City of Johannesburg

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Media Release

For Immediate Release

Date: 30 October 2026

EL NIÑO READY JOBURG: PREPARE TODAY. PROTECT TOMORROW.

The City of Johannesburg urges residents to prepare early for potential El Niño-related water, heat and summer weather risks.

Under its El Niño Ready Joburg campaign, themed “Prepare Today. Protect Tomorrow.”, the City of Johannesburg is calling on residents, businesses and communities to take practical steps to prepare for the 2026/2027 summer season.

Climate outlooks point to the possibility of hotter and drier conditions associated with an El Niño phenomenon, alongside the continued risk of severe thunderstorms, flash flooding and other summer-related hazards.

El Niño Ready Joburg brings together the City’s coordinated summer preparedness efforts by its Disaster Management Centre and the Vikela Amanzi – Protect Our Tomorrow water conservation campaign. Residents are encouraged to act early, use water responsibly and take precautions against what is forecast to be super El Niño like weather conditions.

A Super El Niño is a natural climate phenomenon that occurs periodically over summer seasons that can influence rainfall and temperature patterns across Southern Africa. While its development does not automatically mean Johannesburg will experience an urban drought or prolonged periods of high temperatures, below-normal or irregular rainfall could increase pressure on water resources, raise consumption and place additional demands on municipal infrastructure and essential services.

Preparedness for this periodic phenomenon must begin before conditions become critical. Protecting Johannesburg’s water security starts with all of us.

Typically, hotter weather can drive up water consumption as households, businesses and communities use more water for daily activities, gardens and other needs. When demand rises while rainfall is reduced or irregular, managing available water resources becomes increasingly important.

Johannesburg Water continues to implement operational measures to manage the water supply system, including monitoring reservoir levels, managing water pressure, addressing leaks and bursts, and applying demand-management measures where necessary.

However, safeguarding water security is a shared responsibility. Residents are encouraged to make water-wise choices part of their everyday routines, rather than waiting for water restrictions or shortages before changing their behaviour.

Simple actions can make a meaningful difference:
Take shorter showers and turn off taps when brushing teeth, shaving or washing dishes.
Repair leaking taps, toilets and pipes as soon as possible.
Avoid using hosepipes to wash vehicles or clean paved areas; use a bucket where appropriate.
Water gardens during cooler periods, preferably early in the morning or in the evening.
Cover swimming pools to reduce evaporation.
Reuse suitable household water where safe and appropriate.

Residents are also urged to report water leaks and bursts promptly so that they can be assessed and attended to.

“We cannot control the weather, but we can control how we use water. Every household, business and institution has a role to play in protecting this essential resource, ” said the City spokesperson, Nthatisi Modingoane.

An El Niño phenomenon is not just about water.

While water security is a key concern, the City’s summer preparedness approach recognises that the season presents multiple, interconnected disastrous risks.

Prolonged periods of extreme heat can increase the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion and other heat-related medical emergencies, particularly among older persons, young children, people with underlying health vulnerabilities and residents who work outdoors.

Hot, dry conditions can also increase the risk of veld fires, higher electricity use for cooling and the heat island effect in concretised environments and dense social settings, threatening communities, infrastructure, electricity networks and the natural environment. At the same time, the El Niño phenomenon does not eliminate the possibility of severe thunderstorms, lightning, strong winds or flash flooding associated with summer seasons.

The City’s Disaster Management Centre urges residents to remain alert to official weather warnings throughout the summer season, avoid unnecessary exposure to extreme heat, keep clear of floodwater and report fires or other emergencies promptly.

As part of El Niño Ready Joburg, the City’s summer risk awareness approach is guided by the principle:

“Know the Risk. Act Early. Stay Safe.”

Residents are encouraged to play their part by staying informed through official City communication channels, following verified safety advice and reporting service delivery faults through the appropriate municipal channels.

The City, along with its service delivery departments and entities, will continue to communicate relevant public information as conditions evolve and official forecasts are updated. Any water restrictions or other measures, where required, will be communicated through the appropriate official channels.

Through El Niño Ready Joburg, residents are encouraged to embrace Vikela Amanzi – Protect Our Tomorrow by making water conservation a daily commitment and remaining alert to summer weather risks.

El Niño Ready Joburg: Prepare Today. Protect Tomorrow. Every drop saved matters, every precaution counts and every action helps build a safer, more resilient Johannesburg.

For water-related faults and enquiries, residents may contact Johannesburg Water on 010 061 4470. Residents should also follow official City of Johannesburg and Johannesburg Water communication channels for verified updates and advisories.

ENDS

Issued by the City of Johannesburg

For enquiries, kindly send email to mediaqueries@joburg.org.za