

Cape water woes solved... for now

Cape Town mayor Patricia de Lille prayed for an answer to the city's water crisis recently - and immediately got one.



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Water Minister Nomvula Mokonyane said a plan to access the last 10% of the water in the city's dwindling dams would soon take effect. The deputy director-general of water affairs and sanitation, Trevor Balzer, said the last 10% of stored water would guarantee a supply for the city of 4-million people for another 11 to 14 weeks.

Speaking at Theewaterskloof Dam, Cape Town's biggest, Balzer said work would start this week on a diversion weir and a canal at the dam.

This would move the remaining water in the dam to the intake tower.

The construction would cost R3m to R5m, and the weir and canal could be used in the event of future dry spells.

"We are going to have to bring in emergency pumps at some stage," Balzer said.

He disagreed with those who blamed government management of the drought for the water shortage.

"I think that we managed the situation very well - it's 40 years since our dams have been so low; this is an unusual event."

De Lille hosted an interfaith prayer meeting last week at Table Mountain's lower cableway station.

"This week, our dam storage is at 20.7%.

"With most of the last 10% of the water being unusable, dam levels are effectively at 10.7%," she told the religious leaders.

The city council was spending R315m on emergency drought-relief schemes, and "as I have called on residents and businesses to work with us, I am also calling on religious leaders to help us and pray for rain.

"I ask that the prayers for rain continue each day and every time you gather your congregants."

Source: The Times

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