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R35m bulk water project brings relief to Eastern Cape community

2ND MAY 2025 BY: NATASHA ODENDAAL - CREAMER MEDIA SENIOR DEPUTY EDITOR

The R35-million Kirkwood bulk water project, in the Eastern Cape, has been completed, offering relief from the area's long-standing water shortages.

Construction began in July 2023 and was wrapped up in March.

Implemented by Amatola Water, the project comprised the construction of a new 14-million-litre raw water storage dam, boosting the total storage capacity from 20.2-million litres to 34.2-million litres.

Two new three-megalitre reservoirs in Kirkwood town and Bontrug (Moses Mabida) have been completed, alongside critical pipework upgrades to enhance water distribution and reduce losses.

“This infrastructure project, funded through the Department of Water and Sanitation’s (DWS’s) Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant, represents a transformative investment in water security for the Kirkwood community and the wider Eastern Cape,” says Water and Sanitation Minister **Pemmy Majodina**.



PEMMY MAJODINA The Kirkwood bulk water project represents a transformative investment in water security for the Kirkwood community and the wider Eastern Cape

TIn addition to providing reliable water access for 3 963 households and an estimated population of 16 778, the project ensures uninterrupted water supply during the yearly maintenance shutdown of the Orange–Fish water scheme, which previously left the community vulnerable.

The local citrus industry, a cornerstone of the regional economy, will also benefit from improved water reliability, safeguarding jobs and export revenues.

During its construction phase, the Kirkwood bulk water project generated 41 jobs for local community members and engaged ten local small businesses, furthering the department’s empowerment and local economic development goals.

Besides the 14-million-litre raw water lay dam, at the Kirkwood water treatment works, and its associated infrastructure, such as inlet chambers, interconnecting pipework and security fencing, the project's other components were a three-million-litre steel reservoir in Kirkwood, serving Aqua Park, Bergsig and surrounds; a second three-million-litre reservoir in Bontrug, supplying Moses Mabida, Msengeni and nearby settlements; and interlinking pipework to enable zoning and efficient water distribution across the municipal network.

The project forms part of the DWS's efforts to fast-track the implementation of bulk water infrastructure projects across the Eastern Cape – and the rest of South Africa.

“The completion of the Kirkwood bulk water project is more than just infrastructure; it is a clear demonstration of this government's urgent and unwavering commitment to water security for all,” said Majodina.

“We are now entering a phase where we must – and will – fast-track the roll-out of bulk water projects across the country with speed, focus and accountability,” she continued, noting that the project signals a new era of urgency and delivery in South Africa's water and sanitation sector, with the fast-tracking of bulk water infrastructure at the heart of her national agenda. 🇷🇺

Phone: +27 (0)11 622 3744

Email: newsdesk@engineeringnews.co.za

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