

Dry Taps and Empty Promises: Johannesburg's Water Crisis and the Stench of Political Failure

From Alexandra to Sandton, Soweto to Hyde Park, Diepsloot to Waterfall; millions of people across Johannesburg wake to the same grim reality: dry taps, broken infrastructure, and empty promises. What began as occasional service interruptions has morphed into a full-blown humanitarian crisis affecting every corner of South Africa's economic heartland. This isn't merely about inconvenience; it's about the violation of the constitutional rights of millions.

It is also about decades of mismanagement, political games, and systemic neglect that has robbed residents of the constitutional right to just administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. Instead, the people of the city are faced with a fundamental breakdown in governance, and empty taps, that can no longer be ignored or excused. People of Joburg are fed-up with the broken pipes, throttling, sewage leaks, and empty promises.

Every dry tap is a reminder that families are being stripped of dignity and health in a city that once promised them a better life.

The Johannesburg Water Crisis: A Chronicle of Collapse

Water outages and intermittent supply has been occurring in Johannesburg for almost a decade. Since 2023, water outages in Johannesburg have grown in reach, frequency and duration, leaving nearly half the city facing regular shortages by mid-2024. Households are forced into costly coping measures such as boreholes, storage tanks, and booster pumps, while outages further damage the network and degrade water quality.

This collapse threatens constitutional rights: access to water (Section 27), public health, and an environment not harmful to wellbeing (Section 24). The crisis cuts across health, education, and the economy, eroding the democratic social contract between residents and the city.

Desperate communities collect water from contaminated streams and dug wells, heightening risks of cholera and other outbreaks. Schools have repeatedly closed due to dry taps and unsafe sanitation, with disadvantaged learners suffering most.

The economic fallout is severe. Businesses spend heavily on emergency water, losing production, revenue, and competitiveness. These shocks ripple through supply chains, deepening the city's unemployment and poverty crisis.

Johannesburg's water collapse is no longer a service failure – it is a rights, health, education, and economic emergency.

Obligations of the City of Johannesburg

Residents expect fairness, dignity, and reliability in their access to water. The post-apartheid government committed to correcting the historic denial of water by promising equity and universal access. This vision was clear: every household should have safe, affordable drinking water.

For many poor families, the Free Basic Water policy – 6,000 litres a month at no cost – has been a lifeline. It was meant to guarantee no one in South Africa would go without water simply because they couldn't pay. To make this possible, wealthier households pay more so that poorer households can be supported.

The city is also meant to ensure that everyone, at the very least, has a minimum daily supply of clean water close to their home. Interruptions should be rare and short, never lasting more than a few days.

But the collapse of Johannesburg's water services has broken this promise. Instead of dignity and fairness, residents are faced with empty taps, dirty water, and unaffordable bills. What was meant to be the foundation of justice after apartheid is now crumbling, hitting the poorest communities the hardest.

A City United in Crisis: No Neighbourhood Spared

The water crisis in Johannesburg has forged an unprecedented sense of unity among its residents, cutting across all divides. From affluent northern suburbs to working-class areas and informal settlements, no community has been spared from severe and ongoing water challenges. Among the affected areas are Albertskroon, Bergbron, Brixton, Bryanston, Claremont, Coronationville, Crosby, Cyrildene, Emmarentia, Ferndale, Florida, Forest Town, Greenside, Illovo, Jan Hofmeyer, Kelvin, Kensington, Langlaagte North, Lawley Station, Lenasia, Malvern, Mayfair, Melville, Nana's Farm, Newlands, Northcliff, Parkview, Pumlaqashe, Randburg, Sandown, Soweto, Strathavon, Vrededorp, and Wilgeheuwel. This crisis transcends geographical and socio-economic boundaries. Even those currently experiencing running water are not immune, as they bear the burden of rising water tariffs, crumbling infrastructure beneath their streets, and the broader economic consequences impacting the businesses they rely on.

The Reality on the Ground

Across several areas, residents have reported persistent water issues that severely affect their daily lives. These problems include low water pressure, frequent outages, poor water quality, and unexplained high bills. The impact on communities ranges from compromised hygiene and health risks to increased financial strain and emotional distress. Residents are paying their bills, but the system delivers failing reservoirs, burst pipes, sewage in the streets, and empty promises. Communities describe the situation as *“inhumane”*, *“unconstitutional”* and as one community leader put it: *“There is no freedom without dignity. Please give us water.”*

The deterioration of Johannesburg's water infrastructure didn't happen overnight. Since 1994, a clear pattern of neglect has emerged, characterized by:

1. Financial Mismanagement and Corruption

Johannesburg loses nearly half its treated water to leaks, theft, and illegal connections. Instead of fixing the system, the city passes the costs on to residents through inflated bills, faulty meters, and pre-payments that trap households in cycles of debt.

Residents speak of receiving bills of R50,000 or more without explanation, while others pay faithfully but are still disconnected. Communities are told to record their own meter readings, yet these have “no bearing” on the city’s billing. One resident summed it up: *“We are paying for a service we don’t receive.”*

Chronic underfunding, political interference, and corruption in emergency procurement ensure that money meant for infrastructure disappears while pipes burst, reservoirs crack, and sewage flows.

2. Infrastructure Collapse

Johannesburg replaces just 14km of pipes each year out of the 1200km of water pipes. This neglect leaves reservoirs like Alexandra Park, Berea, Yeoville (1&2), and Hursthill (1&2) failing, while population growth outpaces upgrades. Instead of real investment, the city deploys communal JoJo tanks and water trucks – temporary, unsafe measures that do not meet basic service standards.

Across suburbs, families endure weak water pressure, nightly throttling, and bursts that damage homes. In Florida Park, water only runs after 11pm. In Emmarentia, trapped air spins meters, inflating bills while taps run dry. In Wilgeheuwel, sudden surges flood homes. In Brixton, dirty water runs from taps when supply resumes.

These are not isolated incidences and are spread across the city.

Residents are forced into impossible choices: late-night bucket baths, rainwater harvesting, or buying bottled water to survive.

3. Political Instability and Neglect

Since 2019, Johannesburg has had nine different mayors. Coalition politics, patronage, and corruption dominate short-termist decision-making while service delivery collapses. Leadership in the City is based on political loyalty, not expertise, leaving critical infrastructure in the hands of those focused on accumulation, not accountability.

4. The lived experiences of Joburgers

- **Township residents** face unaffordable, unexplained bills while living with daily cut-offs.
- **Langlaagte North** residents are billed even when water is off for weeks, with deadly consequences during fires.
- **Florida Park** families describe water as *“a privilege, not a right”*, surviving with only a few hours of trickle each day.
- **Claremont** residents have lived with outages for over 11 years, surviving on what they call the *“bucket system.”*
- **Kensington and Cyrildene** endure years of leaks and outages, with hundreds of logged complaints closed without action. Residents describe themselves as *“forgotten communities.”*
- **Informal settlements like Nanas Farm and Lawley Station** rely on JoJo tanks or unsafe streams for thousands of households, exposing children to illness and women to safety risks when fetching water late at night.
- **Sandton** residents often rely on a water backup tank for security and have reported *“even with a water tank, we run dry, and we are a household of two. So imagine bigger households and businesses.”*

The stories are diverse, but the theme is the same: households are being failed every single day by an unreliable service falling far below the basic level of service commitments of the city.

5. The Cost to Residents

The collapse of the water system has become a financial, physical, and emotional burden on residents.

- Families spend tens of thousands on backup tanks, pumps, and boreholes.
- Pensioners borrow money to pay unfair bills or install private storage.
- Parents watch their children go to school unwashed.
- Old-age homes depend on buckets, while the sick are exposed to unsafe conditions.
- Businesses lose income, tourism bookings collapse, and property values plummet.

The city has increased water tariffs, and as one resident put it: *“We are paying more but receiving less.”*

6. Unresponsive Authorities

Despite repeated reports, reference numbers, and escalations, Johannesburg Water and city officials remain largely unresponsive. Leaks are ignored for years. Repairs drag on for months. Communities are silenced on social media, blocked when raising concerns. Councillors escalate cases but see little change.

Residents feel abandoned and humiliated: *“We pay every month, but we live with dry taps. This is appalling and inhumane.”*

Citizens’ Demands for Water Justice

To face the Johannesburg water crisis, beyond political posturing, the following actions and demands, must be immediately met:

Immediate Actions Required

- **Ring-fence water infrastructure funding** - The city council has adopted ring-fencing to ensure that municipal grants and water tariffs directly fund system maintenance. What is needed is an urgent process to be put in place to allow this to happen. This must be more than mere lip-service.
- **Appoint qualified engineers** - Replace political appointees with water management experts
- **Emergency leak repair program** - Deploy rapid response teams to address the 48% water loss
- **Transparent auditing** - Public oversight of all water infrastructure spending
- **Cross-party water crisis committee** - Transcend political divisions for unified action

Immediate Demands

- **Basic level of service** - universal potable water supply with progressive stepped approach to water upgrading (communal tap to yard tap to household tap) and no interruptions for more than seven days a year
- **An end to water tankers** - except for emergency situations, water tankers are **NOT** a basic level of water supply. Provide a list of all contractors supplying tanks and the cost to the city as well as the sources of waters used in such tankers.
- **A just administration of water supply** - accurate information on water outages, an end to poor planning resulting in extended maintenance and lengthy water outages (e.g. two weeks) and responsiveness to citizens' complaints and queries

Approaches That Have Failed

- **Political appointments** - Leadership without technical expertise
- **Reactive maintenance** - Addressing failures rather than preventing them. Throttling is causing more harm than good
- **Silo maintenance approach** - Water services failing to plan maintenance with other functions e.g. Rand Water, roads, etc leading to other problems such as potholes
- **Unfunded mandates** - Promises without budgetary commitments
- **Blame shifting** - Pointing fingers between entities, departments and political parties
- **Short-term thinking** - Focusing on quick fixes rather than system renewal

The people have moved past party politics. We want responsible and qualified and immediate attention on the water crisis now.

A Unified Demand: Water Justice Now

The Johannesburg water crisis has exposed the rot at the heart of municipal governance, but it has also revealed something powerful: when basic rights are threatened, citizens unite across all divides. From Sandton to Soweto, Kensington to Vorna Valley and from Bryanston to Brixton, residents are finding common cause in the demand for water justice.

This is no longer about political affiliations or historical divisions. It is about the fundamental right to water, enshrined in our constitution and essential to human dignity. It is about holding power accountable and demanding that the resources we contribute through rates and taxes fulfil their intended purpose.

The time for polite requests has passed. Johannesburg residents are demanding immediate action on the water crisis. We demand accountability and restore our right to clean, reliable water.

The water that flows, or doesn't flow, through Johannesburg's pipes is more than a utility. It is the lifeblood of our communities, our economy, and our dignity. We will no longer accept

excuses, delays, or political theatre while our taps run dry. The time for unified action is now.

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ANNEXURE 1: Voices of the People

1. Tah Ame James, Kensington, “ It's almost two months since I reported a water leakage issue on the pavement just outside 107 Nottingham Road in Kensington, and nothing has happened despite repeated requests and escalations of the issue. It's unacceptably frustrating and stressful dealing with the JHB services delivery departments, and worst with water. It's more than three times within about two years that the same issue keeps happening. So what type of work does the municipality always come and do?. So frustrated at a personal level, I reported to community representatives for escalation, which they did with reference numbers, but no response from the municipality. They took it to the Cllr Neuren Peterson, who has tried very hard with no success, and has also become so frustrated and angry as no one seems to care, even following his intervention. All these in the name of service delivery 😞, isn't it? ”
2. Samaria Fazel Vrededorp “Stop the lies, thieves stealing things, it's corruption.
3. Andrew Kerr Florida Park- Roodepoort “Since July 2024, after the major tie-in to Alexandra , we have had extremely poor water pressure to our house, with water supply stopping completely on most days between 6 am and 2 pm.
It is so bad that I resorted to installing my own 10,000 L water backup system at a cost exceeding R60 000.00. The Joburg Water response to a Roodepoort Record article and complaint in the matter was that the houses are "at the end of a reticulation system". Well, I've been in the house for over 30 years and have never had a pressure problem like the one we experience now. In addition, the water quality delivered by Joburg Water is So Poor that my water filters clog up every 2 months with algae from the supply line.
The current state is untenable, and the municipality and government offices need to be held accountable for the resolution of this critical life resource. “
4. Stacey Schultz Sandown – Sandton “Almost every second week, we are without water for at least 2-3 days, if not longer. Fixes are not done timeously, and clearly they're not being done correctly, as the fixes do not last, as we experience the same problems in those same areas over again. Maintenance is never as planned as it goes on for 6 days without water, and clearly also not being done properly because these pipes are still breaking! No one is doing the job properly or timeously, whether it's due to corruption or lack of resources, or incompetence. What are we paying for anymore? “
5. Johann Du Toit Florida Park Roodepoort “Water pressure is either low or non-existent from 6 am to around 2 pm every day. The infrastructure is so bad, and even though we pay our service fees every month. The local government cannot deliver on any of the services that is paid for.”
6. Yunus Johnie Florida Park “Pressure to low to no water daily”

7. Nadia Clarke Sandown "Water pressure is terrible, and most of the time there isn't water from about 8 am to. Maybe 3 pm. A very frustrating situation for a basic need that should be provided or at least should be fixed properly. I've moved into the area about a year and a half ago, and this has been the problem ever since."
8. Jean Brook Sandown "Water is a human right, this situation is abusing it"
9. Peter Purdon Florida Park "Despite articles being shared in the Roodepoort Record and Patric from COJ changing our water meter about 3 months ago and advising us to increase the size of our inlet pipes, which cost us almost R8000, we have continued to have little to no water pressure before about 2 pm, for about a year now. I am a runner and always prefer to run in the early morning, but then I have to remain sweaty and dirty until the afternoon, unless I use bottled water or travel about 5km to the gym and hope they have water. This is totally unhygienic and unhealthy. "
10. Martha Purdon Florida Park. "Our water issues have been going on for well over a year now, but after two big maintenance projects were carried out in Johannesburg, the water situation has just gotten worse. There is no chance of showering or bathing before 1 pm, as there is either little water pressure or absolutely no water. You can't do washing before then either unless you use bottled water! This is beyond frustrating or annoying. It is impacting our lives daily."
11. Justin Brown Sophiatown "I have a house in Sophiatown. For many years, water supply has been a major issue. There are daily interruptions to the supply. It is common to go for 3 or 4 days without water. Often, there is only enough pressure very late at night until the morning. One can understand temporary issues; however, to have no reliable water supply for years in Africa's richest city beggars belief. I have installed a water pressure meter and log the data, so my claims actually have real-world data to back them."
12. Christine Wallace, Florida Park "No water in the mornings from 7 till 2 in the afternoon every single day. This is not acceptable."
13. Tonia Du Toit, Florida Park "We will experience low water pressure and then also experience no water for days. We report it but it usually takes days before it gets sorted"
14. Monique Brink Florida Park " In Somerset Street, water has become a privilege instead of a basic right. We only have about three days a week where we can enjoy a full, reliable supply. On weekdays, from around 06:00 until midday, it feels as if the taps are being deliberately throttled. By early afternoon, the pressure improves slightly — but for most of the day, we are left struggling with a trickle or nothing at all. This isn't a new problem. We have been reporting it for over a year, begging for help, yet nothing changes. Over the past three months, the situation has only grown worse. Families can't cook, clean, or even flush toilets properly. Children go to school without being able to wash properly. We are forced to live as if water is a rare luxury, while paying for a service we barely receive. Water is life — without it, our dignity is stripped away. We are tired of being ignored."

15. Juwayriyah Essop, Mayfair West. “I live in Mayfair West, and we have been facing water issues for the past 3 years. Water would just go off and come on at random intervals, with no communication from Johannesburg Water. Thereafter, water was scheduled to go off at 9 pm and return around 5 am the next morning. Some days this schedule was followed; however, on most days, the water would go off around 7 pm and only return around 9/10 am the next morning. There have also been multiple occasions in which we were left without water for weeks on end. This year, the water issue has gone from bad to worse. The water goes off at 7 pm, and sometimes trickles in at low pressure around 1 pm the next day; other times, it just doesn't return at all. When water returns at 1 pm on some days, it only gets to a decent pressure around 3/4 pm, leaving us with roughly 3 to 4 hrs to get all household chores done, including but not limited to washing clothes, washing dishes, cooking, and cleaning. At this time, all household members are also expected to shower and be ready for the next day of work and school. This problem has been going on for way too long and is extremely frustrating.”
16. Junaid Sallie Mayfair West “Water shut off every evening and only restored late next day. Pressure has not been consistent. At times, no water for days.”
17. Muhammad Mayfair West “We have had water cuts every night at 7 pm on St Gothard Avenue for the last 5 years. Sometimes, water is restored at 11 am the next morning, with multiple days with zero water in a month, it's ongoing and crippling us, we have old, sickly, and young kids that need to endure this every day.”
18. Ingrid Bester Kensington “Since 2023, residents of Kensington have been subjected to relentless and unexplained water outages that have brought daily life to a standstill. The situation has only worsened, with prolonged periods of having no access to running water — in some cases, for weeks on end. What began as isolated issues soon escalated into a widespread crisis. Reaching out to Johannesburg Water (JW) for assistance has proven to be an exercise in futility. Calls logged with their call centre were met with vague responses and no clarity on the cause of the outages, expected time of restoration, or any acknowledgment of the broader systemic issues. Even more concerning was the complete lack of awareness or response from our local ward councillors — the very individuals tasked with representing us in times of crisis. Attempts to seek help via Johannesburg Water’s social media platforms only deepened the frustration. Instead of engaging with residents and providing transparent communication, JW blocked many of us, silencing our attempts to highlight the dire situation. It’s inconceivable that a city-owned entity — funded by ratepayers and accountable under the Constitution to uphold access to basic services and freedom of expression — would act in such a dismissive and hostile manner.
- Beyond the water outages, another major contributing factor to this crisis has been the sheer number of water leaks across the area. Over the past two years, residents have diligently reported hundreds of leaks, yet only a handful have been attended to. On Cumberland Road in Kensington, a 400mm steel pipe runs beneath the surface. Along its length, visible leaks have appeared, and the road itself now shows alarming signs of structural collapse. When reported, these leaks were often dismissed as “groundwater”, despite clear evidence to the contrary. Similar issues persist on Patrol and Protea Streets, where reported jobs were inexplicably closed without any repairs being carried out. The structural integrity of our roads is deteriorating rapidly, and if left unaddressed, this will lead

to costly and entirely avoidable repairs — costs that will ultimately be borne by both residents and the City. Despite more than 150 reported leaks being logged by residents, many of these cases were closed overnight, without any intervention. The disconnect between the help desk and actual field operations is staggering. Residents are repeatedly left in the dark, with no visibility, no follow-up, and no accountability. Particularly concerning is the situation between Nottingham Road and 1st Avenue in Bertrams, where extensive and continuous leaks are prevalent. Instead of addressing these leaks, residents have been accused of “overusing” water, leading to further throttling of supply from the reservoirs. This is both unjust and unsustainable. The three reservoirs that service Kensington are undoubtedly losing far more than 25% of their capacity to leaks alone — a crisis of infrastructure that JW has continually failed to address.

Residents of Kensington are not asking for miracles — we are simply demanding the basic right to clean, running water and responsive governance. Our complaints have been ignored, our voices silenced, and our trust in the system has been eroded. Johannesburg Water must be held accountable for the gross mismanagement and disregard shown towards this community.”

19. Yvonne Floracliff “Joburg Water messed up the road and sidewalk in front of 37 Oosthuizen Drive, 3 separate times. Nothing has been done after numerous complaints. Most recently, (4 months ago already), they dug up a massive chunk of our flowerbed on the sidewalk and threw large chunks of the plants on top of others, leaving it in a horrendous state. We have reported this multiple times, but it has fallen on deaf ears. The road has been dug up, tar strewn all over, and it has essentially made a pothole that WE have to keep on filling. Video and pictures can be provided if required.”
20. Kovania Northcliff “Ever since we have been residents of Northcliff 2024, residing on a road named De la Rey, we have been experiencing issues every other month, issues with water, low pressure, quality of water, or no water, burst pipes, water shut down for days, etc. This is affecting us enormously, having children in a household, water is a basic necessity to live in SA. But why do we have this continuous problem in the suburbs that are mostly old residential? In past years, it’s all been about maintenance, shutdowns, etc, no water. As the years go by, it is getting worse, and not forgetting every month there are electrical shut-downs it is creating anxiety, worry, how do we go to work the next day, how do we bath, how do we wash clothes, how do we function. Both water and electricity we pay for every month as citizens of SA. But we are neglected with a basic resource to function in our lives.”
21. Janine Dale Herman Northcliff “Water quality, availability, sewage leaks, and services are disgusting in Northcliff. I would be 100% ashamed of this reality in a world-class African city!!!”
22. Dorothy Anne Presbury Linden Randburg “Since February Linden Street has had water outages sometimes 6 days at a time. Pretoria Street has not been repaired for over a year.”
23. Jasmien Lekay Jan Hofmeyer “We have been having this water issue for a while now for months no water then some nights in the middle of the night we get water for an hour, only the outside tap we have to carry buckets to fetch water or sometimes pay people to bring water as the water truck don't come in our street my geyser broke 4 times

since this water issue, as for my toilets due to flushing it's also broken how long will this continue , we get bills for water we have to pay every month but there is no water”

24. Thomas Swannepoel Vredepark “As a resident of Vredepark, the constant struggle with water is getting out of hand, and also the sewerage water that’s a constant problem, and our Councillor is not helping us as a community to resolve our needs and issues. The sewerage water has been running down Vrededord and Stilte street for more than a week, and no help. Please can someone address this issue? Why does our water get cut off during the night, and on some days, we have no water? And again, there is no explanation why this is happening.”
25. Fazile Karodia Mayfair “Every day is a struggle with water shedding. We lose water from around 7 pm, only for water to return the next morning. In between as a working mom, I cannot prioritize cleaning chores, washing clothing, and cooking decent meals for my family at night because of the water issues. Meanwhile, we have burst water pipes with water gushing for days, not even hours, underground leaks that are reported and only get attended to after 3 - 4 escalations. Rand Water and Joburg water penalise us residents for their inadequacies. If they respond quickly enough to the burst pipes and leaks, so much water can be saved, and there will be no need to implement water shedding.”
26. Margaret Barker Wilgeheuwel “We have low pressure one minute and then extremely high pressure the next. Our taps come on by themselves, and if you are not home, it's a problem it could flood your house, not to mention the wastage. My geyser burst and pipes have burst, causing major damage.”
27. Ryan Bezuidenhout Forest Town “We recently experienced zero water coming out of our taps for six days. We have three young children (3 under). We don’t have access to a borehole. We had to use pool water and boil it to bathe in. We drove around our neighbourhood begging neighbours for their borehole water so we could wash our cutlery and crockery. We bought drinking water. We were left with no tankers in our area. No plan from JHB water. No apology. It was the most inhumane way to be treated, and we struggled. It was a violation of our basic human rights. Insult to injury, we had to pay a water bill of over seven thousand Rand that month.”
28. Jayesh Ratanjee Parkview “ There are constant outages and water pressure challenges, this is due to burst pipes & failing old infrastructure problems. The city did indicate last year that a capital project was underway, but there have been no signs of the project.”
29. Tasli Mobana Mayfair “It's been a long time now, we have been suffering with this water issue. Almost every night, our taps run dry. Its extremely difficult for us to wake up at night to offer our prayers as we need water for ablution. We have to keep buckets and drums filled with water in our homes. Even though we have water shedding every few weeks, there is no difference in our bills. They are skyrocketing without the service being delivered. The world-class metro city and these kinds of service issues is a failures of our government. We demand change. Water is a need it's not a luxury. No one should be deprived of this.”

30. Alicia Erasmus Florida “I only wanted to have my late husband's name taken off the title deed, when asked for a clearance certificate, lawyers done it twice, COJ had given me the debt relief and I had R12000 in credit, the amount they gave was almost R50000 which was paid but they then charged me the same amount after that and when I went there asked if I'm selling, and refused to help me, they then removed the entire water meter and now they are still charging me for water with no meter in place, I do have all my paperwork, tried councillor for help but nothing.”
31. Betty Muika Mabeneshia Suburb Cyril Dene “I am writing to raise a serious concern about the ongoing water shortages in our area. For the past one to two years, we have not had a consistent water supply throughout the month. This has deeply affected our daily lives. From April to June, the situation became even worse — water would only be available once every 2 to 3 weeks, and even then, only for a maximum of 2 hours. This is simply unacceptable. This prolonged lack of access to water is not only frustrating, but also unhygienic — especially for families with children. Toilets are not functional, and basic sanitation is becoming difficult to maintain. This situation is unsafe and unjust. We deserve consistent access to clean water. Please take urgent action to resolve this issue and ensure that water is made available regularly.”
32. Manfred Loepord Liebmann Newlands “I have been subject to behaviour from the council which totally negates my constitutional right to access to water, both for my staff to shower and bathe and to use toilets, as there has been no supply or meter since 22/09/2024 up to the present and continuing. My meter was vandalised or removed by the council for non-payment. On the 22/09/2024. At this time, my account was 100% up to date. This has been confirmed by the council with instructions from the accounts department of the council to replace with immediate effect. Nothing was done, and despite employing a helper for council problems who has been to the council on my behalf on more than six occasions, we remain to this day without water. At this time, I have been forced to sign an acknowledgement of debt that was not true in any manner, as we sat in a manager's office, who worked out the deposit for this transaction would be R3900.00. This was paid by me with the promise of a reconnection and a new meter within 3 days. This, of course, never happened, but I did receive a council query resolved non-reply notification asking to supply a meter reading with proof of date on a non-existent meter. Furthermore, it was claimed that a totally spurious meter belonged to us. This number was not even our original meter number. If requested, I can supply all the people involved names. Their claim that the query is solved is both dishonest and merely indicates the incompetence and total inadequacy of the council employees. We remain, to this day, almost a year later, without water, against all our rights as citizens. The account number is 400166956. I shall supply many reference numbers, names of Johannesburg staff members instruction emails to reconnect with the accounts executive over this period. Our constitutional rights have been violated by a careless and incompetent council.”
33. Mayroon Barners Langlaagte North “Every night water gets closed until the next morning. We are still getting billed for water. We never have water for a full month.”
34. Dominique Prinslo Illovo Sandton “We have so many problems; I'm with supply, quality, overcharging, etc.”

35. Tasmien Ahmed Mayfair “The water problem has been a constant problem in the region of Johannesburg. This issue is consistently happening in the area. It's a serious problem, especially because the families are affected because of the lack of water, and this causes sanitation issues. The lack of water causes a great issue as water is a basic need; the lack thereof is truly disheartening. Another issue is that the cost of paying for water does not equate to the water care that we are getting; it's terrible for us because we are suffering with no water and still have to pay the municipal bill, or else they would cut our electricity. Truly disappointed with the service we received.”
36. Brad Brittan Strathavon “I live in Strathavon, and the water issues we have in the area are beyond belief. There have been months where, for 20 out of 30 days, we have no water. Outside my complex alone, there is one pipe that has burst 5 times. The pipe area that bursts can't be more than 2 meters long, and yet it bursts somewhere along the same spot. Further up the road, there is another pipe that bursts all the time and the pipe is an asbestos pipe right under an Eskom transformer. We live in an area with higher rates than other areas, and yet we are constantly without water for up to 11 days at a time. The lack of notice, communication, and care from Joburg water is astounding, and they simply do not care. The people coming to do repairs often don't have the correct tools or supplies and say they can only get them once they do a certain part, so we all wait. This cannot continue, and people need to be held accountable. It's not just Strathavon but Sandown, Morningside, and many more areas. There has been no maintenance of the infrastructure, and we pay for it.”
37. Jacques Brixton “We always have low water pressure and have to fit a water tank with a pump to get pressure and water when the water is off most of the time.
38. Lamies Matthews Emmarentia “In Emmarentia, we frequently (every 3-6 months) experience water outages lasting 5 days or more. During these outages, my family purchases bottled water for drinking/cooking and fills 5L bottles at the nearby mosque for flushing and bathing. I go to the laundromat once every 3-4 days to do laundry. When water is restored, our pipes are full of muck. The pressure is also unreliable. I have removed all the little sieves from our taps, as one of the sieves was blown out of the tap after one outage. Besides the inconvenience, the situation results in increased costs each time we are faced with an outage.”
39. Fiona Theunissen Coronationville “Resident in Coronationville, Jhb. This water issue is affecting hygiene and health. We have water during the nighttime when we should be sleeping, in order to be rested for work days and school. What purpose does water serve us during nighttime? During the late night hours between 11 and 5 am, we need to clean the floors, wash dishes that have piled up, wash clothes, and still be fresh for work and school, while having to wake before 5 am to wash or bathe. Whenever or wherever there's a burst pipe, we as residents of Coronationville are affected. Why?”
40. Paul Hanly Bryanston “I bought my property in 2008. It is against the Bryanfern Arboretum, which is supposed to be a preserved conservation area in which a small stream runs. Over the past 5 years, it has been virtually impossible to live in my home due to the enormous stench from sewerage now running in the stream. My rates and taxes have probably gone up 4 fold since I have owned the property, yet my property value has diminished because of the stench of the river. There is no longer any birdlife or normal

waterside creatures due to the toxicity of the water. How can the Johannesburg Municipality turn what was once the best city in Africa into another Lagos so quickly? Why should I pay extortionate rates only to live right next to a sewer? It is a highly dangerous accident waiting to happen. “

41. Lynne Dworetzky Strathavon “I am writing as a deeply concerned resident and ratepayer in the Sandton area to appeal for assistance concerning the escalating infrastructure crisis we are facing in Sandton and its surrounding suburbs. Despite paying some of the highest rates in the country, we are frequently left without basic services such as electricity, water, and proper sewage management. It is no longer unusual for residents to endure power and water outages lasting up to five consecutive days. This is unacceptable under any circumstances, but especially so given the exorbitant rates we contribute towards service delivery. We understand that service delivery challenges are widespread across South Africa, but what we are witnessing in Sandton—one of Africa’s most prominent commercial and residential hubs—is rapid infrastructure decay and what appears to be deliberate neglect. Roads are caving in, water and sewage pipes are constantly leaking or bursting, and repairs are often temporary at best. In fact, the situation is deteriorating so rapidly that many residents are beginning to suspect foul play. One troubling concern is the frequent appearance of water tankers, which some believe may be part of a larger pattern of sabotage for financial gain. With outages becoming more frequent and longer in duration, we question whether there are vested interests profiting from our community’s suffering. With the G20 Summit scheduled to take place in Sandton later this year, the need for urgent intervention and transparent accountability is more pressing than ever. If the current trajectory continues, we fear that the area may be unable to sustain basic operations, let alone accommodate a global diplomatic event. “
42. Ahmed Jogee Mayfair “City of Johannesburg is in disarray and must be placed under administration. The city has failed its residents overall.”
43. Pratisha Gunpath Kensington “ I relocated from KZN to Johannesburg in 2023 and have experienced water issues every single month. Either the water pressure is so low that one cannot even shower, or there is no water altogether for days on end. There is no alternative water provided close by, and one has to drive or walk kilometres to try and get water. The lack of communication regarding the lack of water is frustrating.”
44. Charmaine Lewis Kensington “ Our water is unfortunately supplied by Alexander Park Reservoir, and since August 2023, we have been struggling with intermittent water supply. It is very difficult to try to plan anything when you are faced with either low water pressure or no water at all. From the basics like being able to clean your body, clothes or house to the huge disappointment of not being able to host your anniversary lunch, because you can't rely on water being available. The fact that information as to the cause and more importantly, when it might return is virtually non-existent makes it even worse! The fact that we pay for water and have to be "happy" when we do get a trickle is appalling and inhumane!”
45. Aadila Moola Kelvin “Like most JHB residents, I experience water cuts. It incurs extra expenses on my end because I have to go out and buy water. When it's unplanned, I have to go days without properly bathing. The indignity Joburgers face is unacceptable.”

46. Nadima Peters Crosby "I've lived in Crosby for 28 years. I have never had any water or pressure concerns until 4 years ago. Days without water only come in the kitchen, bathrooms, and other taps are bone dry. Water, when available only comes on late afternoon or early evening, by then it's time to get throttled again. I have permanent buckets in my house for daily use. We are only 2 retired persons in the house; the majority of the time, we obtain our water from boreholes in the area. When the water eventually comes on, the pressure is so poor that we still have to resort to bucket baths. We duly pay our rates, water and lights each month, yet we do not have the comfort and privilege of enjoying our home and retirement without one of the basic needs of water. I am "gatvol " of the excuses. With all the supposed maintenance done over the past 4 years, I should have a waterfall in my house."
47. Johan van Biljon Northcliff "Being in Washington drive at the top of the hill, we are always the first to run out of water. If the tower is empty we are low pressure and always the last to come back online. Even with power outages, water is gravity-fed and Washington is always first to run dry and last to get Water leaks in roads are repaired after a lot of wastage. The repaired places is not properly backfilled, and damage occurs again. No road patches are properly done and become potholes."
48. Gail Byrne Cyrildene "I've been reporting a water leak coming through the tarmac in our road on a corner from February 2025, (61 Friedland Avenue), I cannot keep count of the reference numbers and platforms that I am still using, at least once a week to report this hole in our road, that was as big as a R1 coin, I'm scared because if you want to turn into our building you have to turn into oncoming traffic because the hole is now a deep pothole. That is besides our area having to go without water for days at a time, in May of this year, if you count the hours, that we've had water it could easily amount to 2 not more than 5 days in total, with no backup and no way forward or answers, your on the phone for half and hour then gets cut off, (water bill was the same amount). If you do get through to municipalities, they don't care; all you hear is Here's your reference number, and that's it. Our area, Ward 118, Region F, is just water where you drive for years, not months, especially around the Bruma area, the roads are dangerous to drive on, because of the water and leaking infrastructure. I have received not to have my car is still let's say.... Jesus comes"
49. Ridwaan Catterall Florida park. "Since we moved onto the premises on 12 February, we've experienced low water pressure during the day between 8 am and 6 pm Monday to Sunday. Numerous tickets were logged with COJ, and the technician would come and check, but says they see the pressure is low and need to escalate to have the PRV checked. I even spoke to the supervisor, who said the same, but nothing came of it. I also reached out to Cllr Finn and Rodney in the community for assistance. Rodney said he spoke to the Supervisor, who said if it is water throttling, then there is nothing they can do. But why is the water so bad that it we can't do washing not get hot water nor can we shower during the day. Water throttling came in when there was a water shortage and the dams were empty. I have been told by neighbours this has been going on for the past year with no resolution from anyone."
50. Debra Laventhall Kensington "Water in Kensington Johannesburg has been a huge problem for months . Some days we go without water for days not a drop in the taps, then when the water comes on it goes off during the day, and by the time we come home from work there is no water."

51. Keldon Barnett Emmarantia :I had to spend a fortune on a water backup system because of ongoing outages and water shedding and air in the pipes. Every night the water pressure would drop and water would empty from my house. I have to pay to replace this water when water pressure comes back, but to make matters worse, I would get nothing but air coming through which I have video proof spins my meter at an alarming rate that I get billed for. It's also impossible to shower when air is spraying out and the little water keeps getting hot then cold. My house is a double-story on the apex of the road making this situation much worse for me than those around me. I had to install a separate solenoid system to only top up my tanks once a week to avoid issues with air, but also means I rely on the water pump 24/7 (more electricity)."
52. Harmish Patel Mayfair "For more than a year, we have lost water pressure every night, and if not, then we don't have water at all."
53. Shabnam Khan Bryanston "Water outages have become more often, blocked sewers are attended to very late and often recur. Water leaks do not get fixed for weeks, and we are faced with higher water bills."
54. Joshua Liebenberg Ferndale "Over the past year, we have had numerous days, which add up to weeks without a reliable water supply. These interruptions may last from 1 day to 5 days, depending on what happens, after almost every repair, there are unplanned outages caused by new bursts or leaks. The lines are not properly flushed after repairs. We have had to replace almost every tap mechanism in our house due to damage from sand and debris not cleaned out of the line after repairs. This has also damaged our geyser valves. The pressure is unreliable, from very low, where it causes leaking water at taps and inlets that need some pressure to seal; this cost is carried by us as users, unfairly so as the system is not functioning within specifications. With the situation reaching these levels, we have had to spend money on a water backup system, using our pool as a reservoir to try to negate the costs of a full tank system. If I look at what we pay for water monthly, it is totally unacceptable that the system and supply are not up to scratch. We are paying high rates for VERY poor delivery."
55. James Chisholm Greenside "When we moved into our new home, we inherited a R40,000 water bill from the previous tenants. To manage this debt, I entered into a payment agreement with Johannesburg Water, which I consistently honoured over time. However, this year, without prior notice or explanation, Johannesburg Water cancelled our agreement, demanded immediate full payment, and disconnected our water supply until the debt was settled. We spent a week navigating this crisis, working to restore our water service while seeking clarification on why the agreement was terminated. Although our water was eventually reconnected, we have since received bills with unexplained additional charges, amounting to thousands of rands. These sudden increases, provided without justification, have forced us to make substantial payments on short notice to maintain our water supply."
56. Tony de la Motte Melville "Melville is plagued by broken infrastructure (Hursthill) and uncontrolled land use, increasing consumption in an area that is subject to almost nightly water cuts".

57. Chanry Collins Brixton “We have low to no water every single day. We can't manage to do any washing or even bath at times. There are periods when the water is dirty. This has been going on for weeks on end and it's becoming unacceptable and inhumane. At the end of the day we'll still have to pay for water at the end of the month that we did not even get to use”.
58. Berenice Owen Florida “ Our pressure has been very low due to the zama zama damaged pipe. I am elderly, can only shower and do laundry at midnight.”
59. Cedric Hlungwane Cyrildene “Low water pressure is making it difficult to take a bath in the morning when everyone needs to go to work and kids to school. Appliances are failing to operate optimally because of low pressures. High costs of water, even though the service is not up to standard.”
60. Faith Florida “ I have an issue with the billing rates of Joburh water, it's very expensive, we can't even afford it”.
61. Leeanda Adams Malvern “ We reside at 222 Saint Amant Street in Malvern. We lose water pressure early afternoon, most days by 4 pm, and we have no water until the next morning, some days after 6 am. My husband needs to shower before going to work, it affects my household's personal hygiene. My grandchildren, ages 1 and 3, can't bathe in the late afternoon. This means they go to bed dirty. Our washing is constantly behind. This harms my mental health as I suffer from mental illness, and these constant issues lower my mood. My family and I are very disappointed in the service delivery here.”
62. Tshepo Kensington “Alexandra Reservoir always on low levels. We have been struggling for 2 years. Especially after 14H00”
63. Kutlwano Township “In our area, we are billed high and when you ask, there is no explanation from the government employees.”
64. Nonhlanhla Mabunga Informal Settlement “My name is Nonhlanhla Mabunga I reside in Lawley Station my challenge with water issues is low pressure, sometimes like on weekends the water doesn't come out at all and I have to work up in the middle of the night around 1 am to draw water, the reason for a low pressure we use to have communal tapes and for me to go there it was too far since I'm located towards the end of our informal settlement and if happens during the day I was working and come back late I couldn't go so on my area we come with the solution to connect pipe in our communal at least to have an access to water, however we still faces challenges of low pressure or water not coming out of our tapes. We once got a threat from Joburg water last year that they would cut off our water but thank God they didn't for now.”
65. Sean O'Doneal Forest Town “Oxford Road off ramp from M1 - Sewer pouring down into Oxford Road and roads leading off, especially Birnam past the school boundary and into storm water to Zoo Lake. Reported multiple times. Minimal response and

ineffective solution. Quick fix and then leave, as the issue remains. Open water repairs drain in Cowie Road, over 18 months Numerous repairs to the water supply on Jan Smuts from Valley Road to Jellicoe Road, Rosebank. Excavations remain unfilled for months. Inefficient repairs to a broken pipe in Jan Smuts, Approx. corner Bolton. Regular water supply interruptions, with no warning of works to be carried out. Major works are in progress on Jan Smuts and Bolton, with no warning to consumers, as the supply is cut. Continual supply interruption without any warning, where planned works commence or minimal back-up trucks when the supply is cut for 7 days.

66. Nkosinathi Nkosi Nanas Farm “ I'm Nathi Nkosi, a resident in an informal settlement called Nanas Farm. Nanas Farm is an informal settlement that its history dates from the early 90's. Initially started with twenty families, but has expanded in 2020 and now has over 7000 families. The main problem with Nana's Farm is the lack of access to clean running water. In their first 3 years of expansion, the Nanas Farm residents had to depend only on 1 5000L Jojo tank that was only filled once a day. The entire Community had to depend on that tank, and most of the Communication members were forced to use the water that is running from the streams of Klipriver for all their everyday activities to survive. The Community people had to create their own well along the stream so that they could access water. The condition of the water is not even fit for animals to drink, but people of Nanas farm had little choice as they were forced to consume this water in the form of cooking their everyday meals and drinking. Though after the people were later given 10 more Jojo tanks after the protest they made last year in 2024, the situation still remains the same, as sometimes those trucks don't fill those tanks due to ongoing shortages of water in and around Johannesburg. All the people of Nanas Farm need is clean and running water, and unfortunately, that is something that the people of Nanas Farm, in their existence of almost 5 years, have yet to see. In their everyday struggles that they face remains their top priority problem and something they wish one day, as it is their constitutional right, could be within the access distance of 200meters and be able to at least have the privilege of having taps inside their yards.”
67. Julia Fish Melville “I live in Melville. Due to a lack of planning from the City, density has massively increased in my reservoir area with no upgrades from the City to the Hursthill 2 system. Every night for years, the reservoir is shut off, and I am woken up by splattering pipes every morning when water returns. There is no capacity in the reservoir because of a structural crack in the reservoir. Despite this, my driveway is wearing away because of a leak in the street. I've reported it dozens of times over the past two years. The City has dug up the main road by my house, which the City spent R25m to upgrade, and left huge holes for years. I've lost revenue having to refund Airbnb guests that augment my NGO salary because every summer and during repairs to Eikenhoff I don't have water for weeks at a time. My house is littered with bottles of water I fill from a community tank 8 blocks away, just so I can flush toilets. I have had to take out more money on my mortgage to try out in a backup tank so I can give water to my pets and cook. The City claims upgrades to Brixton will help us, but nothing has changed for years, while tariffs just go up and up.”