



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**DATE: 16 FEBRUARY 2021**

**EMBARGO: NONE**

## **CLARITY ON PROVISION OF BULK WATER SERVICES TO POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY**

### **Background**

Lepelle Northern Water (LNW) is the bulk water service provider for Polokwane Municipality, which occurs via two bulk schemes being Ebenezer and Olifantspoort.

### **Ebenezer Scheme**

Due to operational challenges LNW is currently unable to supply adequate bulk water to Polokwane Municipality. LNW has taken the municipality in its confidence in dealing with the situation, to resolve the challenges and reaching lasting solutions to the benefit of residents and consumers.

LNW has a contractual responsibility of supplying 32MI/day from Ebenezer Dam, which was at a critical low of 12% during the period of drought. An abstraction restriction of 20% was put on LNW with the aim of sustaining the dam levels until the rainy period. After the recent rains, dam levels increased and LNW requested the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation to set aside the restriction, to which a response is still awaited.

After heavy rains, LNW faced operational challenges at Ebenezer Plant, which could not handle the high turbidity levels, resulting in less water being abstracted from the dam. The condition contributed to less water being released to the supply areas, including reservoirs for Polokwane Municipality.

In addressing the challenge of high turbidity, LNW embarked on the process of backwashing sand filters to improve its effectiveness. The plant is having ten sand filters which get backwashed four times daily under normal circumstances, but in this crisis period are backwashed eight to ten times a day, a process that is proving to be successful since more water can be purified and be pushed towards Polokwane reservoirs.

The situation has started to yield results with more water getting pumped to the reservoirs of Polokwane Municipality for an improved situation. LNW has started to employ the use of four high lift pumps, where reservoirs levels are expected to pick up soon.

### **Olifantspoort Scheme**

Olifantspoort Scheme is also supplying other water services authorities, being Capricorn and Sekhukhune District Municipalities for Lepelle Nkumpi, Greater Tubatse and Fetakgomo Local Municipalities.

The capacity of the plant is 60MI/day and the allocation to Polokwane Municipality is 27MI/day.

Currently Olifantspoort Scheme is functioning well and pumping more water to Polokwane reservoirs than the determined allocation.

In conclusion it has to be noted that should both schemes function without interruption the water situation in Polokwane will improve in due course.

LNW is doing everything in its power to get the schemes back to full operation status to turn the situation around. The challenges experienced at Ebenezer Scheme have not happened before and took the organisation by surprise.

LNW regrets finding itself in this situation and is doing everything to get out of this dire situation.

Issued by LNW Communications

For inquiries contact Simon Mpamonyane on 082 9051830 or [simonm@lepelle.co.za](mailto:simonm@lepelle.co.za) or Yolande Nel on 083 278 1446 or [yolanden@lepelle.co.za](mailto:yolanden@lepelle.co.za).