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City of Johannesburg

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Media Statement

Johannesburg Water launches groundbreaking underground water pilot project to improve supply to informal settlements

Johannesburg Water, in partnership with Wits Enterprise, is proud to announce the launch of a pioneering pilot project aimed at improving access to reliable water supply in informal settlements through the use of underground water sources.

“This innovative project marks a significant step in addressing long-standing water supply challenges in underserved communities across the City of Johannesburg. By tapping into underground aquifers, Johannesburg Water aims to supplement existing water infrastructure and ensure that all residents — regardless of where they live — have consistent access to safe water,” said Johannesburg Water’s Managing Director, Ntshavheni Mukwevho.

The pilot phase, targeted at nine informal settlements across the Deep South (Region G), involves the drilling of boreholes and the creation of localised water distribution points. The goal is to test the viability, sustainability, and scalability of underground water as a complementary source to the city’s bulk water supply, particularly in areas with limited or no formal infrastructure.

This project will be the first of its kind to improve water supply for informal settlements throughout the City of Johannesburg.

Work has begun at the Water Works, Marikana, and Kokotela informal settlements; and next, the project will move to the Phumla Mqashi and Narens Farm informal settlements.

The Deep South is an area with a high volume of informal settlements and illegal water connections, which has put a strain on the Deep South systems due to the demand exceeding available supply/capacity.

“We are truly grateful to Johannesburg Water and all its partners for this project. We will ensure that we safeguard the project as water is life, and is also a scarce resource,” said Keletso Mbele, community leader for Water Works Informal Settlement.

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