

MALUTI-A-PHOFUNG INSTALLS TEMPORARY TAPS

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Some residents used to walk up to two kilometres to get water

The Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality in the Eastern Free State has erected temporary water taps in the protest-troubled community of Intabazwe informal settlement, in Harrismith.

Residents of Intabazwe informal settlement were delighted after the municipality and its water entity, Maluti-a-Phofung Water handed over six taps of running water to the area.

This comes after residents went on a rampage last month, blocking traffic on the N3 highway, demanding basic services including running water and low cost houses.

A member of the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality mayoral committee for water, electricity and waste management, Mbutana Mokoena, said the area was declared a non-residential area after Geo Tech tests were conducted but did not prevent people from squatting in the area.

“This led to the municipality and MAP (Maluti-a-Phofung) Water setting up temporary taps to sustain residents while they waited to be placed in a permanent residential area identified for them. We have just connected six stand taps in and around the area to help community members cope for the time being. The connection was made to the water pipe that runs through the area,” said Mokoena.

Some residents who used to walk up to two kilometres to get water welcomed the development. They now walk less than 200 metres.

“We have been walking long distances for years to get water. However, we are very grateful to the municipality for placing these taps closer to our homes because that gives us time to do other things that we could not do before. I now hope that one day I will be moved from this place like they promised and be able to stay in a house like other people,” said Madlamini Tjhabalala.

Maluti-a-Phofung Water’s acting chief executive officer (CEO), Nico Emmenes, beseeched the community to ensure the safety of the taps and report any leakages that may arise.

“We are faced with a challenge of water shortage that is caused by community members from time to time. We need to ensure that we report any leakages and unnecessary usage of water because it is in our best interest,” said Emmenes.

During the protests, 11 people including three children were arrested and charged with public violence. However, the protest was defused by the former Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality executive mayor, Mathokoana Mopeli, who resigned recently due to illness.

[Source: www.theweekly.co.za]