



31 March 2026

FOR ATTENTION: DR DV FARRELL

Interim Executive Member

Garden Route First

By email: admin@grfirst.org.za

Dear Dr Farrell

OUTSHOORN MUNICIPALITY RESPONSE: WATER QUALITY ASSURANCE & GOVERNANCE TRANSPARENCY

We acknowledge receipt of your correspondence dated 30 March 2026 regarding the recent precautionary boil-water advisory issued by the Greater Oudtshoorn Municipality . We appreciate the constructive intent of your letter and the concerns raised by residents.

1. Current Water Quality Situation

Following the recent rainfall events, inflows into the Raubenheimer Dam resulted in a significant increase in turbidity (water colour and suspended particles). While this discolouration in itself does not pose a direct health risk, it does impact the effectiveness of chlorine disinfection, which is currently the only form of treatment applied to this source.

As a precautionary measure, and in line with best practice and regulatory requirements, the Municipality issued a boil-water advisory.

It must be emphasised that regular water quality testing is conducted as part of our routine monitoring programme. The water quality results for the previous months (specifically relating to bacteriological compliance) are attached for your reference and confirm that:

- No faecal contamination or E. coli was detected; and
- Total coliform counts were within SANS 241 limits.
- Further samples were taken today following the recent increase in turbidity, and the results are currently awaited. These new results will be shared upon receipt.

We are fortunate that the Raubenheimer Dam catchment is located in a largely pristine area, with no formal human habitation or agricultural activities taking place upstream. However, it must be noted that natural organic material, including plant matter washed into the system during rainfall events, can lead to elevated total coliform counts. This, combined with increased turbidity, is the reason for the current precautionary notice.



2. *Nature of the Oudtshoorn Water System*

It is important to clarify that no conventional Water Treatment Works (WTW) exists at the Raubenheimer Dam. Since the construction of the dam in 1972, the system has operated on raw water abstraction with chlorination only, which under normal low-turbidity conditions has historically proven sufficient to maintain compliance with drinking water standards.

However, during periods of high turbidity following rainfall events, the absence of a full treatment works limits the effectiveness of disinfection. This is the primary reason for the current precautionary advisory.

3. *Infrastructure Planning and Funding Constraints*

The need for a dedicated Water Treatment Works at the Raubenheimer Dam is fully recognised and has been consistently included in:

- The Municipality's Water Services Development Plan (WSDP)
- The Water Master Planning processes
- The Integrated Development Plan (IDP)
- The estimated capital cost of such a facility is in the order of R120 million. Unfortunately:
- The Municipality does not have the financial capacity to fund such a project internally; and
- To date, we have not been successful in securing external grant funding at this scale.

We continue to pursue appropriate funding avenues, including national grant programmes aligned to bulk water infrastructure.

4. *Immediate Operational Measures and Specific Responses*

In response to your specific queries:

- Corrective actions to restore disinfection effectiveness
- The primary corrective measure currently in place is the precautionary boiling of water, which ensures safe consumption while turbidity levels remain elevated. Operationally, the Municipality is optimising chlorination within the constraints posed by raw water quality and continuing with intensified monitoring.
- Provision of alternative water sources (tankers)
- The use of water tankers is not a feasible alternative, as any water supplied would originate from the same source system and therefore be subject to the same water quality characteristics. Tankering would therefore not provide a safer alternative under the current conditions.
- Role of the Blossoms Wellfield augmentation
- The Blossoms Wellfield, including emergency augmentation, is currently being utilised primarily to support rural supply areas. However, it is not sufficient to replace the bulk supply from Raubenheimer Dam, which provides approximately 20 Ml/day to the Oudtshoorn system. It can therefore only serve as a supplementary source and not a standalone alternative for the town supply.



5. *Transparency and Information Sharing*

We note your requests regarding access to water quality data and reporting. The Municipality supports transparency and will continue to provide appropriate updates and communication, including sharing of test results, particularly while the advisory remains in place.

6. *Governance and Oversight*

The Municipality operates within established governance frameworks as prescribed by applicable legislation, including internal and external audit processes, regulatory reporting (including Blue Drop requirements), and Council oversight structures. Your proposal regarding additional oversight structures will be considered within this context

Yours faithfully



MR M YEKANI

MUNICIPAL MANAGER