



**Councillor A T Lovemore**  
**DA Spokesperson: Corporate Services**  
**Member: Public Health Committee**  
**Nelson Mandela Bay**  
**Email : annettel@mandelametro.gov.za**  
**Cell : 0834635334**

30 March 2026

The Head of Department  
Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism  
Eastern Cape

**Attention: Ms M Mama**

Email: Pendulwa.Guma@dedea.gov.za

Copies: Hon H Pieters (MEC: DEDEAT)

Email: Mandisa.Nohashe@dedea.gov.za

Hon V Knoetze (Leader of the Opposition in the Legislature and DA Spokesperson: DEDEAT)

Email: vknoetze@yahoo.com

Dear Ma'am

#### **INVESTIGATION INTO FISH KILL, SWARTKOPS RIVER, 27 March 2026**

On 27 March 2026 the community of Redhouse was greeted with the sight of thousands of dead juvenile fish, of various species, along the banks of and in the waters of the Swartkops River.

It has since been determined that a sewer main in Motherwell had collapsed, and sewage was flowing into the Motherwell stormwater canal, and, via this canal, into the river. This caused eutrophication of the river, and, ultimately, depletion of the oxygen availability in the watercourse, causing so very many fish to die of suffocation.

The Swartkops Conservancy reported the sewage spill in question on 9 March, and alerted the public to be aware of the severe contamination of the river. Despite this prompt report by the Conservancy, it was only three weeks later that work commenced to repair the collapsed sewer main.

This is not an isolated incident.

The Swartkops River is subject to regular discharge of partially-treated effluent from the Kelvin Jones Wastewater Treatment Works. Just this morning, a sewage spill into the Markman Canal was reported – also ultimately destined to discharge into the Swartkops River. Such spillages via the Markman Canal are not uncommon, and nor are spillages via the Motherwell Canal.

The pollution of this river, caused primarily by the failure of the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality to maintain its sewerage infrastructure and to respond promptly to failures of the system, has continued over many years.

This cannot be allowed to continue, with no accountability and little to no action taken to prevent recurrences.

Kindly investigate the fish kill specifically, but also the ongoing threat of pollution of the river. Take the necessary action to ensure appropriate action and accountability.

We rely on you to assist this municipality to protect its environment.

I look forward to your positive response.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annette Lovemore', written in a cursive style.

**COUNCILLOR ANNETTE LOVEMORE**