

Cape Town achieves 95% in No Drop report

The City of Cape Town has received a No Drop score of 95% in the National Department of Water and Sanitation's 2014 First Order Assessment. This report assesses current usage patterns, the city's water planning, and the city's expertise and monitoring programmes in terms of whether they support the sustainable use of water.



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The No Drop Programme was developed within a similar framework to the Blue Drop and Green Drop assessments, and aims to encourage progress in water use efficiency and preventing water losses.

The following points are extracts from the report:

- The No Drop score of 95% indicates that the city has an excellent knowledge of its status, and has the required processes, systems and plans in place to manage water losses and non-revenue water.
- Monthly and annual water balances are in place and were well presented for the assessment period in question. The historic water balance trend data was used to verify and adjust the data set accordingly. A comprehensive water demand management strategy is in place and reflects in the Integrated Development Plan with the necessary prominence.
- Water Conservation and Water Demand Management Programme implementation takes place on an ongoing basis, and projects for the 2012/13 year included pressure management, pipe replacement, reuse, and metering are the main initiatives. Movement against project timelines was shown, including budget and responsible persons.

One area of concern in the report was the figure for water use efficiency, sitting at 229,6 litres per capita per day – regarded as "average", according to the report. This figure includes water supplied to external customers. For water supplied internally, this figure is approximately 200 litres per capita per day. Judged against international benchmarks, there is significant room for improvement in this respect. While programmes such as the roll-out of treated effluent reuse can help to reduce these figures, much of the power lies in the hands of residents themselves.

Water cannot be used thoughtlessly

"As the current low dam levels illustrate, Cape Town is not a city where water can be used thoughtlessly. The ecosystem in which we live is classified as semi-arid. By implication, this means that rainfall is comparatively scarce. In order for these limited resources to support large urban populations, it is essential that a more responsible attitude is cultivated. Other

interventions such as desalination require massive capital spend which, in the current context of redressing the spatial planning of apartheid, is difficult to justify when a careful attitude to water will be just as effective," says the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Utility Services Alderman Ernest Sonnenberg.

"That being said, the response to the Level Two water restrictions has thus far been good. For this I would like to thank those residents who have answered the city's call to change their water habits. Sustaining a commitment to water conservation takes effort, and it can be demoralising when other members of the community continue to use water wastefully. To those residents who have gone above and beyond, we'd like you to know that your efforts are making a significant difference," continues Sonnenberg.

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