

Reconfiguration of entities aims to improve water provision

Water and Sanitation Minister, Senzo Mchunu, has reiterated that reconfiguration of water entities aims to improve water provision to communities.



Image source: Nyau Mri from [Pexels](#)

“The reconfiguration of water boards is meant to give adequate support to the under-capacitated Water Services Authorities (WSAs) to meet the ever-increasing demand for services by communities, and ensure adequate capacity with quality and skilled engineers,” Mchunu said.

Mchunu was addressing a virtual Water and Sanitation Portfolio Committee meeting held on Tuesday to respond to the resolutions of the National Assembly on several issues in the water and sanitation value chain.

Mchunu said the reconfiguration will address transformation challenges, increase water access to unserved areas, enhance market capitalisation for infrastructure projects and reduce skewed supply of water.

He said the process will ensure that water boards provide water services to areas where there is no provision.

However, the Minister said this process is not an imposition, but due process is undertaken to bring on board all relevant stakeholders, including the WSAs in various provinces where the services are being extended, to ensure that there is sustainable water supply in all parts of the country.

“The reality is that the expenditure to implement projects is too high and the demand of services is also too high, yet the delivery by government institutions is too low and we need to fix this as a matter of urgency,” the Minister said.

The reconfiguration of all water boards follows the resolutions taken during the National Water and Sanitation Summit held early last year, where stakeholders came up with ways to improve the sector.

Proposed incorporations

Mchunu said the department has consulted all relevant stakeholders in KwaZulu-Natal to create a single water entity by incorporating Mhlathuze Water and its boundary into Umgeni Water.

He said the process is expected to be finalised by end of February and a new board to be appointed in April 2023.

“The scope of Rand Water will be extended to cover the entire Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces. Consultations with the affected stakeholders are ongoing and a gazette notice for public comments has been published and closed on Friday, 27 January 2023.

“Lepelle Northern Water Board’s boundary is also being extended to service the entire Limpopo Province. Technical discussion between Lepelle and Magalies Water to take over on areas that are currently being served by Magalies are underway,” Mchunu said.

Mchunu said Magalies Water scope expands to service the entire North West province, taking over from Sedibeng Water, was disestablished last year, and Magalies’ functions and assets in Gauteng and Limpopo will be transferred to Rand Water and Lepelle Water respectively.

“Bloem Water will service the whole Free State and the Northern Cape as part of the reconfiguration. The utility has already taken over the staff, assets and liabilities from the disestablished Sedibeng Water with effect from August 2022. A new name has been proposed for this entity, to accommodate Northern Cape customers.

“The incorporation of Sedibeng Water into Bloem and Magalies Water Boards has gone smoothly, and transfer agreements have been signed and operational funds transferred to Bloem Water and Magalies Water respectively,” Mchunu explained.

In the Eastern Cape, the Amatola Water’s scope has been extended to cover the entire province and all due processes are unfolding while the process to select new board members is underway.

The Minister has reiterated that the process of reconfiguration will not result in job losses, and it is only meant to “strengthen capacity, improve institutional efficiencies and enable water boards to better support Water Services Authorities.”