



## Johannesburg Water Infrastructure

#Executive Mayor

Dear Residents of Johannesburg,

Many of you have experienced water disruptions that have tested your patience and resilience over the past several months. I want to address you candidly and with transparency. I hear your concerns. I understand your frustration, and most importantly, want to assure you that we are taking decisive action to address Johannesburg's ageing water infrastructure and stabilise the water supply across our city. The challenges we face today did not arise overnight. They are the cumulative result of years of underinvestment, deferred maintenance, and mounting pressure on a system that has become inadequate for a growing and dynamic city like Johannesburg.

This administration is not here to offer excuses. Our mandate is to fix what is broken and rebuild a water system that serves Johannesburg—not just today, but for generations to come. For too long, critical infrastructure such as reservoirs, pump stations, pipelines, and treatment facilities was permitted to deteriorate. Burst pipes became an almost daily occurrence, and millions of litres of clean water were lost through leaks. Entire communities were left without water when key parts of the system failed. As the City of Johannesburg, in close partnership with Rand Water and national government, we resolved to confront these challenges directly and decisively.

We have launched an ambitious programme of repairs, maintenance, and upgrades across every region of the city. Each day, our teams are replacing ageing and collapsing pipelines; repairing significant leaks and bursts that waste millions of litres; upgrading reservoirs and pump stations; strengthening pressure management systems; and enhancing our response times to faults. This is not superficial work; it is structural change aimed at rebuilding the very backbone of Johannesburg's water system. One of the primary causes of our water shortages has not been limited supply, but infrastructure failure.



In certain areas of the city, up to 40 percent of clean water is lost before it even reaches homes and businesses—water disappearing underground due to decaying pipes. My administration is resolute that we cannot effectively address water shortages without first addressing these failing pipelines. Our turnaround strategy now focuses on replacing high-risk pipelines, adopting advanced leak-detection technologies, transitioning to preventive maintenance rather than constant emergency repairs, and prioritising historically neglected areas.

Every major repair reduces water losses and improves pressure across the network. In several communities, we are already seeing supply stabilise after prolonged disruption.

Simultaneously, we have strengthened our emergency response protocols. When major outages occur, we deploy water tankers to affected communities, prioritising hospitals, clinics, schools, and vulnerable residents. However, I must be candid—water tankers are not a solution; they are a temporary measure. The true solution lies in comprehensive infrastructure repair so that communities no longer have to rely on emergency relief.

Our focus remains firmly on long-term rehabilitation, upgrades, and sustainable water management. This is not about patching one problem here and another there. Johannesburg needs a full system reset. Our work is now coordinated across all regions, guided by data on infrastructure condition, water losses and pressure challenges. We are also strengthening Johannesburg Water's financial stability to ensure maintenance and upgrades are properly funded going forward. This includes better planning, improved asset management, faster repair procurement, stronger accountability, and quicker response times.

A functioning water system is not a luxury, it is a basic service that every resident deserves. Fellow residents, I will not pretend that all challenges will be resolved overnight. Much of Johannesburg's water infrastructure is decades old, and fully restoring it will require time, investment, and sustained effort. There will still be disruptions as essential repairs and upgrades are implemented, but these short-term inconveniences are necessary for long-term stability. What I can promise is this: we are no longer ignoring the problem, postponing critical repairs, or managing crises without addressing root causes.

We are committed to rebuilding Johannesburg's water system properly, decisively, and sustainably. As the City fulfils its role, I urge residents and businesses to partner with us by promptly reporting leaks and bursts, using water responsibly, and settling municipal accounts where possible to support effective service delivery. Water security is a collective responsibility. This year marks a pivotal turning point in how Johannesburg addresses its water challenges. From emergency response to large-scale infrastructure rehabilitation, we are laying the foundation for a city that reliably supplies water to every household, business, and institution.

The journey is not easy, but it is necessary.

*Until next time,*

**Johannesburg Executive Mayor Councillor Sello Dada Morero**

