



Joint Media Statement

Thursday, 22 June 2023

To: All Media

SABC North West Media Report on “Alarming Water Quality Issues at Mmabatho Water Treatment Plant” Deliberately Misleading and Sensationalist

Magalies Water has noted with despondency recent media reports by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (North West) on a story titled “*Alarming Water Quality Issues Detected at Mmabatho Water Plant*” published on the public broadcaster’s various platforms on the 20th and 21st of June 2023. While the Blue Drop Water Report released by the Department of Water and Sanitation was released this year, it remains a retrospective performance of the sector for the 2021/22 financial year and not the 2022/23 financial year. It is indeed true that the Mmabatho Water Treatment Plant was not compliant since it acquired a 48% compliance on microbial compliance.

Worth noting, is that Magalies Water took over operations of the plant in July 2022, following the disestablishment of the now erstwhile Sedibeng Water which was responsible for operation and maintenance. Since then, until the end of October 2022 a monitoring program was undertaken, and the Mmabatho Water Treatment Plant had maintained an average performance of 99% in line with the SANS 241 parameters. The SABC in its quest to provide the public with a fair, accurate and balanced news story conveniently omitted to indicate in any of its platforms (radio, website and television) that while report was recently made public by the Department, it does not refer to the current performance of the system which has shown significant improvement since Magalies Water had been appointed by the Ngaka Modiri Molema district municipality to operate and manage the plant on its behalf.

The district municipality has at all material times received reports from Magalies Water on technical challenges which were reported on and remedial actions, which were implemented in order to correct the

identified anomalies in the system. It is for that reason, that the contractual relationship between the entity and the municipality remains intact and cordial as our shared interest remains the provision of potable water of the highest standards to the communities of Mahikeng.

Scientific Data Provided to SABC

Magalies Water views the actions of the journalist assigned to the cover the story, as sensationalist, reckless and has total disregard to the basic tenets of good journalism. When afforded an opportunity to comment on the story, recent data which supports the compliance evidence was provided to the journalist by Magalies Water's Scientific Services and this is information which is accessible to the public. This data is loaded onto the Integrated Regulatory Information System (IRIS) which is in the ambit of the Department of Water and Sanitation and Magalies Water provides this information pertaining to water quality to the department on regular intervals as required by law. This information is also audited by the Auditor-General of South Africa, in order to authenticate information supplied by the water board and can withstand any form of scrutiny, further, to corroborating our view that there has been significant change in the water treatment plant.

Consequently, it remains the view of Magalies Water that the SABC sought to create unwarranted public panic about the quality of water supplied by the water treatment plant to the community of Mahikeng. More mortifying, the journalist and the story published demonstrated acute understanding of sectoral reporting regimes and in addition to the reality on the ground currently.

Water Quality Concerns and the Cholera Outbreak

While the residents who have been interviewed had referenced the recent cholera outbreak as a threat to their health and is one of the reasons, they cannot consume water from the plant. Magalies Water continues to supply water which is safe for human consumption including potable water from the Mmabatho Water Treatment Plant.

Since the initial reports regarding cholera outbreak and as a safeguarding measure, Magalies Water has started the monitoring of additional points within the distribution network along with increased water quality monitoring frequency. If water supplied had been found to be non-complaint after the treatment processes, robust and swift corrective measures would have been taken to eliminate any anomalies which would otherwise have affected sustained supply and pose a threat to the consumers. Magalies Water has also noted with dismay that the report suggests that communities of Mahikeng receive water supply from

Wastewater Treatment System, which is meant to treat sewage waste, whereas the current potable water supply is from the Water Treatment System which treats raw water from the dam to potable levels fit for human consumption.

End.

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