



Councillor A (Dries) van der Westhuizen
Infrastructure and Engineering Portfolio
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18 May 2022

The Director-General
Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS)
Private Bag X313
Pretoria 0001

Attention: **Dr Sean Phillips** (mdakanep@dwa.gov.za)
Copies: **Mr Senzo Mchunu, Minister: DWS** (alexanderv@dws.gov.za)
Ms Avril Williamson, Director-General: COGTA (ZandileZ@cogta.gov.za)
Ms Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Minister: COGTA (MandisaMB@cogta.gov.za)

Dear Dr Philips

ADDRESSING THE LACK OF LEADERSHIP DURING THE NELSON MANDELA BAY WATER CRISIS?

On 18 May 2022 an **article** "Nelson Mandela Bay snubs Treasury drought support" **featured in one of Nelson Mandela Bay's local newspapers, The Herald**. The article can be accessed at https://www.heraldlive.co.za/news/2022-05-18-nelson-mandela-bay-snubs-treasury-drought-support/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook#Echobox=1652846114. The article **outlines how all those responsible for managing the drought in Nelson Mandela Bay, from the Mayor to the officials in the Water and Sanitation sub-directorate, have ignored letters and not worked with experts made available to assist with coping with the water crisis.**

The lack of will and urgency, and, most importantly, the **lack of leadership during this crisis has been of great concern to us**, the official opposition in Council. Of particular importance are the following:

- The city has **two apparently-elected City Managers**, with one recognised by some officials, and the other recognised by a different faction. The City Manager's office

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remains unoccupied due to threats made to both "incumbents". Both are working elsewhere within the municipality.

- The **position of Executive Director : Infrastructure and Engineering (within which the Water and Sanitation sub-directorate resides) has been vacant for over a year**. The acting incumbent stepped down recently, and **no other official is either prepared to act or suitable to act**.
- **The Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) has been removed from Council** by his party. He is fighting this in court. In the interim, there is no active MMC, and councillors have had no portfolio committee meetings. This has severely affected the flow of information to the residents that councillors represent.
- **The position of Speaker of Council is affected in the same way** as that of the MMC, and Council meetings are held now only for compliance reasons.

It is our contention that **your Department can second an official, or a suitably qualified expert, to LEAD (not just to advise) the municipality's Sub-Directorate of Water and Sanitation** during this crisis time. This can be **coupled with a directive that the seconded expert be utilised to LEAD the sub-directorate, and that ALL officials (including the current Senior Director: Water and Sanitation) report to the seconded person**.

It is our view that such support can be effected via **your mandate outlined in Section 154(1) of the Constitution** (Act 106 of 1996), dealing with "the support and strengthening of municipalities to manage their own affairs".

It is worth noting that the officials in the relevant sub-directorate are largely competent. It is the leadership, and thus **the high-level handling of the current crisis, that is at issue**.

In light of the fact that **the first of our dams is set to run dry within 27 days**, I trust that this request, made out of concern for the Metro in which we live, will receive your **urgent attention**.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely



COUNCILLOR DRIES VAN DER WESTHUYZEN