



**CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD**

WATER AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT
WATER AND WASTE DIRECTORATE

Richard Nell

Water Quality Improvement Programme Lead
Catchment, Stormwater & River Management Branch

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26 March 2020

OUTA
318 Oak Avenue
Randburg

For the attention of: Ms Andrea Korff
via email: andrea.korff@outa.co.za

Dear Madam,

DIEP RIVER / MILNERTON LAGOON
YOUR REF: L9/BD/04

We hereby acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 20 March 2020.

On behalf of the City we would like to thank you for the tele-conference of Wednesday, 18 March 2020 and the opportunity to discuss with you the complex challenges faced with regard to the current state and pollution of the Diep River / Milnerton Lagoon.

In response to your letter, we reply (as per your number references) as follows:

- 3.1 Noted.
- 3.2 Noted.
- 3.3 Additional resources will be appointed as part of the City's Water Quality Improvement Programme (WQIP). Weekly progress reports are being received from the various City line functions responsible for the various tasks and monthly reporting is delivered to the Mayoral Committee and Sub-Councils 3 & 15.
- 3.4 Noted. Please note that the City of Cape Town has no jurisdiction over river reaches that fall outside its boundaries.
- 3.5 Noted.
- 3.6 Noted. The capacity of the Potsdam Wastewater Treatment Works will be increased from 47MI to 100MI/d upon completion of the upgrade works in 2025. The membrane bioreactor (MBR) will be installed with sufficient membranes to treat the projected increase in flow for the next 15 years (post completion).
- 3.7 Noted.

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- 3.8 Weekly water testing is to be implemented shortly. Awaiting response from City Scientific Services if they are able to undertake.
- 3.9 Noted.
- 3.10 Noted.
- 3.11 The Terms of Reference of the City's WQIP are in the process of being finalised, as well as the detailed action plan for the Diep River / Milnerton Lagoon. These are due for completion by 9 April 2020. The detailed "Transversal Action Plan" specific to the Diep River / Milnerton Lagoon will be signed off in the next 2 to 3 weeks, and will be shared with OUTA upon completion.
- 3.12 Water Quality data is not currently posted on the City's website. Water quality sampling analysis results will be shared with OUTA. The latest data up to end February 2020 is attached for your information, as **Appendix A**.
- 3.13 The City met with the Department of Water and Sanitation on 5 March 2020 to discuss various challenges faced at the Potsdam Wastewater Treatment Works. The City's salient points from the meeting were emailed to DWS on 16 March 2020, and receipt thereof acknowledged by DWS via return email (refer to **Appendix B**). Minutes of the meeting from DWS are yet to be received by the City.
- 4.1 Noted.
- 4.2 It cannot be said that the pollution is caused by the action or inaction of specific officials, as there are many contributing factors. Due consideration will be given to your submission in this regard, and the City's Executive Management structures will decide whether any steps against officials are warranted. Due cognisance will have to be taken of the various factors contributing to the pollution, as well as the City's record of compliance with the water use licence.
- 4.3 Noted.

As discussed, the City assures you that we are taking this issue seriously and are managing the situation as a "crisis". In order to improve the water quality in the Diep River / Milnerton Lagoon the following is being undertaken:

- (i) Formalising a Water Quality Improvement Programme that will give effect to and drive action plans to improve the water quality in the rivers across the City.
- (ii) A transversal action plan for the Diep River / Milnerton Lagoon has been compiled. This plan is being further expanded to include more comprehensive detail. This plan details the specific tasks, accountable officials, the resources including finance and personnel required, as well as detailed time-frames for each specific task to be completed.
- (iii) Various key actions such as the repairs to the belt press and ultraviolet treatment facility at the Potsdam Waste Water Treatment Works are already in progress. Please refer to the following table in this regard.

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Section	Description / Progress	Service Provider	Due Dates	Costs
Treated Effluent Pump Station	Filter system maintenance. Contract or to come out this week to do assessment and quotation	Internal/ External	TBC	TBC once contractor assesses and provides quotations
Belt press No. 2	Cleaning and technical assessment was done to get the Press operational. Technical report and requirement received. Submitted deviation report to SCM to test the market in order to maintain competitive pricing. Awaiting confirmation of site briefing date from SCM. RFQ document supplied for open sourcing to test market. COVID-19 restrictions are a cause for concern at SCM.	Internal/ External	TBC with SCM timelines	TBC once market testing is completed
Belt press No. 3	Busy with assembly works. Cold commissioning scheduled for 31 March 2020.	Internal	31-Mar-20	n/a
Belt press No. 4	Available	n/a	n/a	n/a
Belt press No. 5	Available	n/a	n/a	n/a
UV System	Assembling parts and installation	External	29-May-20	R 2 003 778.90 linked to Rand vs USD rate of exchange
Pond Cleaning	2 out of 5 ponds are cleaned	Internal	31-May-20	n/a

- (iv) Numerous other activities to improve water quality have already been initiated across the lower portion of the Diep River Catchment; these will be clarified in the Transversal Action Plan.
- (v) We are also in the process of instituting an Ecological Monitoring Plan for the lower reaches of Milnerton Lagoon that will provide and track ecological indicators to measure progress over the long term.

5.1 Noted. The steps listed are being considered for action under the detailed "Transversal Action Plan" specific to the Diep River / Milnerton Lagoon.

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- 5.2 Noted.
- 5.3 Noted. It is anticipated that once all the belt presses and ultraviolet treatment processes are fully operational the effluent produced will be much improved.
6. Noted, refer to responses to 3.3, 3.11 and 4.3.
7. Noted, refer to response 4.2.
8. We concur with your views on this matter and look forward to mutual co-operation with OUTA to improve the water quality in the Diep River / Milnerton Lagoon.

We note that OUTA is sharing, via social media, its results from bacteriological sampling taken from the Diep River. Whilst we always welcome transparency and public accountability, we take the view that accountability and responsibility for accuracy of information is shared between government and private sector role players. We request that OUTA applies scientific rigour and standards in its public reporting, specifically as it relates to making definitive statements based on a sample series of only four tests.

Should you have any further queries in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact Richard Nell, the City's Water Quality Improvement Programme Lead.

Yours sincerely,



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RICHARD NELL

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