

Policy to improve water, sanitation services on privately-owned land

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The launch took place on Friday at Cool Air Sport Grounds in Dalton under the uMshwathi Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal. The launch was part of activities planned for National Water Month, which is observed annually in March.

2019 court case

The Water and Sanitation Services on Privately Owned Land Policy was propelled by a court case in 2019, which sought to enforce the provision of basic services to farm dwellers and others who reside on privately-owned land in different parts of the country.

Following this, the department developed a policy, which underwent extensive nationwide consultative processes for 90 days from December 2022 to March 2023. It was subsequently approved by Cabinet on 29 November 2023 for implementation.

Addressing hundreds of farm dwellers attending the policy launch held collaboratively with uMngeni-uThukela Water, the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), uMgungundlovu District and uMshwati Municipality, Mchunu reiterated the department's commitment to ensure equitable provision of water and sanitation services.

"The purpose of the policy is to outline government's intentions regarding water and sanitation services provision to residents living on privately-owned land.

"It establishes a framework for enhancing water and sanitation services provision in such areas, with specific strategies to be developed at provincial, district and local municipal levels. We are not here to just say we are launching the policy and then leave it there.

"We have measures put in place to ensure the effective and successful implementation of this policy, working collaboratively with other sister departments, civil society organisations and all spheres of government," he said.

A comprehensive status quo analysis has been done by uMgungundlovu District Municipality in response to the 2019 court judgment.



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Boreholes

Thus far, four boreholes in uMngeni, two in iMpindle, one in uMshwathi, nine in Mkhambathini and two in Richmond have been developed to ensure access to clean water.

A total of 231 basic sanitation facilities have been provided within the uMngungundlovu District Municipality.

Added to this, uMsunduzi Local Municipality has started with the planning process and has conducted a census of all farms under their jurisdiction needing clean water and safe sanitation services. This will enable them to allocate resources and start with the implementation of the policy.

Mchunu emphasised the commitment to implement the policy nationwide, not only in KwaZulu-Natal.

"As much as the policy is being launched under the uMgungundlovu District, its implementation will cover all corners of South Africa. We are calling upon all stakeholders to avail their resources and work alongside the department to ensure the full implementation of the policy.

"This policy is not just a document, but a programme of action to provide basic services to people living on privately-owned land," Mchunu said.

Commitment to access

The launch of the policy marked the beginning of a transformative journey for the Department of Water and Sanitation and the sector as a whole.

It is a commitment to a shared future where communities thrive, the environment flourishes, and every individual experiences the dignity that comes with access to basic water supply and sanitation services.

The launch provided residents, stakeholders and duty-bearers with a comprehensive understanding of the policy's key features and benefits, which includes improved access to reliable and safe water sources, enhanced service delivery and increased transparency and accountability.

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