50-75mm pipe. This bypass is suspected to be a major factor in the restricted water supply to the affected streets.

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



The bypass may have been installed due to the valve being closed or tampered with, possibly with the handwheel removed or stolen, or because the valve is jammed in the shut position. As a result, a bypass valve and pipe were added, as shown in the photograph, to allow some water to flow. However, this severely restricts the flow downstream. This setup is thought to be contributing to the frequent water supply interruptions, with affected residents experiencing inconsistent water pressure. When the reservoir levels are above 60%, pressure is adequate, but when the levels drop below 60%, water pressure weakens or becomes non-existent, leaving the streets without water for extended periods.

LCBP's primary concern is that this particular valve may not be the only one affected in Phalaborwa. There is a suspicion that other valves in the town could also have been bypassed in a similar manner, contributing to widespread water disruptions in other areas. The bypass at 22 Knoppiesdoorn Street is believed to have been implemented in August, though this remains speculative.

LCBP referred this photograph and the situation to a water reticulation expert for further analysis. The expert's feedback indicates that the bypass was likely a deliberate attempt to restrict water flow, which is severely impacting residents' water supply. The expert noted that the valve is missing key components, such as the gland seal parts, and that the installation of the bypass suggests intentional tampering to prevent the valve from being easily operated.



*"I do not believe it to be a fire hydrants Valve. They have by-passed the valve as I can only guess that it has been closed and the hand wheel removed or stolen and or the valve has been jammed in the shut position hence the by-pass valve and piping installed to allow some water to pass, however it is severely restricting the flow to the downstream side. It is missing the gland seal parts and it is a non rising spindle type valve. The shaft that moves the valve gate could also have broken. My feeling looking at the setup indicates it indicates that they want to restrict the flow for whatever reason and thus removed the spindle so it cannot be tampered with. The by-pass looks recently installed."* Water Reticulation expert.

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



## 7. !! Water Contamination Incident !!

In August 2024, Ba-Phalaborwa experienced a large-scale water contamination incident that severely impacted residents, vulnerable groups, businesses, and the environment. Despite multiple complaints and confirmed test results, the Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality (BPM) failed to issue any public warnings or notices, endangering public health and undermining trust in governance.

### Details and Affected Areas

#### 14 August 2024:

- **Extension 2 (4 Meyer Street):** Residents reported sewage-like odour and taste in their tap water.
- **Extension 1 (De Kuiper & Bronkhorst Streets):** Similar complaints received.



*Note:* Stormwater drains feed into two dams between Bush Villas on Kruger and Sefapane Safari Lodges. Contaminated water flows into the Tshutsi River, reaching the Kruger National Park and ultimately the Massingir Dam in Mozambique.

The General Manager at Bush Villas on Kruger confirmed their lodge had operated at only 30% capacity for six months due to the foul water smell from their dams.

#### 19 August 2024:

- Tap water at Bush Villas on Kruger Safari Lodge (14 De Kuiper Str) was officially tested and confirmed to be contaminated with sewage. The lodge was ordered to shut down immediately. The results were not made public.



- An independent dam water test returned alarming results, confirming contamination – see [Contaminated Dam Water](#) for the results.
- **Extension Dorp (Hardekool, Aalwyn, Sealene Streets):** Residents, including those at **Bougainvilla Old Age Home**, reported foul-smelling tap water. Several elderly residents at the old age home reportedly fell ill after consuming the water.

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



## Evening, 19 August 2024:

- A resident discovered numerous dead fish and foul-smelling water near the **Selati River bridge** on the Lepelle Northern Water Board access road (GPS: 24°02'18.8"S 31°08'01.1"E).

## 20 August 2024:

- **Extension 2 (Monna Street) and Extension 8 (Bokmakierie, Kwartel, Sysie, Blue Crane Streets)** reported foul-smelling tap water.
- Staff accommodation at the **Kruger National Park gate** also reported sewage contamination in their drinking water.
- Senior Manager: Technical Services (Mrs. Motlalepula Mphachoe) and Water Manager (Gift Hlongwane) met with the Bush Villas manager.
- LCBP, representing the affected community, was invited by General Manager of Bush Villas On Kruger but forcibly removed from the meeting by the Senior Manager Technical Services, refusing to engage in LCBP's presence.



## 21 August 2024:

- A potable water pipeline located at the corner of **Park Street and Hans Pirow Street** was discovered running directly above a frequently blocked sewer line, inside the same manhole.
- The potable pipe was visibly patched and fully submerged in raw sewage — the likely source of contamination.



## 22 August 2024:

- Excavation revealed a new hole in the same potable water line, suspected to have been caused by municipal workers during sewer unblocking efforts.
- Initially, the municipality attempted to patch the line again — an unacceptable solution — but after public pressure, agreed to reroute (bypass) the potable water line instead.

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



**24 August 2024:**

- The fire hydrant on the corner of **Boekenhout and De Kuiper Streets** was opened to flush out remaining contaminated water.

## **Public Health, Business & Environmental Impact**

- Elderly residents, particularly at Bougainvilla Old Age Home, reportedly fell ill from ingesting contaminated tap water.
- Businesses such as Bush Villas on Kruger suffered significant financial loss and reputational damage, operating at reduced capacity and ultimately forced to shut down temporarily.
- Dead fish and foul odours downstream in the Selati River indicate that aquatic ecosystems are severely impacted.
- The Kruger National Park and Mozambique's Massingir Dam remain downstream recipients of the contamination via the Tshutsi River.

## **Municipal Silence & Refusal to Engage**

- Despite the scale and severity of this incident, Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality failed to notify or warn the public.
- There was no public advisory, no alternative water distribution, and no apology.
- The refusal to allow LCBP to participate in discussions related to the incident underscores a broader pattern of exclusion, opacity, and neglect by the municipality during emergencies.

## **Conclusion**

This incident exemplifies the dangerous consequences of collapsed infrastructure, poor interdepartmental coordination, and a municipality unfit to manage essential services.

The community's health and livelihoods were jeopardised, while **THE MUNICIPALITY REMAINED SILENT!!**

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



## 8. On-going Water Theft in Extension 5

- Since 2022, Extension 5 has become a hotspot for illegal water extraction. Unmarked water trucks and bakkies carrying barrels and containers are routinely seen drawing water from municipal fire hydrants on 1st, 2nd, and 5th Streets - **daily, from early morning until late at night**.
- These trucks, with capacities ranging between 16,000 and 20,000 litres, often refill multiple times a day.
- The misuse of hydrants has led to frequent damage and significant water wastage.



- A hydrant on 5th Street leaked continuously for **three months** before the municipality responded.



- In 2023, the number of trucks and bakkies increased, with some completing their first fill by **08h00**.

### This illegal activity is causing:

1. Massive and avoidable water wastage
2. Ongoing infrastructure damage
3. Severe road degradation
4. Prolonged water outages for residents
5. An increase in criminal activity (e.g., burglaries and cable theft) affecting households and businesses

# WORST AFFECTED AREAS



- A hydrant on 1st Street, left open due to a damaged valve, gushed water for **four days** as municipal workers and standby teams refuse to respond outside of working hours or over weekends.
- By 2024, the situation has worsened - **queues of trucks now start at 05h00** and operate well after 20h00.

While our Ward Councillor, has shown great concern and taken active steps - including meeting with the Senior Manager of Technical



Services, launching a petition, escalating the matter, and planning a community meeting in the new year - the municipality itself continues to downplay the urgency of this on-going problem.

## Proposal submitted:

- All hydrants in Extension 5 be removed, and
- A single, secure location be designated for municipal truck refilling

Without immediate municipal enforcement and prioritised action, this illegal activity will continue to devastate our infrastructure, drain critical resources, and place our community at further risk.

In an effort to address the issue, LCBP has raised concerns about the practice and formally requested clarification on how this water - amounting to hundreds of thousands of litres each month - is accounted for in terms of consumption.

**LCBP has asked:** Who pays Lepelle for this water? How does the municipality record this loss in its revenue collection? It is widely known that this water is taken illegally and sold elsewhere for profit. The municipality's on-going failure to intervene has allowed the practice to grow significantly.

**LCBP is therefore calling for a full investigation into this matter and an audit of both municipalities involved, as their awareness and continued inaction strongly suggest collusion and corruption.**

# ANNUAL WATER TESTING RESULTS 2022



First year of water testing conducted in partnership with WaterCan (affiliated with OUTA). **Between 4 and 18 September 2022**, testing was carried out in and around Phalaborwa.

Results confirmed that the region's natural watercourses are heavily contaminated with raw sewage - posing serious risks to both human and environmental health. A total of six (6) water tests were conducted in Phalaborwa; four on river sites and two on tap water sources.

River water samples show dangerously high levels of E.coli and coliform bacteria. While water from local reservoirs was deemed safe for consumption.

## WaterCan's Feedback:

Tests were conducted in 8 of the 9 provinces: Gauteng, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Northwest and Western Cape. The testing points in KZN, Gauteng, Western Cape and Limpopo provinces had the highest positive levels for E. Coli and coliform. The main causes in each of the areas could be attributed to failing wastewater treatment plants, overflowing manholes and waste dumping into rivers and streams.

The conclusion derived from the results is that our tap water is healthy, however, the electricity crisis has affected pumping of water at reservoirs, and this could result in water being contaminated – which means that regular testing is becoming even more imperative.

Municipalities need to do regular tests and make the results timeously available to the public.

**Note: LCBP maintains that these tests are likely not being conducted, as no results have ever been made available to the public.**

## PHALABORWA WATER TESTING RESULTS (2022)

	Site	Location	Water source being tested	E.coli / Coliform Present	Result	Comments
1	117 Tulbach Street Phalaborwa	Municipal water supplied from Town North (Combretum Str) reservoir	Tap inside house	None	Safe	Within the acceptable limits, thus indicating that the water was safe to drink
2	4 Lark Street Phalaborwa	Municipal water supplied from Ext 8&9 (Bataleur Str) reservoir	Tap inside house	None	Safe	Within the acceptable limits, thus indicating that the water was safe to drink
3	Selati River	Selati River close to where it crosses the Waterboard Road bridge	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.
4	Olifants River	Olifants River at the Kambaku Lodge. This is where the water for Phalaborwa is collected and pumped to the service provider	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.
5	Tshutsi tributary (R71)	Tshutsi stream tributary where it crosses the R71 at Bollanato near the Phalaborwa KNP Gate	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.
6	Tshutsi tributary (Koper Road)	Tshutse stream tributary where it crosses Copper Road south of Kruger Park Spar	Raw water source	Anaerobic	Unsafe	The water sample tested anaerobic, indicating a complete lack of dissolved oxygen and potential conditions for harmful bacterial growth.

# ANNUAL WATER TESTING RESULTS 2023



This marks the second consecutive year of water testing conducted in partnership with WaterCan (affiliated with OUTA). **Between 17 and 24 September 2023**, testing was carried out in and around Phalaborwa.

Results confirmed that the region's natural watercourses remain heavily contaminated with raw sewage - posing serious risks to both human and environmental health. A total of nine (9) water tests were conducted in Phalaborwa; six on river sites and three on tap water sources. Additionally, three cholera tests were carried out at specific locations, all of which returned negative results.

River water samples continued to show dangerously high levels of E.coli and coliform bacteria. Although water from local reservoirs was found to be safe for consumption, caution was advised due to elevated chlorine levels detected in the samples taken from two of the three reservoirs during testing.

## PHALABORWA WATER TESTING RESULTS (2023)

	Site	Location	Water source being tested	E.coli / Coliform Present	Result	Comments
1	117 Tulbach Street Phalaborwa	Municipal water supplied from Town North (Combretum Str) reservoir	Tap inside house	None	Safe	Within the acceptable limits, thus indicating that the water was safe to drink
2	4 Lark Street Phalaborwa	Municipal water supplied from Ext 8&9 (Bataleur Str) reservoir	Tap inside house	None	Safe with warning	High levels of Chlorine. Within the acceptable limits, thus indicating that the water was safe to drink
3	1B Bronkhorst Street Phalaborwa	Municipal water supplied from Town South (Tambotie Str) reservoir	Tap inside house	None	Safe with warning	High levels of Chlorine. Within the acceptable limits, thus indicating that the water was safe to drink
4	Tshutsi tributary (R71)	Tshutsi stream where it crosses the R71 behind the Kruger Park Spar	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.
5	Tshutsi tributary (Koper Road)	Tshutsi stream where it crosses the Koper Road at Golovans Restaurant	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.
6	Selati River	GPS: 24°02'17.1"S 31°08'00.0"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli. Cholera test result was negative
7	Grey Street Stream	GPS: 23°56'08.3"S 31°07'44.4"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli. Cholera test result was negative
8	Olifants River at Kambaku	GPS: 24°04'20.1"S 31°07'49.7"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli. Cholera test result was negative
9	Ingwe Stream (R71)	GPS: 23°55'49.5"S 31°06'05.3"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.

# ANNUAL WATER TESTING RESULTS 2024



This marks the third consecutive year of water testing conducted in partnership with WaterCan (affiliated with OUTA). **Between 2 October and 18 November 2024**, testing was carried out in and around Phalaborwa.

Results confirmed that the region's natural watercourses remain heavily contaminated with raw sewage - posing serious risks to both human and environmental health. A total of ten (10) water tests were conducted in Phalaborwa; six on river sites and four on tap water sources. Additionally, two cholera tests were carried out at specific locations, all of which returned negative results.

River water samples continued to show dangerously high levels of E.coli and coliform bacteria. While water from local reservoirs was deemed safe for consumption, elevated chlorine levels were detected - likely introduced in an effort to neutralise contamination following the potable water incident in August 2024.

## PHALABORWA WATER TESTING RESULTS (2024)

	Site	Location	Water source being tested	EColi / Coliform Present	Result	Comments
1	38 Combretum Street Phalaborwa	Municipal water supplied from Town North (Combretum Str) reservoir	Tap inside house	None	Safe	Within the acceptable limits, thus indicating that the water was safe to drink
2	4 Lark Street Phalaborwa	Municipal water supplied from Ext 8&9 (Bataleur Str) reservoir	Tap inside house	None	Safe with warning	High levels of Chlorine present, however, within the acceptable limits, thus indicating that the water was safe to drink
3	1B Bronkhorst Street Phalaborwa	Municipal water supplied from Town South (Tambotie Str) reservoir	Tap inside house	None	Safe with warning	High levels of Chlorine present, however, within the acceptable limits, thus indicating that the water was safe to drink
4	31 Sealene Street Phalaborwa	Municipal water supplied from Town South (Tambotie Str) reservoir	Tap inside house	None	Safe with warning	High levels of Chlorine present, however, within the acceptable limits, thus indicating that the water was safe to drink
5	Tshutsi tributary (R71)	Tshutsi stream where it crosses the R71 behind the Kruger Park Spar GPS: 23°56'46.34556"S 31°9'19.11755"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	High levels of Chlorine present. The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.
6	Tshutsi tributary (Koper Road)	Tshutsi stream where it crosses the Koper Road at Golovans restaurant GPS: 23°56'51.03452"S 31°9'5.5381"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	High levels of Chlorine present. The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.
7	Selati River	GPS: 24°0'40.27759"S 31°6'45.00598"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	High levels of Chlorine present. The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli. Cholera test result was negative.
8	Grey Street Stream	GPS: 24°0'40.27759"S 31°6'45.00598"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	High levels of Chlorine present. The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.
9	Oliphants River at Kambaku	GPS: 24°4'19.4988"S 31°7'48.5256"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	High levels of Chlorine present. The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli. Cholera test result was negative.
10	Ingwe Park Stream (R71)	GPS: 23°50'48.0188"S 30°17'53.1861"E	Raw water source	Very High	Unsafe	High levels of Chlorine present. The results were positive for high levels of total coliform and E.coli.



# HOURS PER MONTH

This section presents detailed monthly statistics on water outages across Phalaborwa town, captured through community reporting and the LCBP Service Delivery Incident Register. The data highlights **hours without water** per month, broken down by root cause, including:

- **Aged Infrastructure** – Incidents caused by broken pipes, corroded fittings, and structural failures due to lack of long-term maintenance.
- **Water Shedding** – Scheduled nighttime shutdowns and ad hoc restrictions by Lepelle due to low reservoir levels or non-payment by Mopanie District Municipality.
- **Loadshedding** – Periods where Eskom’s national electricity cuts disable water pumping operations due to the lack of back-up power.
- **Power Outages** – Unscheduled electricity failures caused by aging electrical infrastructure, vandalism, or inadequate planning disable water pumping operations due to the lack of back-up power.

Graphs and tables that follow provide a breakdown per month and per extension, making the scale and distribution of the problem visible and quantifiable.

- Hours without water due to aged infrastructure per extension per month
- Hours without water due to water shedding per month
- Water leak incidents per month
- Sewage incidents per month
- Hours without water due to power outages per extension per month
- Hours without water due to loadshedding per month
- Monthly reservoir levels.

**Note:** Where interruptions overlap in cause (e.g., both aged infrastructure and power outages), LCBP has assigned the root cause based on the most immediate contributing factor reported or verified at the time.

2024	
Month	Hours
January	744
February	672
March	744
April	720
May	744
June	720
July	744
August	744
September	720
October	744
November	720
December	744

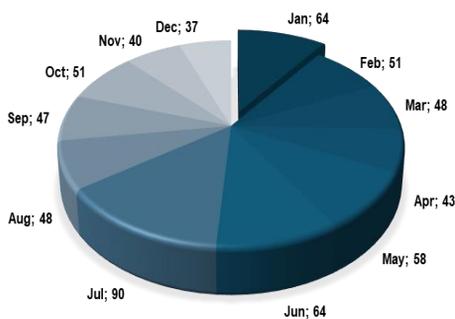


# WATER LEAKS

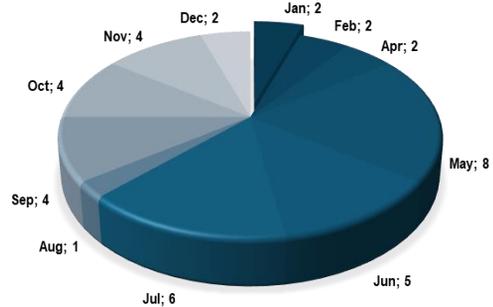
Our municipal infrastructure is deteriorating and nearing collapse due to decades of neglect and a reliance solely on reactive maintenance. The complete absence of proactive upkeep - largely driven by financial constraints - has led to chronic and worsening service delivery failures.

The water system, now over 50 years old, is no longer fit for purpose, especially given the growing population. Damaged valves, corroded pipes, and ageing infrastructure result in recurring water leaks. These leaks not only waste significant volumes of potable water but also create ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes - particularly concerning in this **malaria-prone region**.

WATER LEAKS

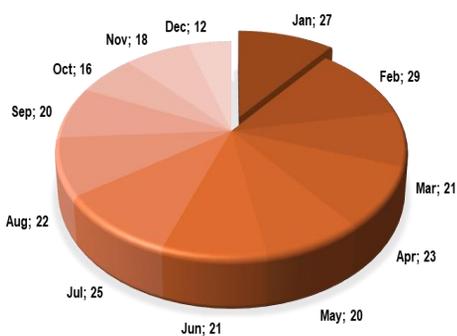


RECURRING WATER LEAKS

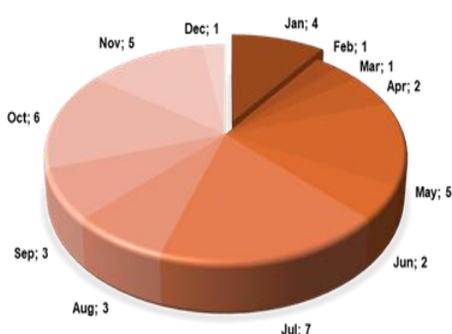


# SEWAGE SPILLAGES

SEWAGE SPILLAGES



RECURRING SEWAGE SPILLAGES



The sewerage system, over 50 years old, is inadequate for the growing population. Damaged valves, pipes, and infrastructure contribute to recurring sewage spillages.

Raw sewage flows through private homes, down streets, and into watercourses, creating hazardous living conditions. The stench lingers throughout the town, while prolonged sewage spills raise serious environmental and health concerns. **This situation is extremely detrimental to the well-being of our tourism industry.** Fly infestations thrive due to the spills, exacerbated by the failure to disinfect affected areas after repairs.

The Tshutsi River, once a seasonal stream, now flows continuously with untreated sewage, contaminating the Olifants River since 1998. This pollution impacts the Kruger National Park and travels downstream to Mozambique's Massingir Dam, causing severe environmental damage.

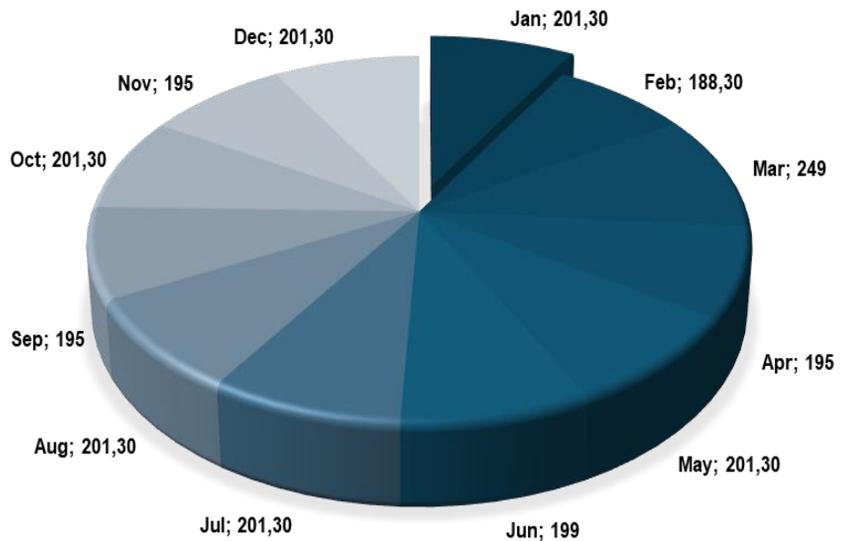


# NO WATER DUE TO:

## WATER SHEDDING

We face daily water shedding due to non-payment of the bulk water account, bulk supply failures, an inability to meet demand caused by illegal connections, unauthorised building development and water losses from aging infrastructure.

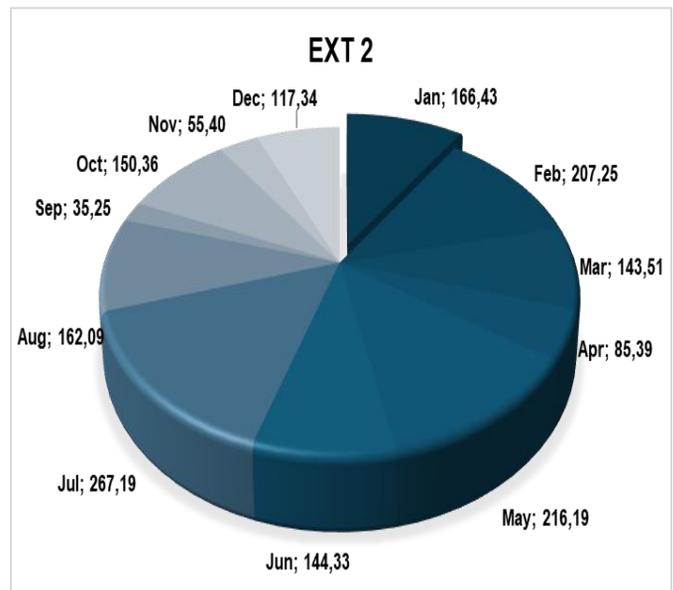
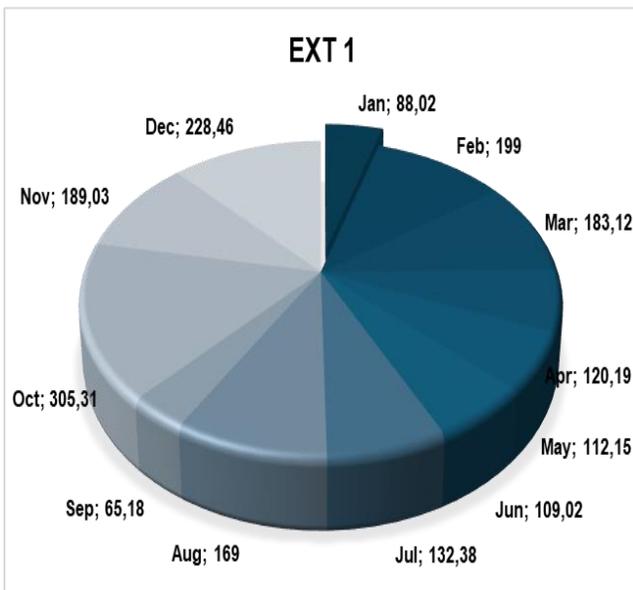
The routine evening water shedding from 22h00 to 03h30 is implemented to ensure sufficient supply for the following day.



## AGED INFRASTRUCTURE

Our municipal infrastructure is in a state of decay and collapse due to decades of little more than reactive maintenance, at best. As a result, we endure chronic and worsening service delivery failures.

A significant portion of the town has had no reliable water supply for years, with interruptions lasting days, weeks, or even months.

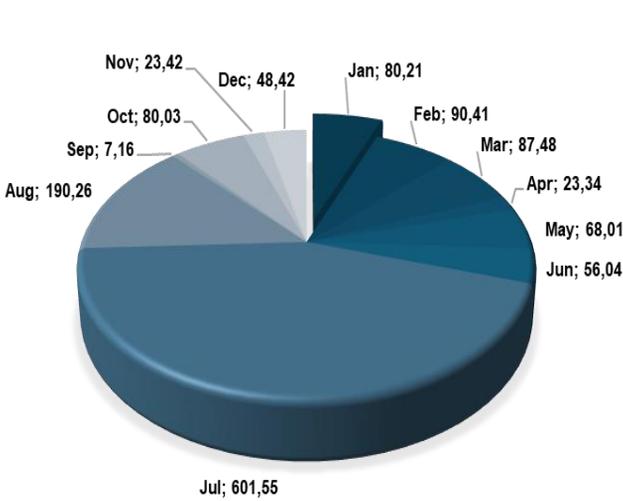




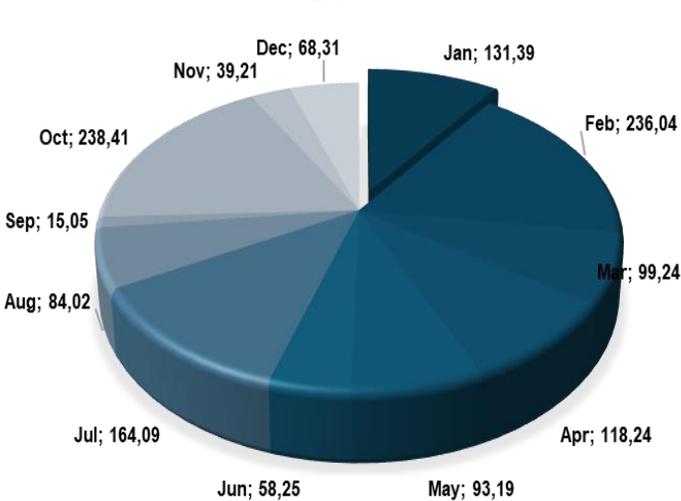
# NO WATER DUE TO:

## AGED INFRASTRUCTURE

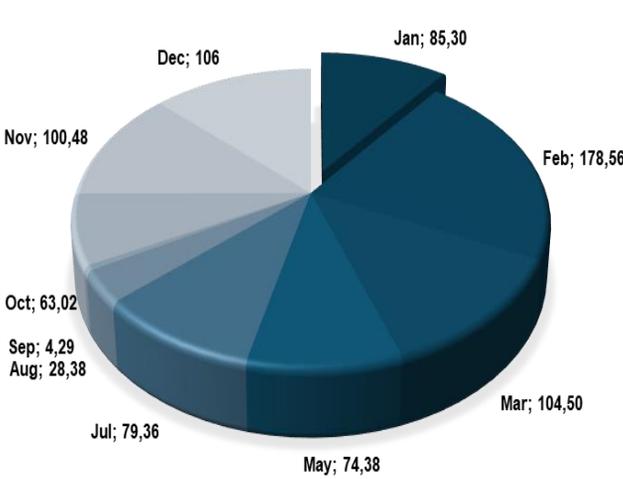
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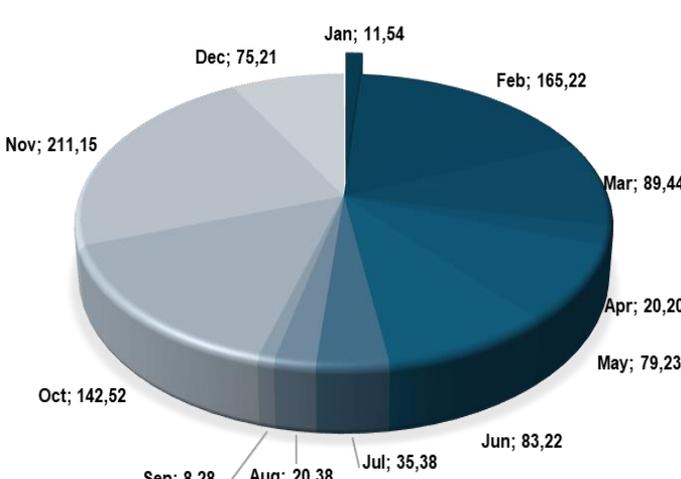
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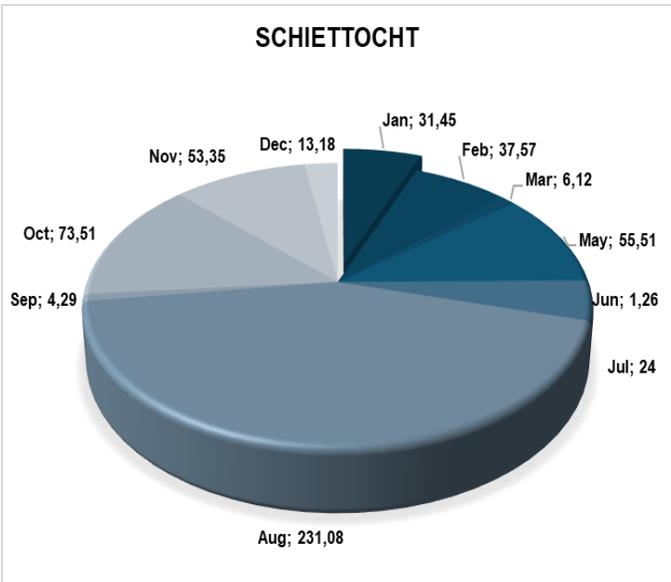
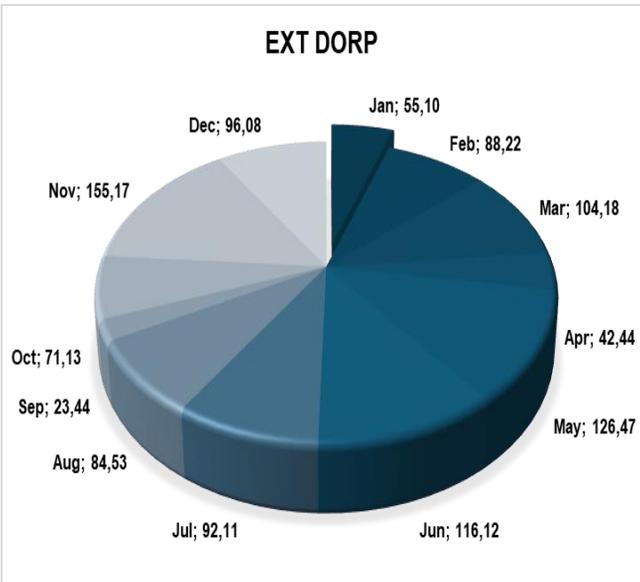
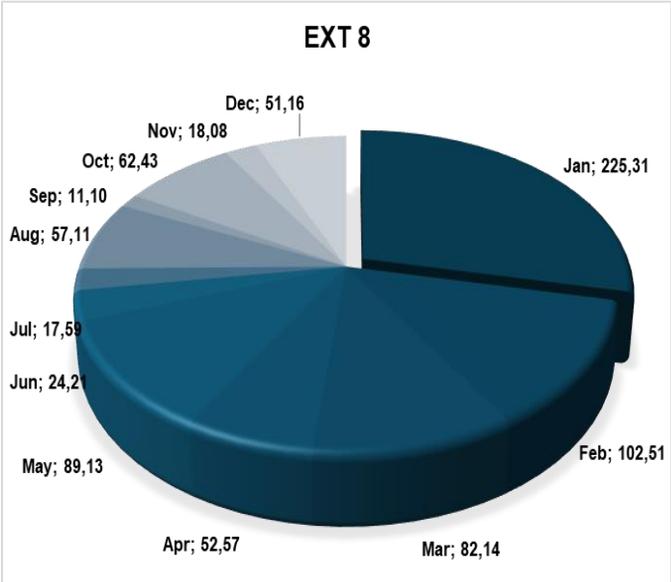
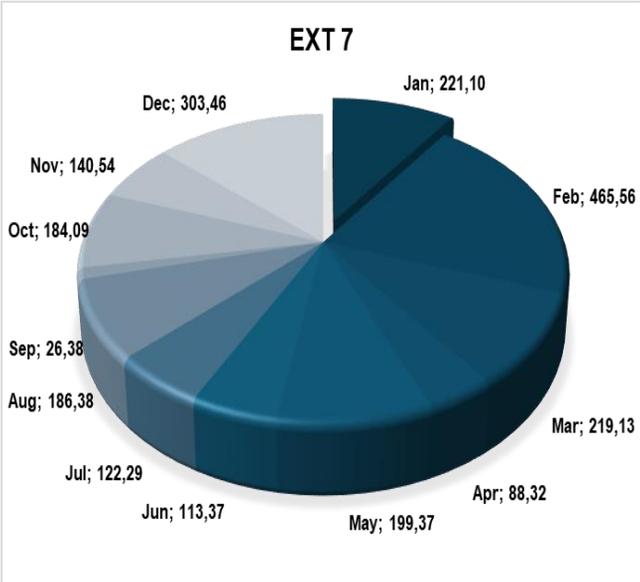
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# NO WATER DUE TO:

## AGED INFRASTRUCTURE



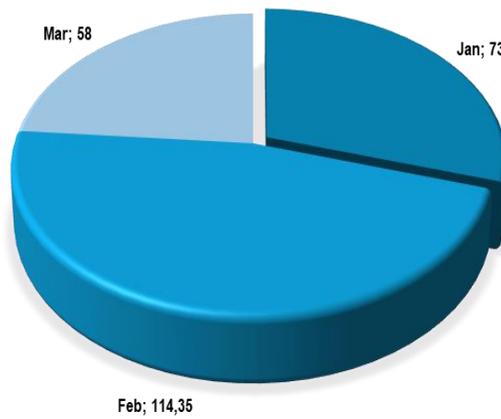


# NO WATER DUE TO:

## LOADSHEDDING

### No power means no water!

While a vast improvement, the water supply remains severely affected during power outages due to lack of backup power at reservoirs, which neither Municipalities nor Lepelle are willing to remedy due to the cost.

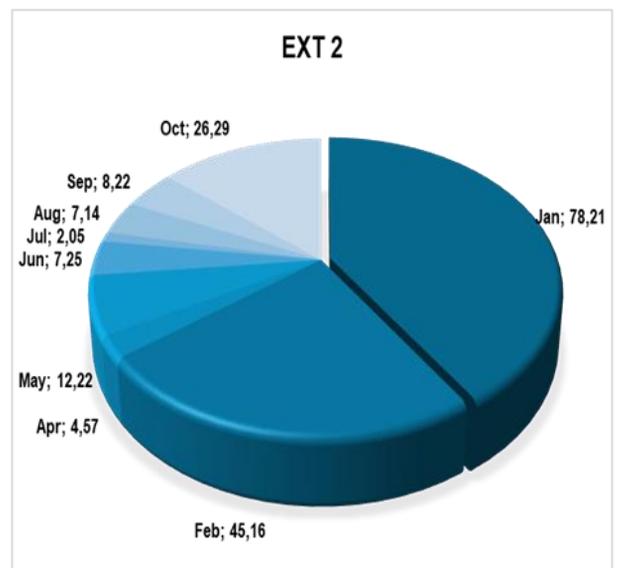
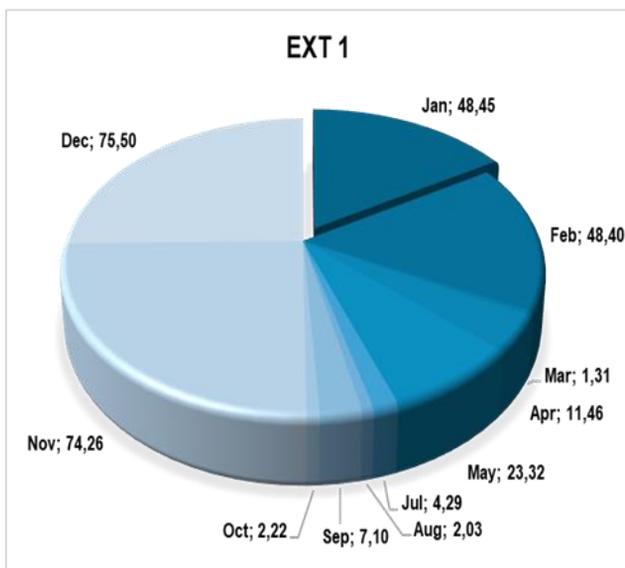


## POWER OUTAGES

### No power means no water!

It is important to note that the transfer pumps at all three town reservoirs are connected to the municipal power grid, so when there is no electricity, water supply is also cut off. In contrast, Lepelle continues pumping water 24/7 into the reservoirs, as their operations are supported by a dedicated power supply.

Frequent power outages, driven by ageing and deteriorating infrastructure, have a severe impact on our tourism industry and local businesses. Guests are often forced to check out earlier than planned, many vowing never to return.

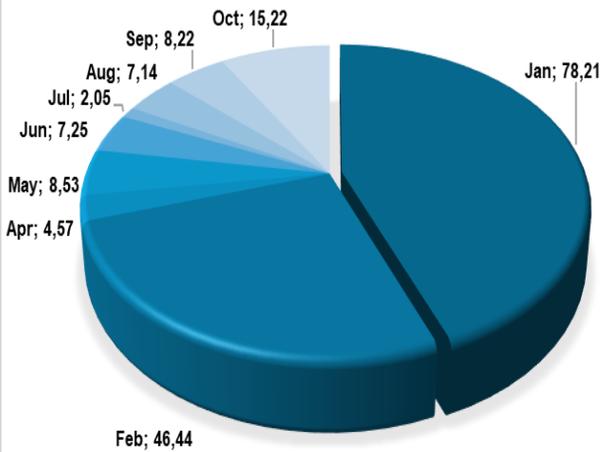


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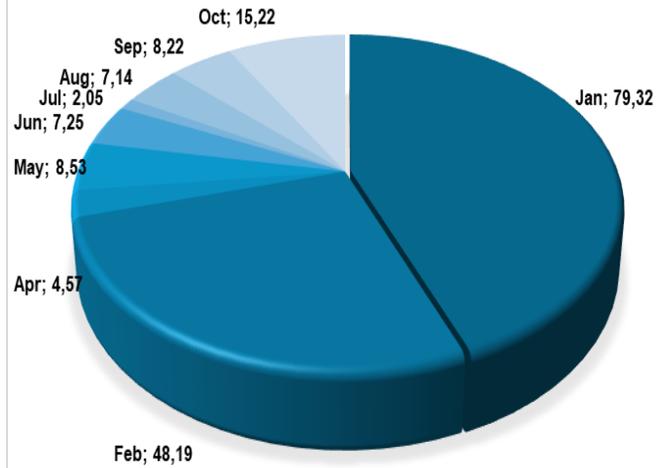


## POWER OUTAGES

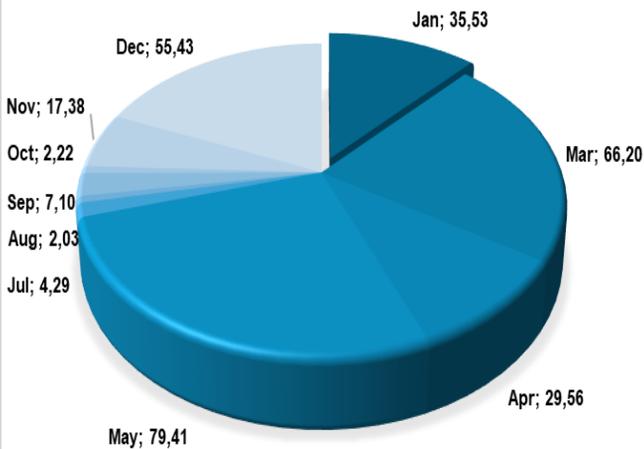
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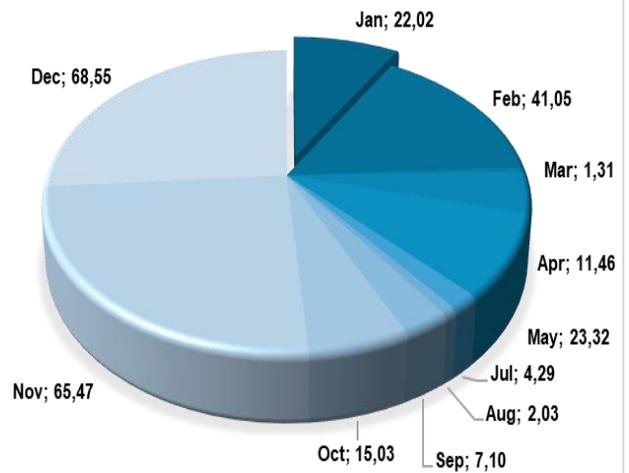
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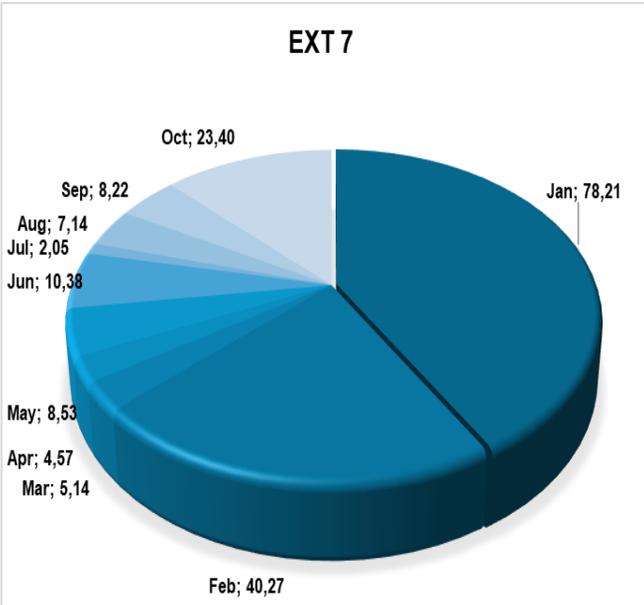


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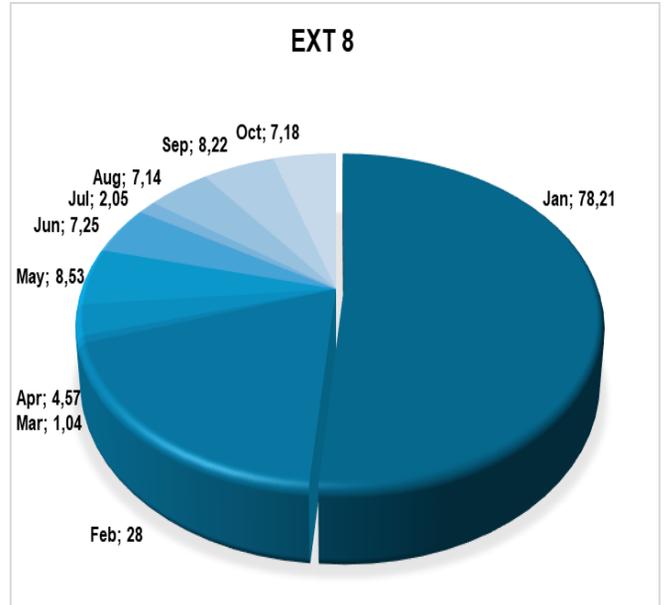


## POWER OUTAGES

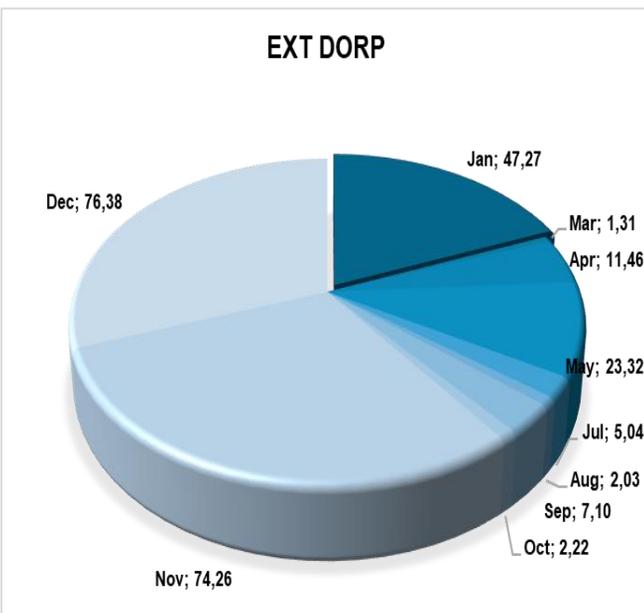
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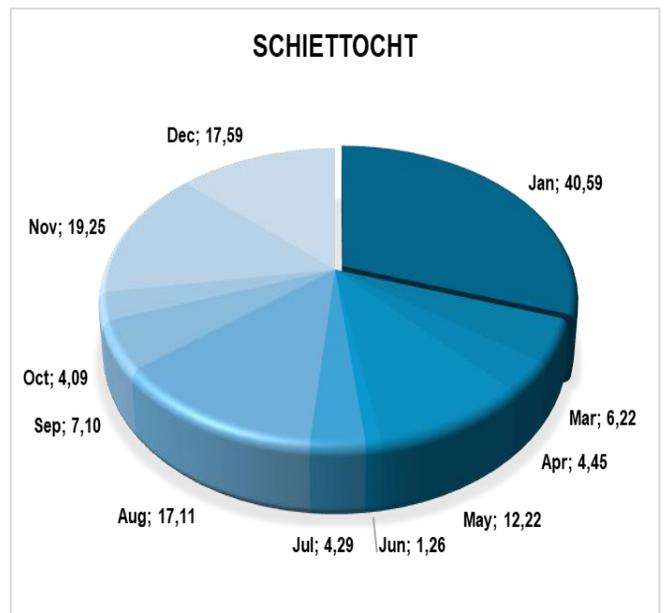
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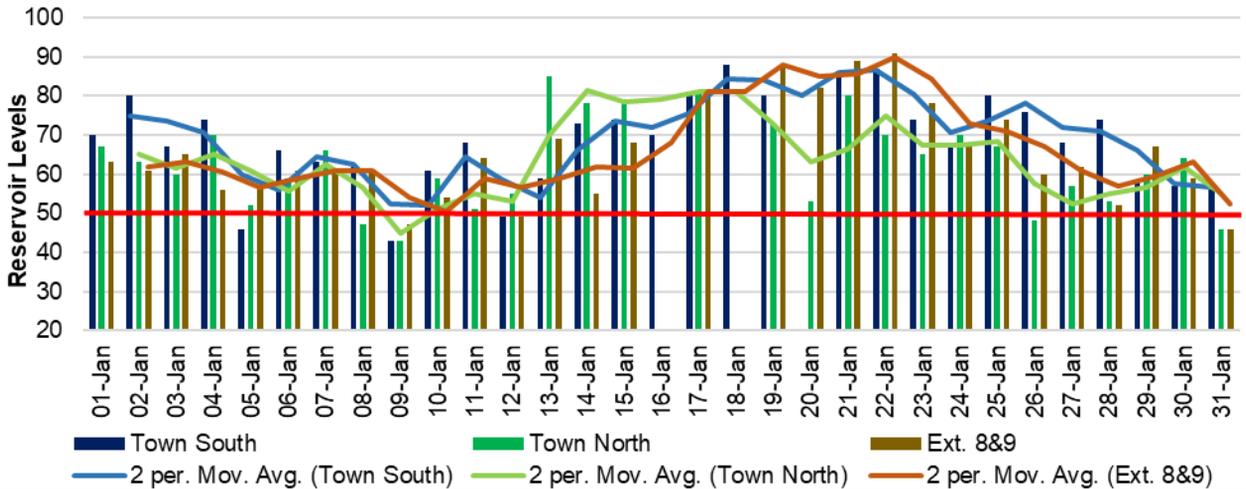
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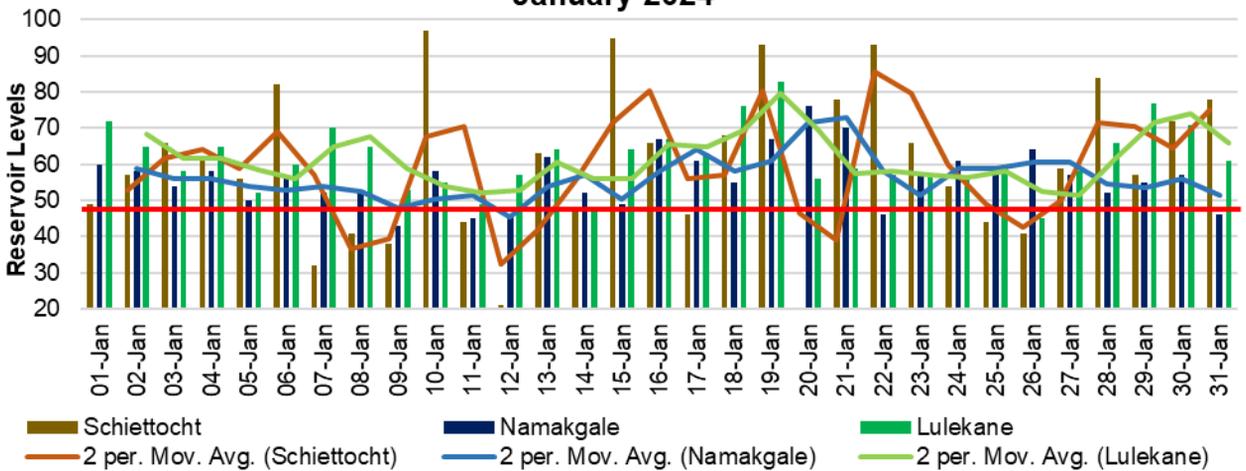


# RESERVOIR LEVELS

## Reservoir Levels in Town January 2024



## Reservoir Levels in Schiettocht, Namakgale & Lulekane January 2024

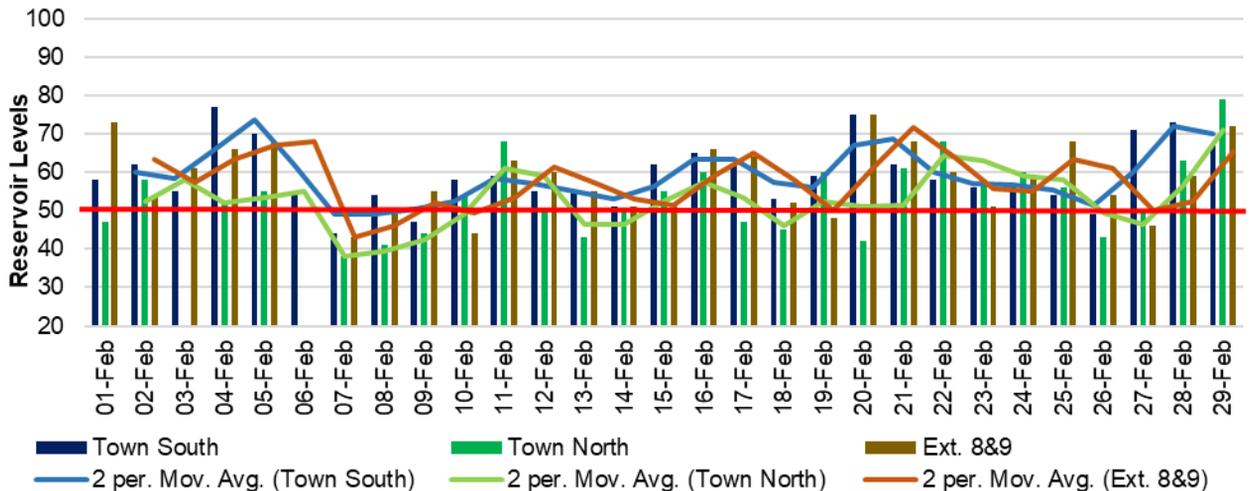


- 03-Jan-24 Repairs on the 508mm and 273mm pipelines
- 04-Jan-24 Repairs on 546mm potable bulk pipeline.
- 11-Jan-24 Repairs on 546mm potable bulk pipeline. Work incomplete
- 12-Jan-24 Repairs on 546mm potable bulk pipeline completed.
- 16-Jan-24 Power outage affecting Town North and Ext 8&9 Reservoirs
- 18-Jan-24 Power outage affecting Town North and Ext 8&9 Reservoirs
- 19-Jan-24 TS reservoir vandalised/cable stolen
- 20-Jan-24 TN reservoir acble theft last night. This cable is for monitoring not for pumping to the tower. Telemetry failure
- 23-Jan-24 TN Reservoir tower overflowing.
- 29-Jan-24 Lepelle is waiting for SCM processes re the Town North cable replacement
- 29-Jan-24 The Forbay valve is cleaned today.

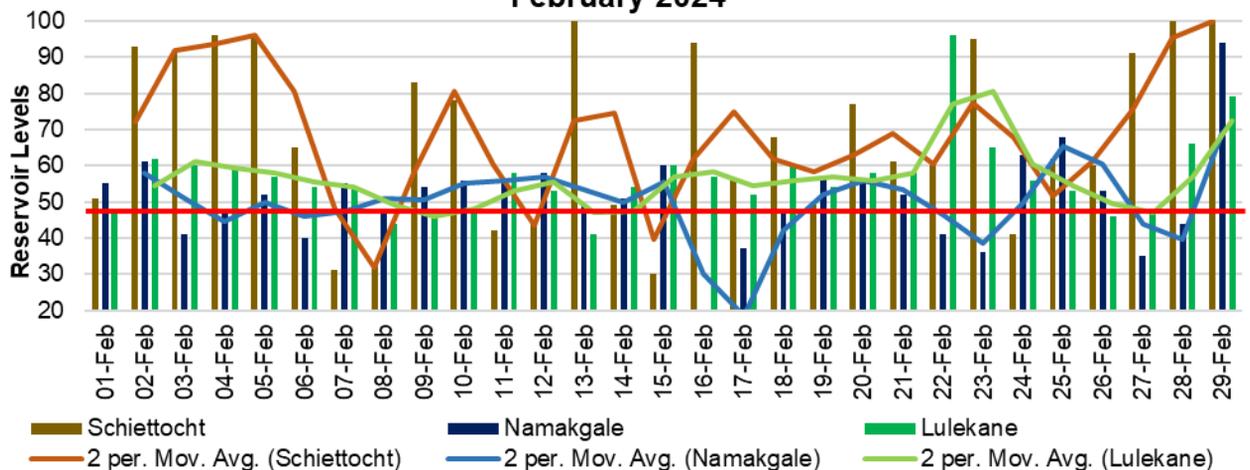


# RESERVOIR LEVELS

## Reservoir Levels in Town February 2024



## Reservoir Levels in Schiettocht, Namakgale & Lulekane February 2024



03-Feb-24 Electrical cable stolen and transformer vandalised at TN Reservoir last night. The pumps could not pump, hence low levels. When Lepelle switched the power on the pumps did not operate correctly. This due to low voltage at 380V as the pumps require 550V to operate correctly.

04-Feb-24 The 550V transformer provided and installed by PMC. The bypass is open.

05-Feb-24 Lepelle to repair the crack in the Ext 5 Reservoir. Repairs expected to be completed by Wed, 7 February 2024

06-Feb-24 Power outage affecting Town North and Ext 8&9 Reservoirs

07-Feb-24 Plant shut down for maintenance purposes, hence low reservoir levels.

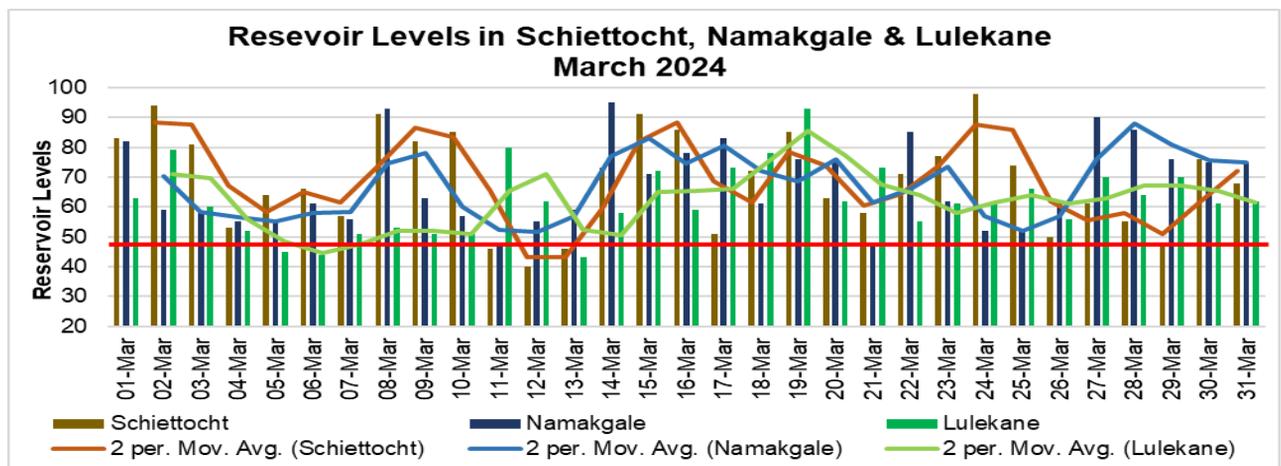
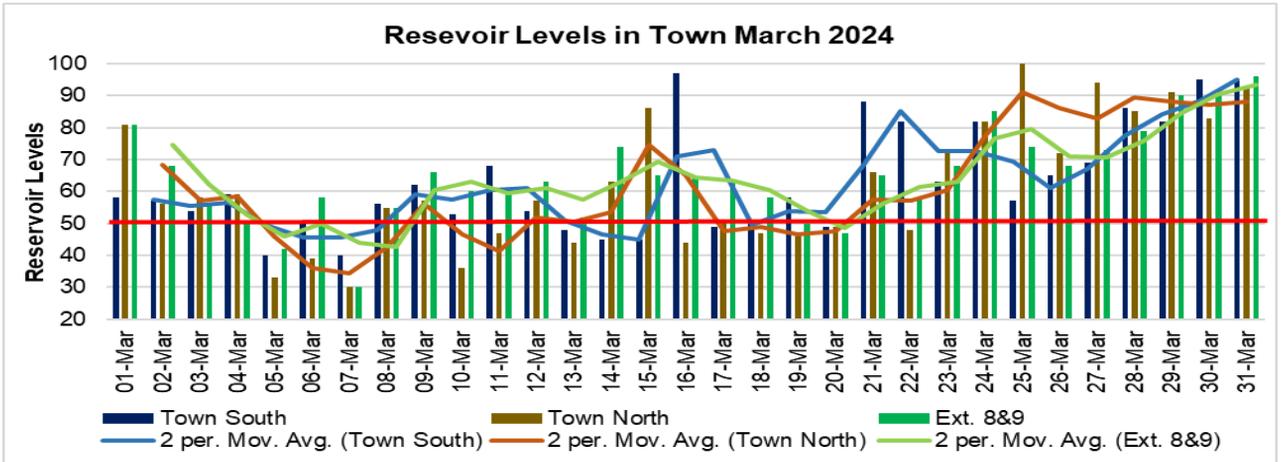
12-Feb-24 A small cable about 4m long containing very little copper wire was stolen from TN Reservoir last night. It is assumed that this is sabotage!!

13-Feb-24 Lepelle is still engaging with the Municipality regarding security enforcement

16-Feb-24 A small scobie-doo type wire was stolen from the TN Reservoir last night. This confirms our assumptions that this is an act of sabotage!!

27-Feb-24 Note: Namakgale level - 35% and Lulekane - 48%. The mines are also low today!!

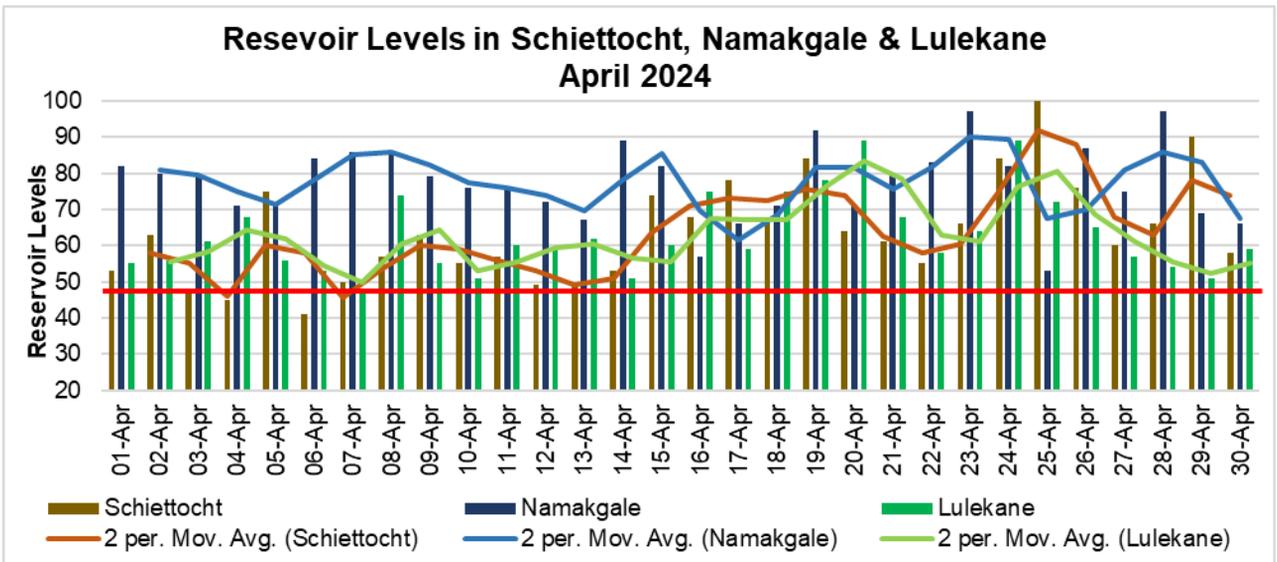
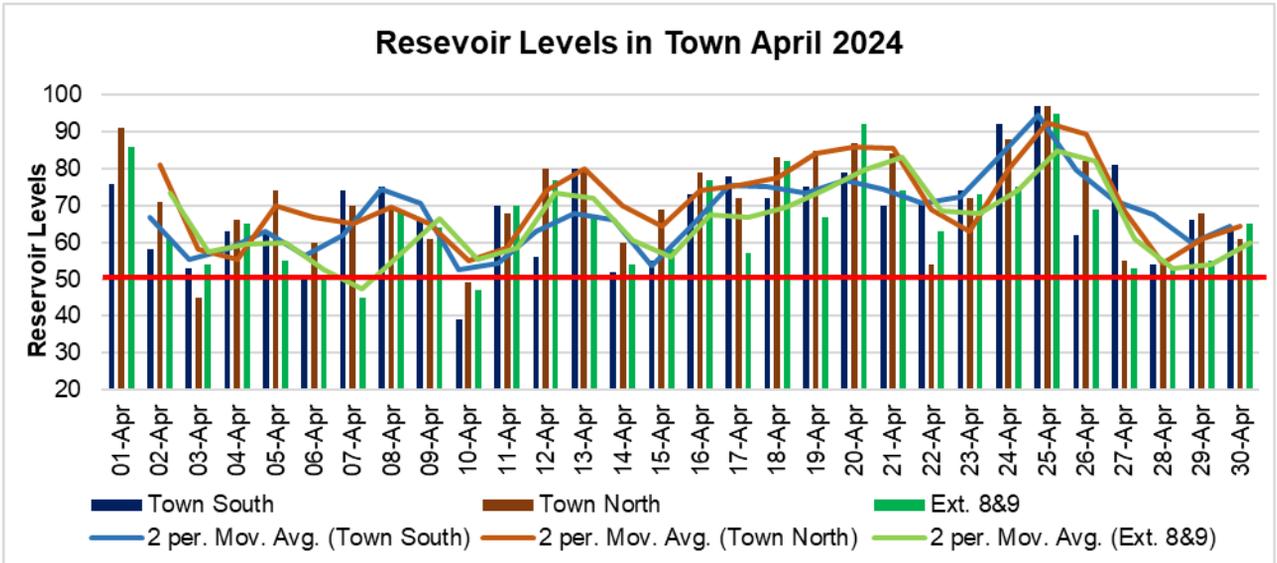
# RESERVOIR LEVELS



- 01-Mar-24 Nightly watershedding continues (Stoppage of transfer pumps from 22:00 to 4:30)
- 03-Mar-24 3 leaks located on the 546mm bulk potable pipeline
- 04-Mar-24 Repairs to the 3 leaks successfully completed.
- 05-Mar-24 Reservoir levels are not recovering.
- 06-Mar-24 Watershedding implemented (Stoppage of transfer pumps from 08:00 to 16:00)
- 06-Mar-24 Watershedding implemented (Stoppage of transfer pumps from 10:00 to 16:00)
- 06-Mar-24 Watershedding implemented (Stoppage of transfer pumps from 19:00 to 03:00)
- 06-Mar-24 Breakdown at the Plant that lasted 7 hours. The 3 Town reservoirs are extremely low.
- 07-Mar-24 Watershedding implemented (Stoppage of transfer pumps from 18:00 to 20:00)
- 07-Mar-24 Note: Temperatures in the forties since Monday, including today. Residents supplied by TN Reservoir - Day 4 without water.
- 10-Mar-24 The cables between the motors, pumps and central panel at Ext 8&9 Reservoir were stolen last night.
- 12-Mar-24 Councillors received confirmation from Lepelle that water shedding has been implemented from 12 to 15 March 2024
- 12-Mar-24 Stoppage of transfer pumps from 10:00 to 16:00
- 12-Mar-24 Stoppage of transfer pumps from 19:00 to 03:00
- 14-Mar-24 Cables from the transformer, the soft starter and pumps were stolen from TS Reservoir last night. This would explain the low reservoir level.
- 16-Mar-24 Planned shutdown for repairs to Ext 5 Reservoir. Water interruptions for 3 days. Water trucks to be deployed by Lepelle.
- 20-Mar-24 Repairs to Ext 5 Reservoir still under way. All 3 reservoirs in Town are very low this morning.
- 21-Mar-24 The 6AB is out of operations due to electrical failure. This is affecting Namakgale and consumers supplied by the 800mm pipeline, namely Town North.
- 26-Mar-24 No reading available for TN Reservoir due to a faulty transmitter.
- 27-Mar-24 TN Reservoir faulty transmitter replaced.
- 31-Mar-24 The Reservoir levels have remained high since 26 March 2024, providing wonderful pressure, however this is causing the water meters for a lot of residents to leak.



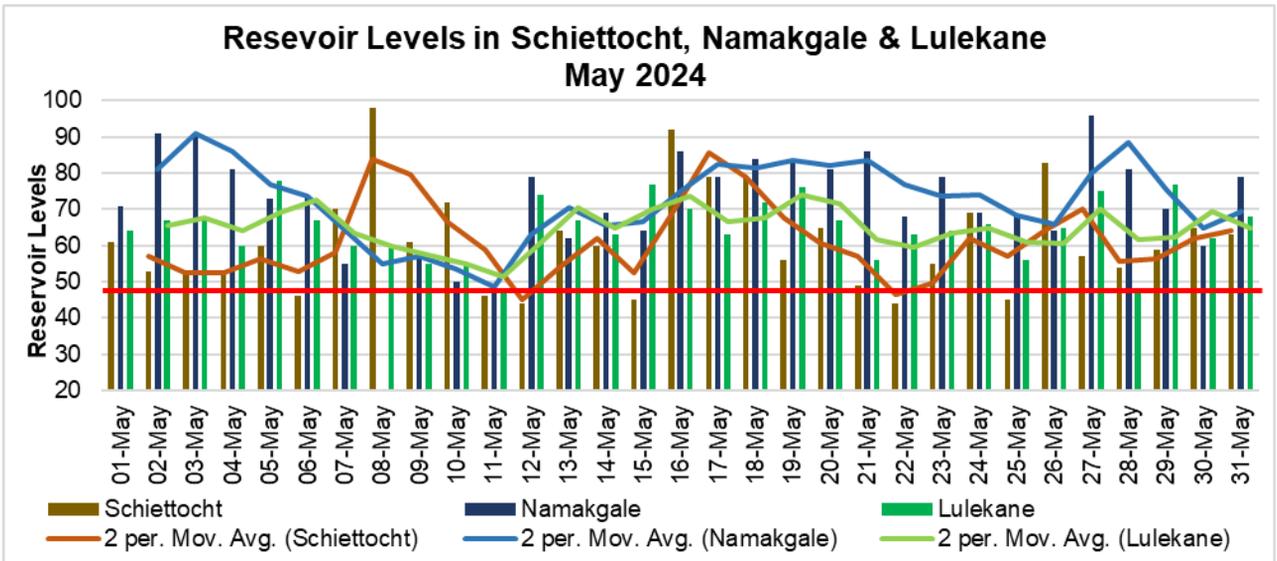
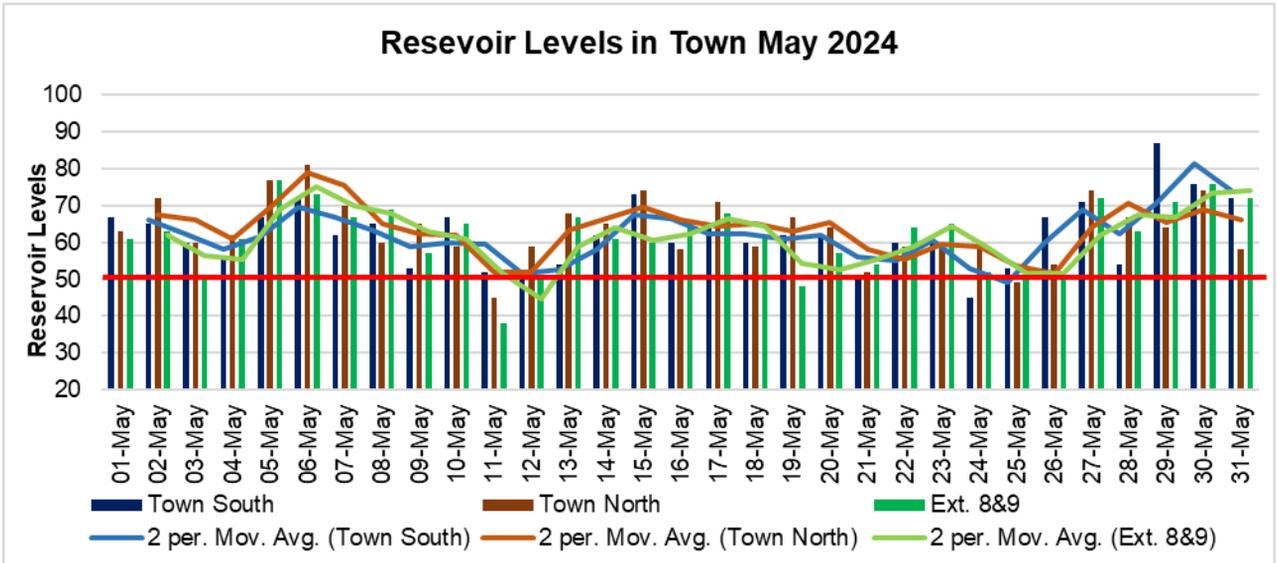
# RESERVOIR LEVELS



- 11-Apr-24 Regional Manager based in Tzaneen requested to intervene yesterday. Reservoir levels recovered.
- 13-Apr-24 "Namakgale is going down very fast" mentioned on today's report has been duly acknowledged. It's hardly unexpected, given the consistent outflow averaging at 22kl/min significantly outweighing the comparatively lower inflows.
- 15-Apr-24 Lulekane 6AB transfer pump tripped.
- 16-Apr-24 6AB transfer pump in for repairs.
- Levels recovered well.
- 18-Apr-24 Note: Town's water was switched off yesterday for unknown reason. Residents had no water from 17h53pm



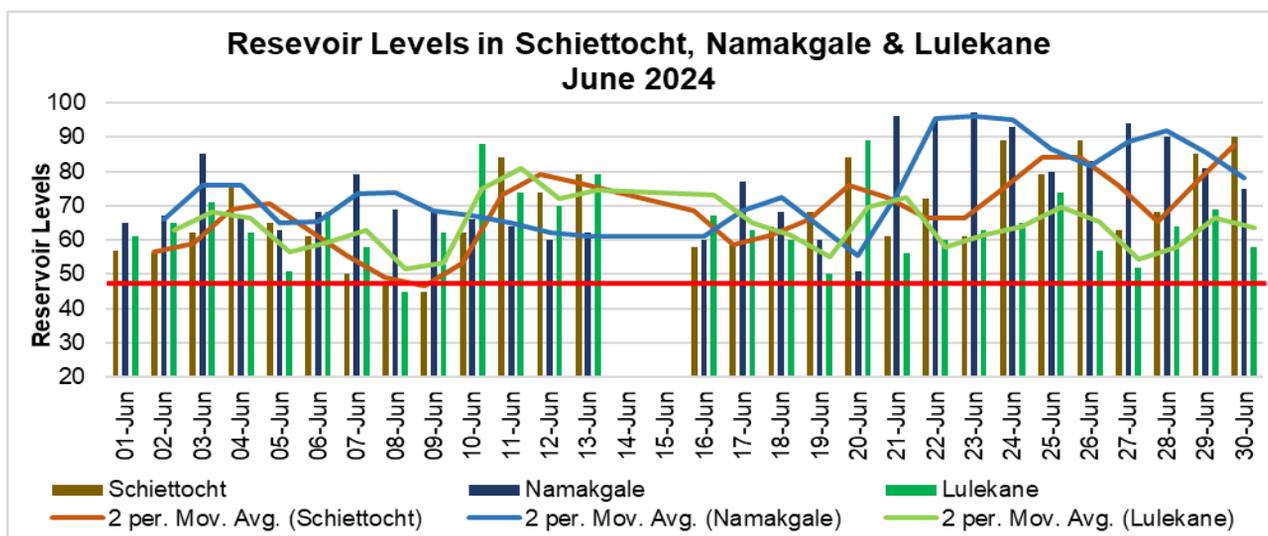
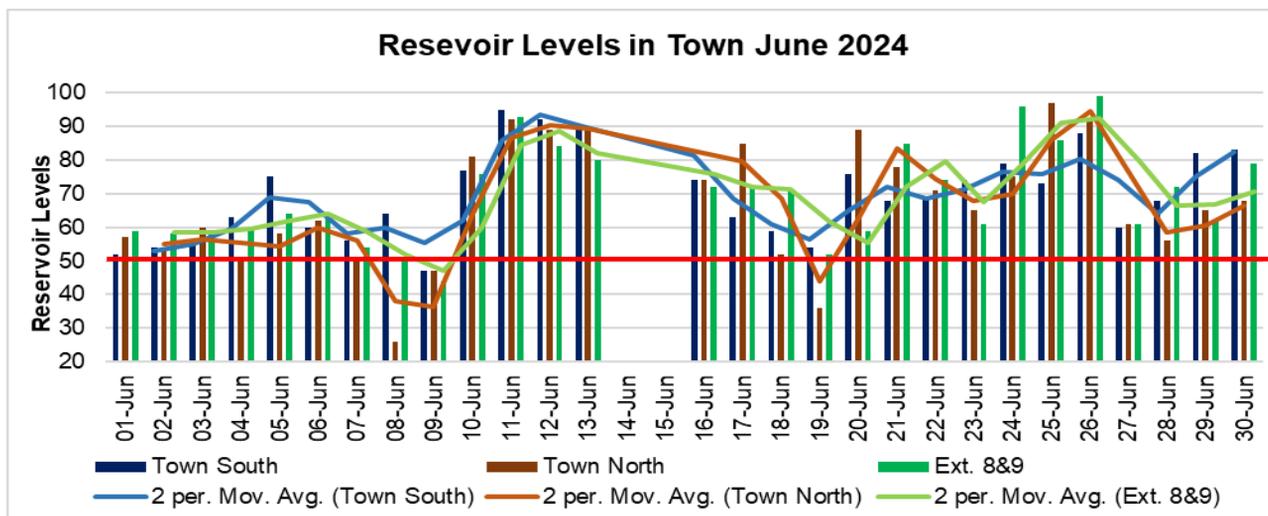
# RESERVOIR LEVELS



- 07-May-24 Leak along 546mm bulk potable pipeline. Repairs to one leak complete, however the second leak requires plant shutdown.  
6AB pump out of commission due to bearing.
- 08-May-24 Power failure at Namakgale
- 10-May-24 Plant shutdown - emergency repairs on second leak along 546mm bulk potable pipeline.  
At 18h25pm Lepelle advised that they had successfully repaired 2 leaks and were in the process of finalising a 3rd leak at 19h55pm
- 11-May-24 Repairs successfully completed at 04h00 therefore no pumping to the reservoirs hence low levels.
- 27-May-24 It would appear that the 6AB is back in operation due to the KPA pressure.



# RESERVOIR LEVELS



TN reservoir is critically low!!

08-Jun-24 Lepelle discovered that the 700mm pipeline had been sabotaged as the valve was closed/restricted. Watershedding implemented (Stoppage of transfer pumps from 20:00 to 04:30) to recover the levels

09-Jun-24 Watershedding continues (Stoppage of transfer pumps from 20:00 to 04:30) to recover the levels

10-Jun-24 Reservoir levels recovered well.

14 & 15 Jun-24 Reservoir level report not received.

16-Jun-24 [Message as posted by Lepelle via the Water WhatsApp group](#): "Going forward the report that will be shared to the community is reservoir levels only. The rest will be shared on the technical group. This will allow technical personnel to discuss on their level without involving Cllrs and the community at large."

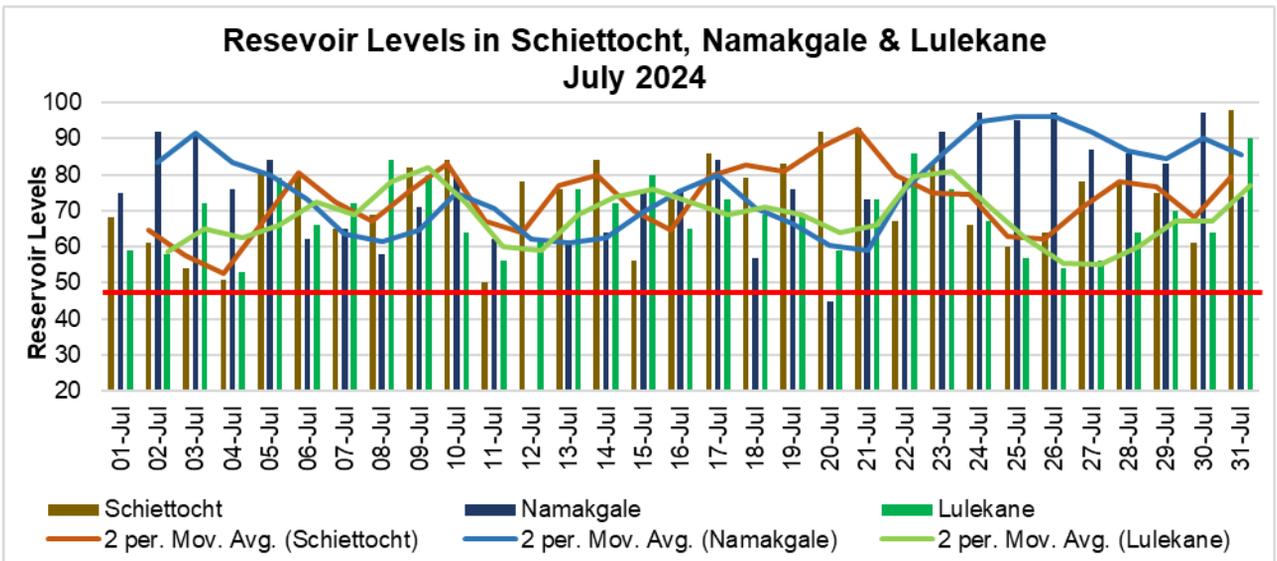
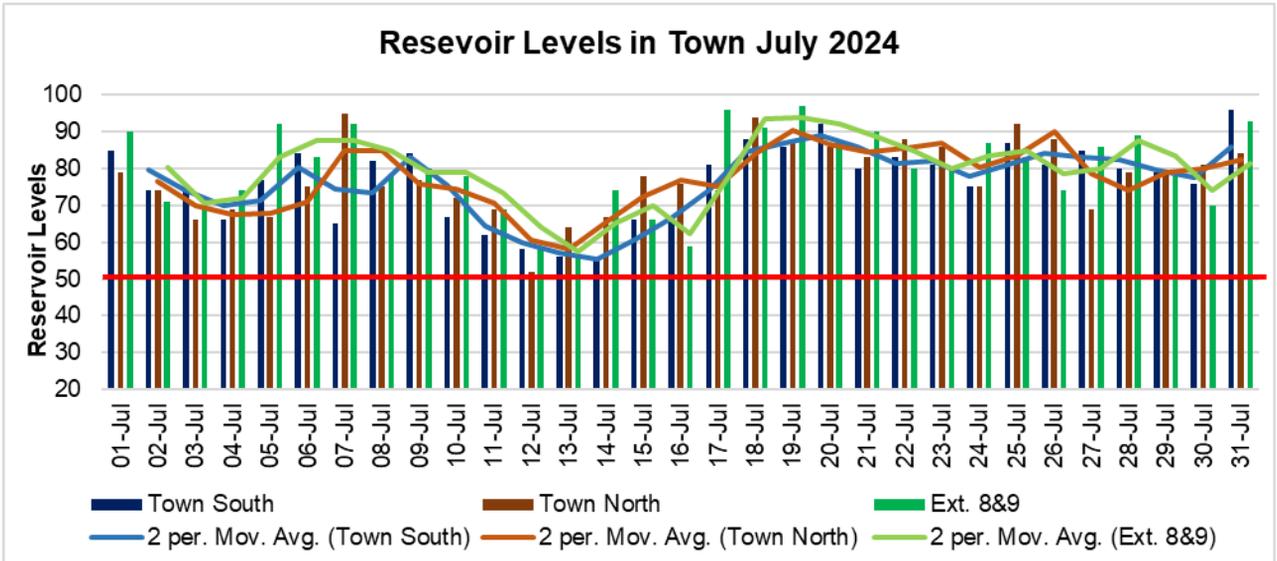
19-Jun-24 Another leak located on the 546mm pipeline. Lepelle advised that they thought it would be a quick fix, however it took longer to repair than expected.

24 & 25 Jun-24 Technical data not provided on the daily reservoir level report as per Lepelle's message received on 16 June 2024.

26-30 Jun-24 In and out flows not provided on the daily reservoir level report as per Lepelle's message received on 16 June 2024.

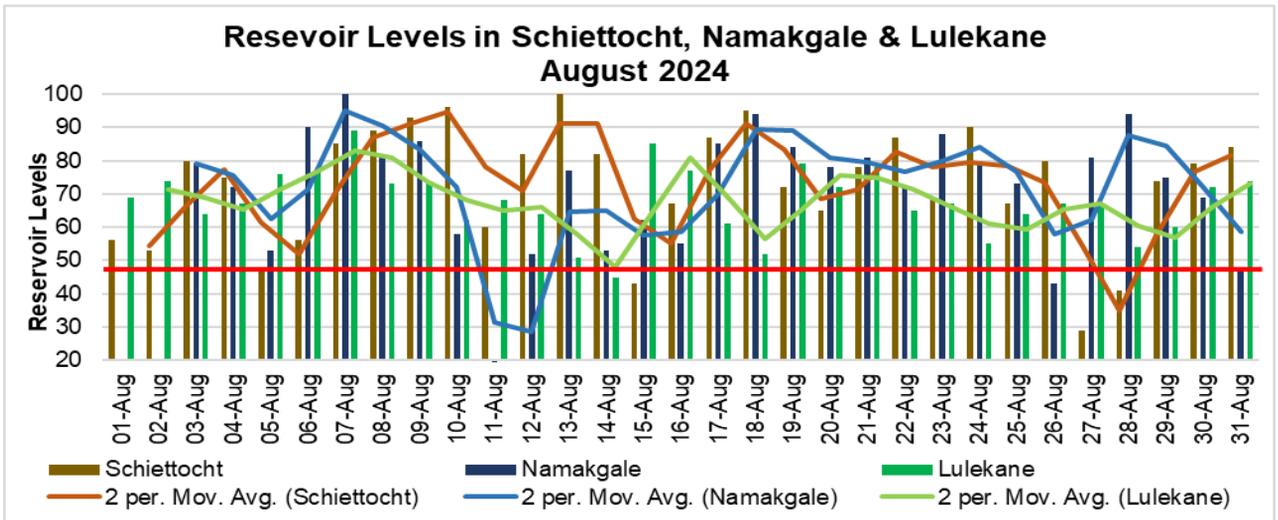
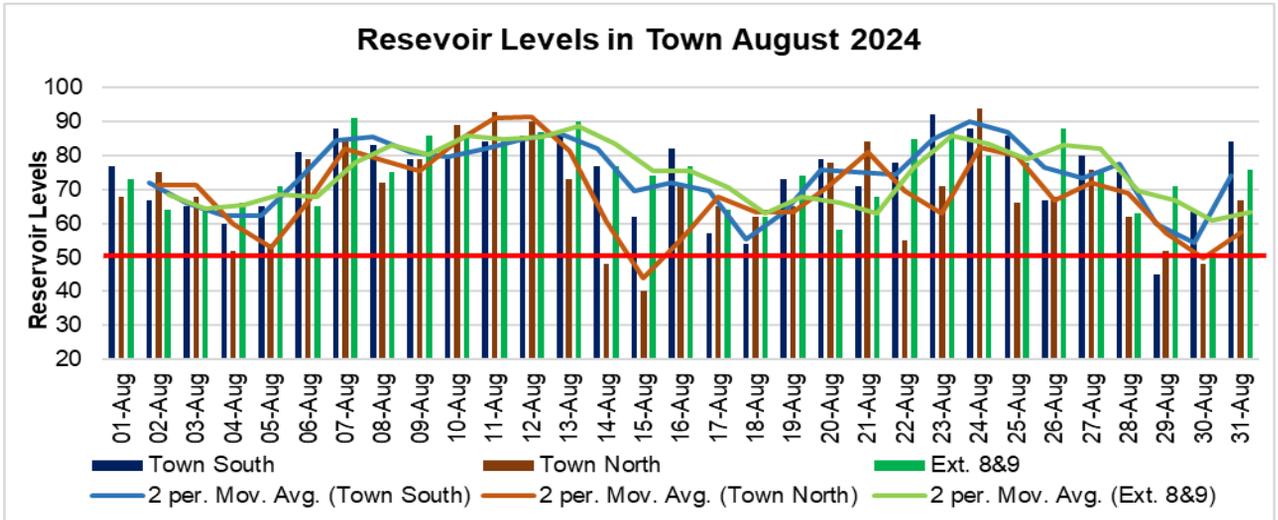


# RESERVOIR LEVELS



- 01-31 Jun-24 In and out flows not provided on the daily reservoir level report as per Lepelle's message received on 16 June 2024.
- 11-Jul-24 KPA is very low. The 800mm KPA from 1883 down to 1428 and the 546mm from 1764 down to 1303. Either a major leak somewhere or a pump issue.
- 12-Jul-24 KPA is good; however, Town's levels are significantly low.
- 16-Jul-24 TN reservoir is overflowing due to a telemerty issue caused by the power outage.
- 23-Jul-24 Huge water leak at the TN Reservoir complex below the baffle on one of the pipelines or the baffle itself. Repaired by BPM on 25 July 2024
- 28-Jul-24 Water leaking again at the TN Reservoir complex below the baffle on one of the pipelines or the baffle itself. The same leak BPM attended to on 25 July 2024

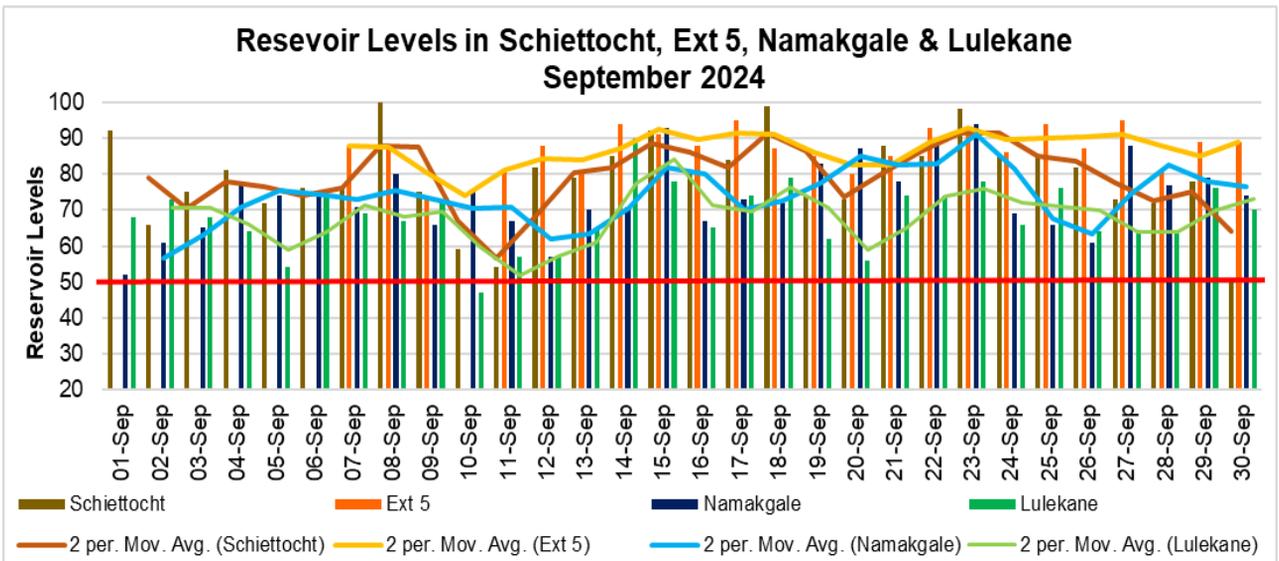
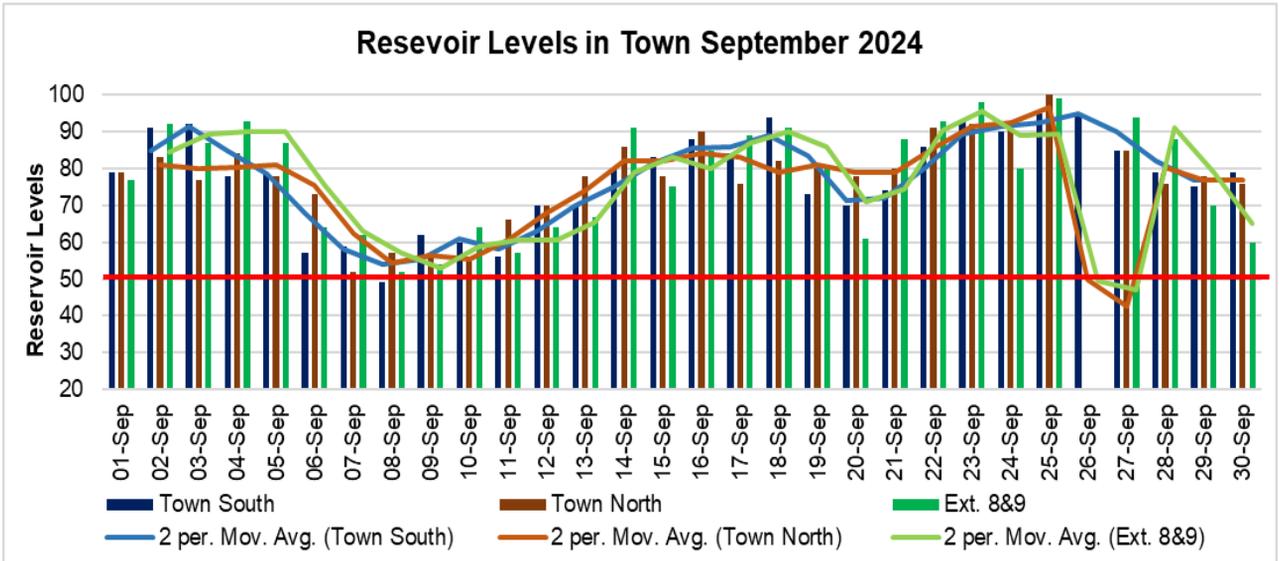
# RESERVOIR LEVELS



01-Aug-24	KPA is low. The 800mm is 1633 and the 546mm is 1523. Either a major leak somewhere or a pump issue.
05-Aug-24	KPA is low. The 800mm is 1645 and the 546mm is 1530. Either a major leak somewhere or a pump issue.
06-Aug-24	Leak located along the 546mm bulk potable water pipeline
10-Aug-24	KPA is low. The 800mm is 1658 and the 546mm is 1530. Either a major leak somewhere or a pump issue.
11-Aug-24	Namakgale critically low or a typing error.
13-Aug-24	Emergency plant shutdown due to emergency maintenance repairs on the 546mm bulk potable pipeline.  Repairs were completed around midnight last night.
14-Aug-24	KPA is very low. The 800mm is 1609 and the 546mm is 1488. Either a major leak somewhere or a pump issue. TN reservoir level is very low. Lepelle battling to release all the airlocks as this must be done the long way round due to the 560mm being decommissioned.
15-Aug-24	KPA is low. The 800mm is 1637 and the 546mm is 1521. Either a major leak somewhere or a pump issue. Lepelle still battling to release all the airlocks.



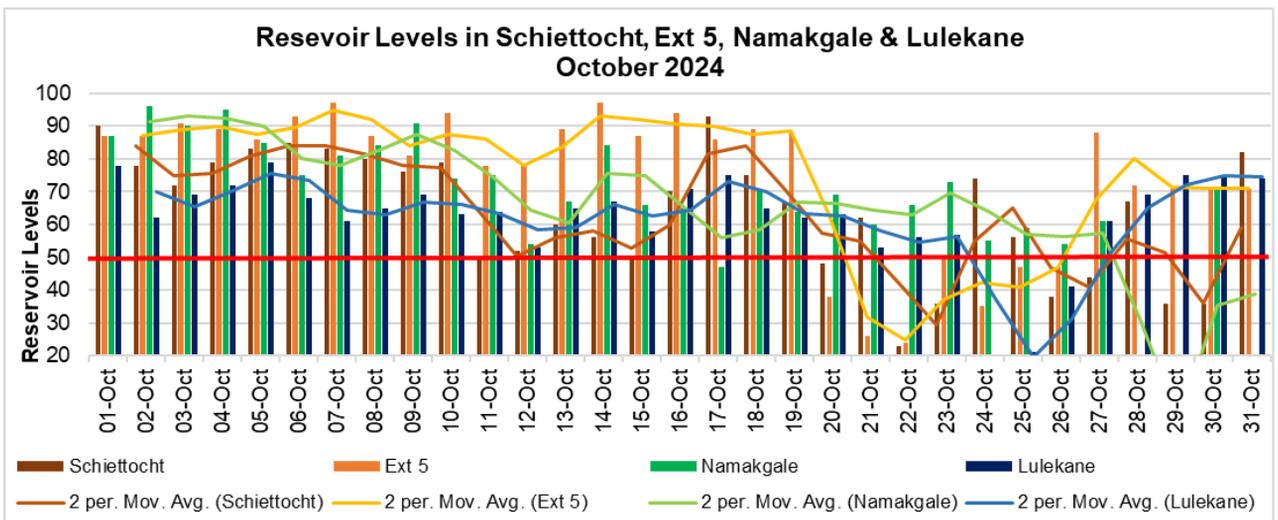
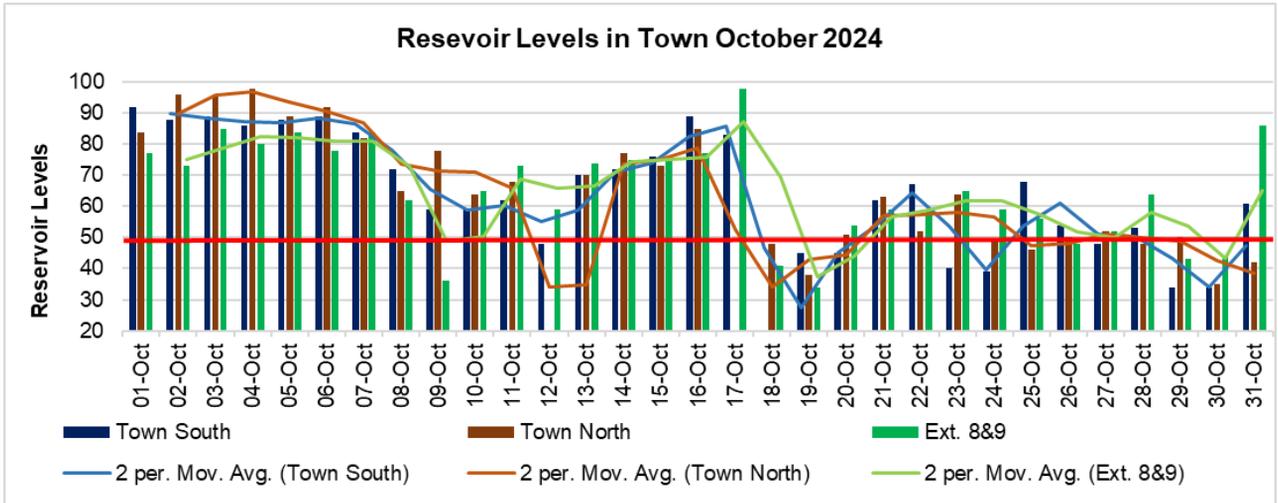
# RESERVOIR LEVELS



- 01-Sep-24 TN Reservoir tower overflow due to vandalism
- 18-Sep-24 Water supply interruption in Namakgale due to on-going 800mm pipeline repairs
- 19-Sep-24 800mm KPA is low. May be due to pipe burst/leak.
- 20-Sep-24 546mm KPA is low.
- 21-Sep-24 Water supply interruption in Namakgale due to a pipe burst in the 800mm pipeline
- 22-Sep-24 Water supply interruption in Namakgale continues as the 800mm pipeline repairs were not completed yesterday.  
The Ext 5 reservoir closed due to repairs to a burst pipe on corner 1st and 2nd Street/Ave.
- 26-Sep-24 Power Outage in Ward 12



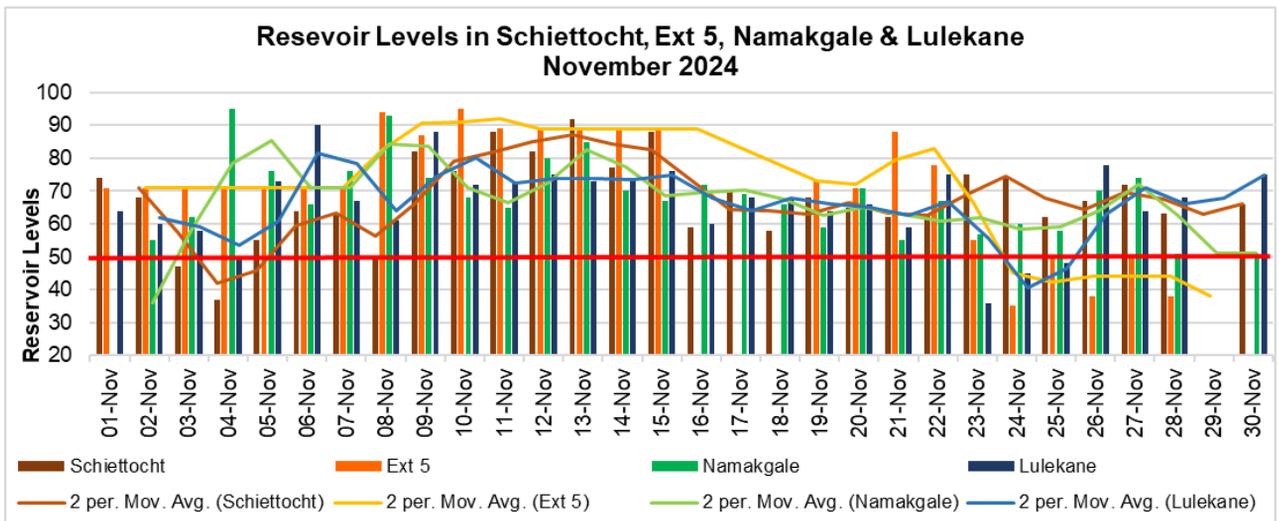
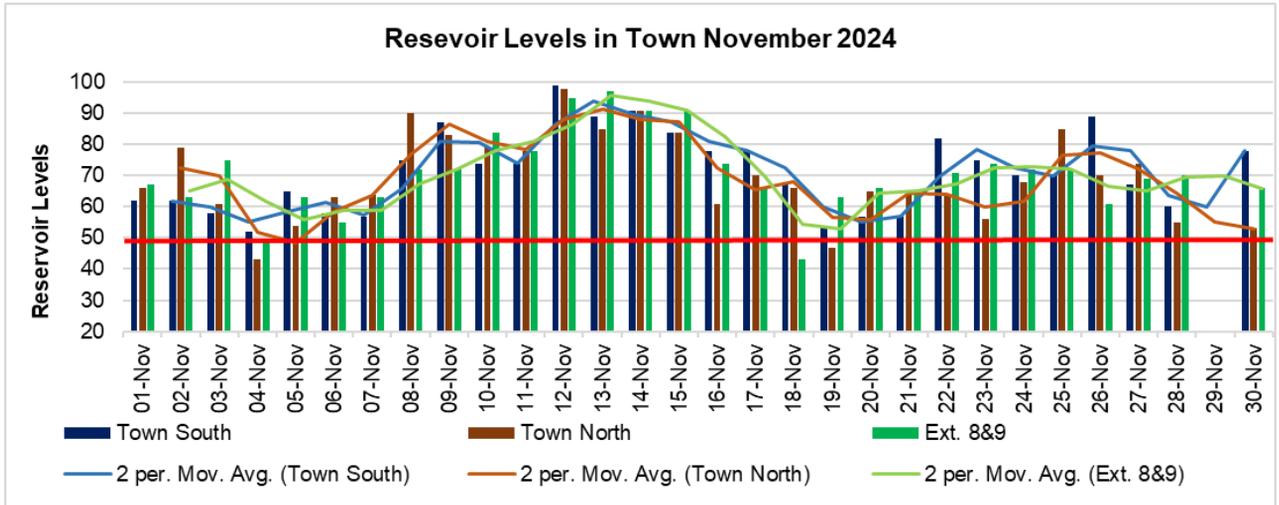
# RESERVOIR LEVELS



09-Oct-24	No reason provided regarding Ext 8&9 reservoir low level
12-Oct-24	Attempted cable theft at transformer on TN Reservoir at 22h49pm last night. No reason provided regarding TS reservoir low level
16-Oct-24	Annual scouring of TN Reservoir. Community was not notified by either of the municipalities!!
17-Oct-24	Annual scouring of TS Reservoir. Community was not notified by either of the municipalities!!
18-Oct-24	All 3 Town reservoirs low. TS is critically low!! Annual scouring of Ext 8&9 Reservoir. Community was not notified by either of the municipalities!!
19-Oct-24	Annual scouring of Ext 5 Reservoir. Community was not notified by either of the municipalities!!
20-Oct-24	Annual scouring of Sxhiettocht Reservoir. Community was not notified by either of the municipalities!!
22-Oct-24	Day 3 - Ext 5 reservoir is not recovering!!
25-Oct-24	Lepelle seems to be battling to recover the reservoir levels since the scouring process was done. The reservoir levels have still not recovered, suggesting ongoing challenges in maintaining adequate levels. Given normal pipeline pressures, this is likely due to high outflow from leaks, illegal connections, and consumption, which equals the inflow —we currently do not have reserve capacity to even last 24 hours in the case of supply disruptions. Conclusion high possibility of water shedding.
26-Oct-24	
29-Oct-24	The F9 station (the station that monitor and operate outstations through control) is out of operation. The booster pumps must be started manually.
30-Oct-24	The F9 station is still out of operation. Repaired by 14:00pm
31-Oct-24	Namakgale Reservoir level is critically low due to a faulty telemetry system.



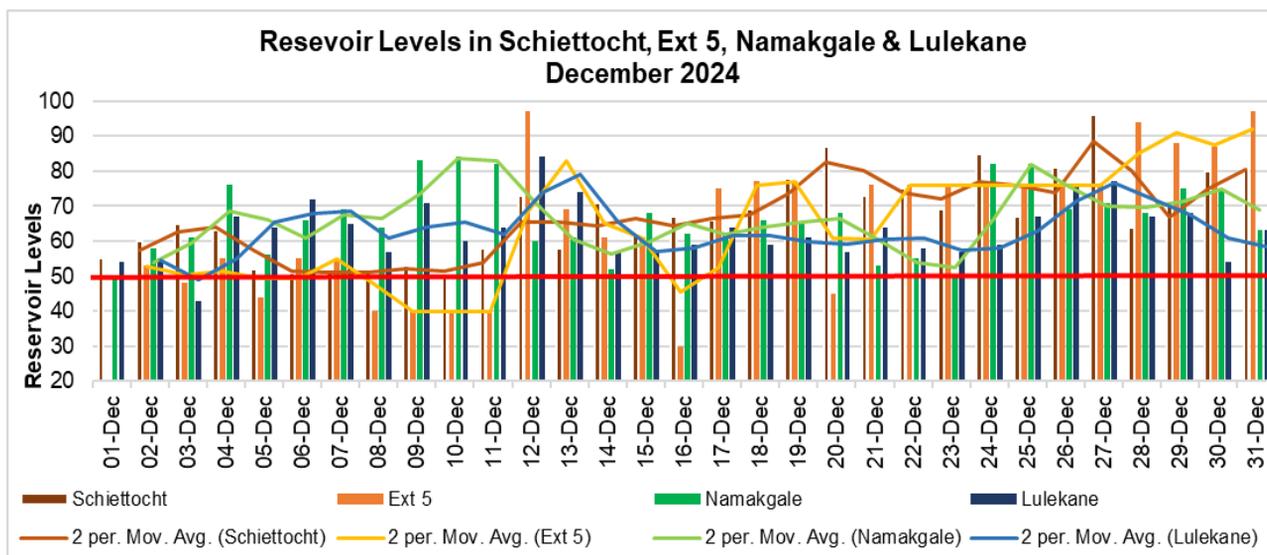
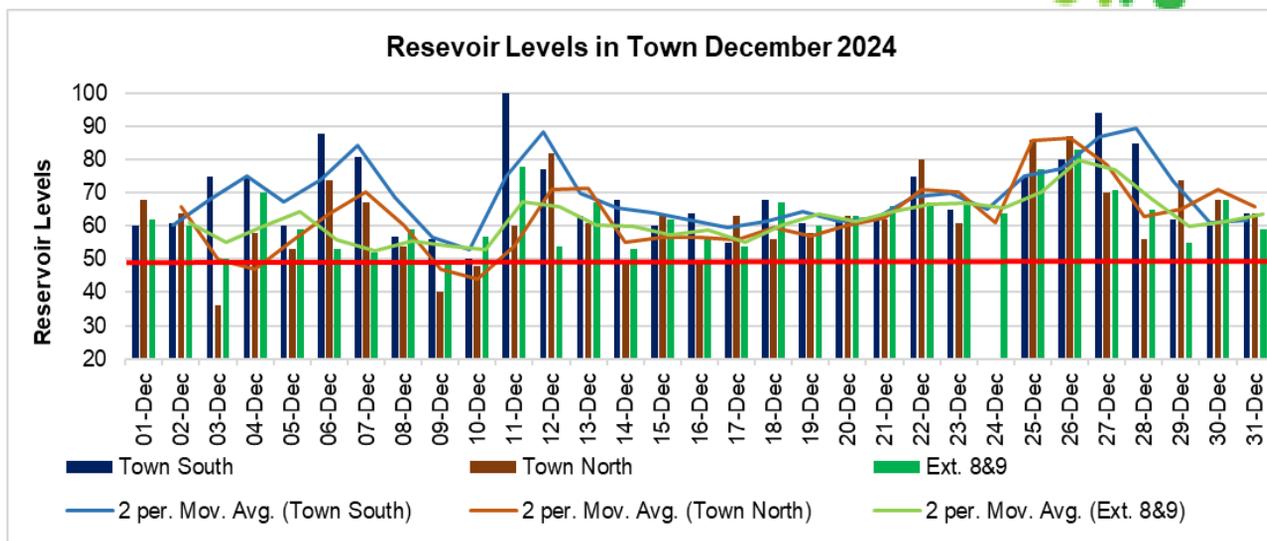
# RESERVOIR LEVELS



01-Nov-24	Confirmation received re Namakgale extremely low level is due to the annual reservoir scouring.
03-Nov-24	546mm KPA is low.
05-Nov-24	TS reservoir motor burnt.
06-Nov-24	TS reservoir motor installed.
09 & 10-Nov-24	TS reservoir closed due to burst pipe on corner Hardekool and Selati Streets. TS reservoir closed due to burst pipe on corner Hardekool and Selati Streets.
11-Nov-24	Tx fail at TS and Schiettocht reservoirs due to ward 11 power outage and cable fault at TS reservoir. Cable fault repairs completed by 17h38pm.
12-Nov-24	TS reservoir still closed due to burst pipe on corner Hardekool and Selati Streets. Repairs completed in the afternoon.
15-Nov-24	Pipe burst on the pipeline supplying water from the Town South reservoir.
16 & 17-Nov-24	No readings provided for the Industrial Area (Ext 5) reservoir. 546mm KPA is low.
26-Nov-24	KPA is low.
30-Nov-24	Report not received.



# RESERVOIR LEVELS



- 01-Dec-24 KPA is very low.
- 04-Dec-24 TN Reservoir level appears to be satisfactory, however the residents taps are dry!!
- 10-Dec-24 The TS reservoir bypass was opened during the power outage in Ward 11, however a large majority of residents received no water the entire day!!
- 11-Dec-24 The level is indeed at 100%. What was reported earlier was 37% but the reason for this is that due to the power failure, the telemetry had failed and was stuck at 37%.
- 20-Dec-24 LCBP met virtually with the Deputy Minister of the DWS, Hon. David Mhlobo and his team with a positive outcome.
- 23-Dec-24 KPA is very low.
- 24-Dec-24 Levels not available for Town North and Ext. 8&9 due to power outage.
- 28-Dec-25 KPA is very low.

# ENGAGEMENTS



The ongoing municipal service delivery failures in Ba-Phalaborwa pose a serious threat to the well-being of its residents and the sustainable development of the town.

The evidence presented in this report underscores the urgent need for effective governance, proper maintenance of infrastructure, and strategic investments in water and sanitation systems.

We continue to call on both the Municipalities and other organs of state to prioritise the restoration and maintenance of essential services to mitigate further deterioration of our infrastructure and to restore the community's faith in local governance.

- AfriForum SA
- The Arbitration Foundation of South Africa (AFSA)
- Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality (BPM) - Water Services Provider
- Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHTA)
- The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE)
- The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS)
- Foskor Zirconia (PTY) Ltd. (Foskor)
- Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET)
- Lepelle Northern Water Board (LNW) - Bulk Water Supplier
- Mopani District Municipality (MDM) - Water Services Authority
- National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA)
- Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA)
  - WaterCan platform – annual water testing
  - Community Active Networks (CAN) platform
  - Towns Active Networks (TAN) platform
- Palabora Mining Company (PMC)
- The Premier
- The Public Protector
- The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)
- SAKELIGE Selfstandige Sakegemeenskap

- Stakeholders
  - AfriForum Phalaborwa
  - Ba-Phalaborwa Chamber of Business
  - Community Policing Forum (CPF)
  - Kruger National Park (KNP)
  - Phalaborwa Accommodation Association (PAA)
  - Phalaborwa Tourism Association (PTA)
  - Phalaborwa Natural Heritage Foundation (PNHF)
- Ward Councillors



**LET'S CHANGE  
BA-PHALABORWA**

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*Non-Profit Company with registration number 2022/780255/08*

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Rachel Longster – Chairperson

Trevor van Rooyen – Vice Chairperson

Rodger Ferguson – Governance and Legislation

Kim Duverge – Secretary/Administrator

Danie Buys – Director

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**Prepared by:**

*Kim Duverge*

*Secretary/Administrator*

*Let's Change Ba-Phalaborwa*

*Date: April 2025*