Publication: Durban North News
Title: Water crisis: PSA calls for urgent dialogue
AVE: 7368.48
Page: 11
Publish Date: 04 November 2026
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Water crisis: PSA calls for urgent dialogue

The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 250 000 public sector employees, is extremely concerned about the escalating water crisis that continues to affect communities across South Africa.

Persistent water shortages, deteriorating infrastructure, and lack of decisive government intervention have left millions of citizens without reliable access to this necessity. Water is not a privilege but a constitutional right. The PSA condemns government's failure to maintain and upgrade critical infrastructure, which has resulted in widespread disruptions, unsafe supply, and growing public frustration. Communities across South Africa are facing daily disruptions, dry taps, and unsafe water supplies, whilst government responses are slow and inadequate. This crisis undermines service delivery, threatens public health, and places additional strain on public servants who must operate under increasingly difficult conditions.

The PSA condemns the chronic neglect of water infrastructure, which has left pipelines broken and treatment plants dysfunctional. This crisis is not a natural disaster but the direct result of poor planning, corruption, and failure to maintain essential systems. Employees in hospitals, schools, and government offices are struggling to deliver services without reliable water, undermining public health and productivity.

The PSA is dismayed by reports of unsafe water supplies causing illness, with families forced to consume contaminated water that leads to diarrhoea, stomach infections, and other serious health conditions. The PSA condemns the reckless disregard for public health, as unsafe water places especially children, the elderly, and vulnerable citizens at grave risk. The PSA stands in solidarity with people who are forced to queue for hours at water tankers or rely on unsafe sources.

The water crisis threatens to destabilise the economy, deepen inequality, and erode investor confidence. Government must act decisively, not with empty promises but with concrete measures to restore water security. The PSA demands immediate national intervention to stabilise supply in affected areas. Transparency is essential as citizens deserve clear reporting on the state of municipal water infrastructure and funds allocated for repairs. Accountability must follow as officials and contractors whose negligence has worsened the crisis cannot escape responsibility.

By Claude Naiker

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