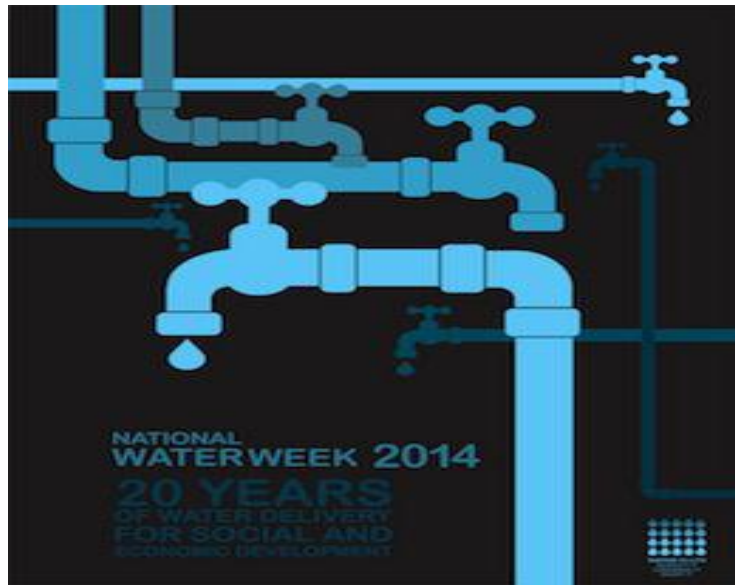


NATIONAL WATER WEEK

From 17 -23 March the Department of Water Affairs theme is Water is Life – 20 Years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development. This week coincides with World Water Day on 22 March. Various South African organisations aim to mobilise people and organisations like schools to become involved.



Water is life

The National Water Week is an awareness week campaign by the Department of Water Affairs around the value of water, the need for sustainable management of this scarce resource and the role water plays in eradicating poverty and under-development in South Africa. In a number of innovative ways the links between

water services, supply, resource management, poverty eradication, social and economic developments are emphasized. The awareness creation is coupled with the responsibility that every citizen must take in ensuring the integrity of the water resources and its efficient use.

The awareness week campaign will take place from 17 – 23 March 2014 under the theme “Water is Life – 20 Years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development”. The Department will celebrate the success of the government’s water delivery programmes and management during the two decades of democracy. In 1994 around 14 million people did not have access to safe drinking water and some 21 million people did not have access to a basic level of sanitation. Since then the Department has provided millions of South Africans with clean access to water.

The Department’s key messages in the campaign are:

Water is a scarce resource – let us work together to conserve it!

- Water scarcity is a global challenge that effects many regions in the world with Southern Africa being the hardest hit.
- South Africa is a water scarce country, ranked the 30th driest country in the world with annual rainfall levels about half the world average.

- In many parts of the country we have either reached or are fast approaching the point at which all viable freshwater resources will be fully utilised.
- Every South African needs to take immediate measures to preserve and save water so that we do not face a future water crisis.
- We all have a part in conserving water and reducing demand for the good of the country's resources and to preserve a legacy for future generations.

Government can't do it alone.

- Water conservation begins with each one of us; there needs to be a change in attitude and behaviour to use water more wisely in our daily activities.
- Efficient water use ensures a reliable supply, which in turn improves the quality of life of all South Africans, and promotes local economic development.
- Take action and report all water leaks on your property or in your area to your local municipality for assistance.
- Report unlawful usage of water, dumping of agricultural, industrial and sewerage waste in rivers to our compliance monitoring and enforcement unit the "Blue Scorpions".
- Our water infrastructure belongs to all of us and we must not allow it to be vandalised or uncared for as we depend on it for a vital services.
- Government calls on all stakeholders to come together in a collective effort to conserve water in order for it to have a greater impact.

- Municipal councillors are encouraged to engage communities on planned water disruptions and maintenance.

The provision of water has been a key priority for government since the advent of democracy.

- Since 1994 government has been hard at work ensuring that all South Africans have access to water.
- Government is committed to continue to roll out its interventions to ensure the universal access of water.
- In 1994, only 59% of our people had access to clean and safe drinking water, by 2013 we had progressed to a national average of 95.2%.
- Government has a 10-year plan to address the water access backlog.

Government acknowledges that water challenges still persist in some areas.

- Being a water scarce country and coupled with infrastructure and maintenance challenges means that in some areas the provision of water continues to remain a challenge.
- Ageing and mal-functional infrastructure which is compounded by vandalism poses a serious problem.
- Lack of engineering skills prevents proper maintenance of our water infrastructure.
- Our water quality is negatively affected by pollution.

- Seasonal droughts impact on amount of water available.

Our plans are supported by the building of sustainable water infrastructure.

- Through Strategic Integrated Projects (SIP) 18 South Africa has a 10 year plan to address the estimated backlog of adequate water supply to 1.4 million households and 2.1 million households to basic sanitation.
- Our water projects will provide new infrastructure, rehabilitation and upgrading of existing ones, as well as improve water management infrastructure.
- In expanding our water supply the following projects were recently launched:
 - The MooiMgeni Transfer Scheme 2 (MMTS-2) which includes the Spring Grove Dam in KwaZulu-Natal which will boost declining water supply in the area and benefit approximately 5 million people.
 - The newly constructed De Hoop Dam in Limpopo economically supplies water to towns and poorly serviced communities in the Greater Sekhukhune, Waterberg and Capricorn district municipalities.

More information on National Water Week can be found on the DWA [website](#).

Please download the National Water Week regional programme [here](#). (PDF, 205 KB)



Water management is a global issue and the South African Water Week coincides with the United Nations [World Water Day](#) on 22 March. The World Water Day theme “Water & Energy” brings attention to the fact that water and energy are closely linked and interdependent. Energy generation and transmission requires utilisation of water resources, particularly for hydroelectric, nuclear, and thermal energy sources. About 8% of the global energy generation is used for pumping, treating and transporting water to various consumers.

The UN specifically addresses inequities, especially for the ‘bottom billion’ who live in slums and impoverished rural areas and survive without access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, sufficient food and energy services. It also aims to facilitate the development of policies and crosscutting frameworks that bridge departments and sectors, leading the way to energy security and sustainable water use in a green economy. Particular attention will be paid to identifying best practices that can make a water- and energy-efficient ‘Green Industry’ a reality.

The main celebrations of World Water Day will be organised on 20-21 March 2014 and will take place at the UNU Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. The World Water Development Report 2014 on Water and Energy will be launched, and the UN-Water “Water for Life” Best Practices Award will be given. These celebrations will be followed by the World Water Week from 31 August – 5 September 2014. This annual meeting place for the planet’s most urgent water-related issues will be hosted in Stockholm, Sweden under the same Water & Energy theme.

For Love of Water (FLOW) is a South African movement of people, organisations, government departments, corporates, media, educators and others. The parties in FLOW are linked through a shared commitment to create a deeper appreciation, understanding and respect for water.

FLOW’s core goals are to:

- Create a deep appreciation and respect for water
- Raise awareness that each human being has the right to clean, safe drinking water
- Demonstrate solutions to current water challenges

The FLOW [website](#) provides a interesting and fun collection of water facts and water saving tips as well as a recording of the For Love of Water song featuring various South African artists. Individuals and organisations can get involved by making the online FLOW promise.

The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) in the WESSA [Share-Net project](#) supports environmental education through the provision of resource materials. Especially for Water Week and World Water Day they have created a resource pack that includes a teachers guide, pamphlets and activity booklets. Please click [here](#) to find out how this pack can be ordered.

Teachers can also encourage learners to monitor the health of a river by doing a so-called MiniSass. With simple materials like a scoring sheet, a sieve, a white tray and a pen, learners can collect a sample of macroinvertebrates (small animals) from the water, and depending on which groups are found, have a measure of the general river health and water quality in that river.

Source: <https://umngeniriverwalk.wordpress.com/2014/03/14/national-water-week/>