

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Rising vandalism targeting municipal infrastructure threatens essential services



**Caption:** Municipal pumpstations vandalised over the past week

**Barkly East, 13 August 2025** - The Joe Gqabi District Municipality (JGDM) is troubled by the rising vandalism that has been directed at its water and sanitation infrastructure in recent weeks.

Over the past week alone, four (4) municipal pump stations in Burgersdorp and one (1) in Ugie were vandalised and electric cables stolen. These acts of vandalism have directly impacted on the municipality's water and sanitation services and resulted in water supply interruptions and sewer spillages in the affected areas.

"The pump station facilities play a critical role in sustaining the day-to-day functioning of our communities. They are the backbone of safe and healthy living spaces responsible for managing water supply, and wastewater systems," said Mcebisi Nonjola, Municipal Manager of the Joe Gqabi District Municipality.

Nonjola explained that vandalism to essential assets threatens service delivery and places an undue burden on both municipal resources and the daily lives of residents. The vandalism incidents have included deliberate destruction of pumps, control panels, and electrical systems. In some cases, the perpetrators have stolen copper wiring or other valuable components like the motor or electric cables.

He said of more concern was that the municipality recently completed a R12 million Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) funded project to refurbish five (5) pump stations throughout Burgersdorp in the 2024/25 financial year: Mzamomhle pump station, Thembisa 1 and 2 pump stations, and Eureka pump station, which are in the local townships, as well as the "MM" pump station (in Burgersdorp town). The pump stations in the townships were all affected in the recent vandalism incidents.

"The consequences of vandalism at pump stations are profound and far-reaching. These facilities are designed to operate continuously, ensuring reliable delivery of drinking water and the safe removal of wastewater. Any disruption - temporary or prolonged - can significantly affect hundreds of homes, businesses, public institutions, and emergency services," explained Nonjola.

The net effect of damaged water pump stations is the interruption of water supply, low water pressure, total loss of service, or contaminated supply due to backflows. In extreme cases, communities can be without water for hours or even days, severely affecting daily routines, hygiene, and food preparation.

“Vandalism can incapacitate the sewerage pump stations, causing hazardous overflows, blocked lines, and environmental pollution. Overflows of untreated wastewater pose serious risks to public health, leading to the spread of waterborne diseases and contamination of local rivers, and groundwater,” said Nonjola.

He said that vandalism undermines the municipality’s efforts and forces it to divert significant financial and human resources to repair and restore vandalised facilities.

“Costs associated with damage assessments, emergency repairs, and replacement of stolen equipment quickly mount, leaving fewer funds for routine maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, or community development projects,” said Nonjola pleading with residents to play their part in safeguarding municipal infrastructure and to report any incidents of vandalism.

Residents are encouraged to report incidents of vandalism and any potential syndicates that might be involved in vandalising municipal infrastructure to the South African Police Service (SAPS) or to call the municipal toll-free line on 0800 201 726.

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