

Press release: Minister investigates water problem on Paarl farm

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Illustration: Photo by Wouter Kriel

W-Leliefontein 1: "Rosie September discussing her housing needs with Gerrit van Rensburg, Western Cape Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development"

Body: Gerrit van Rensburg, Western Cape Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, together with Gesie van Deventer, Drakenstein Mayor, paid a visit to Paarl farmer, JT Basson, earlier today. Basson has been issued with a warning that his irrigation water supply will be cut within 24 hours by the Department of Water Affairs if drinking water is not restored to ten houses on his land.

"Our visit this morning was initiated out of concern for people who are struggling, and who, by the reports we received, did not have access to clean water", Van Rensburg said. He said after discussions with Mayor van Deventer, the Municipality was ready to provide drinking water from a tanker if needed.

But during the visit it came to light the farmer did provide drinking water to the inhabitants of the ten houses with a water tank he regularly fills up. The houses do not currently have running tap water, due to the theft of a copper cable and water pump. Van Rensburg advised Basson to report the theft to the police. Basson also agreed to replace the stolen pump, and to continue to supply drinking water in the interim.

Mayor van Deventer said the installation of a pre-paid electrical point from where the inhabitants of the ten houses can operate the new pump will receive priority from her officials. Drakenstein Municipality is also lending a drinking water tank to the farm for the time period it takes to construct the power connection.

Van Rensburg said the visit once again highlighted the dire housing need in South Africa. "Of the 50 people who live here, only 5 are working for Basson. The other people simply do not have anywhere else to go for a roof over their heads. I would like to see all farm workers have a decent house within our municipal areas. A house they have the property rights to, which can be used as security and one their children can inherit"

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