



## Putting People First – Through transparent, inclusive, independent governance

**MEDIA STATEMENT: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE:** 7 April 2026

**SUBJECT:** Oudtshoorn Residents Challenge 2026/27 IDP Over "Hidden Infrastructure Collapse" and Water Quality Crisis.

**OUDTSHOORN, Western Cape** – A group of concerned residents and stakeholders, approached **Garden Route First**, to submit a formal positioning paper and objection to the Oudtshoorn Municipality regarding the 2026/27 Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The group is calling for an immediate shift in municipal priority from "Water Quantity" to "Water Quality" following a decade of systemic infrastructure neglect. To view the paper click on [http://grfirst.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/POSITIONING-PAPER\\_IDP-RAUBENHEIMER-DAM-7-April-2026.pdf](http://grfirst.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/POSITIONING-PAPER_IDP-RAUBENHEIMER-DAM-7-April-2026.pdf)

### Key Findings Revealed:

- **The 0.4% Maintenance Failure:** While National Treasury requires an 8% spend on repairs and maintenance, the 2022/23 AGSA report revealed a staggering low of **0.4%** in Oudtshoorn—a direct contributing cause of the current turbidity and "Boil Water" notices. The average estimates spend on maintenance 2020 is calculated at 3,1 %.
- **The Negative Maintenance "Hockey-Stick" Trend:** Oudtshoorn's collapse from an already inadequate 3.1% average maintenance spend to just 0.4% in 2022/23 — against the National Treasury benchmark of 8% — represents a classic negative financial hockey-stick curve. As maintenance spending flat-lines downward, the cost of asset failure accelerates sharply upward. This widening gap is now visible in real-world consequences: turbidity spikes, repeated "Boil Water" notices, and a water system unable to meet constitutional standards of safe, potable supply.
- **The R100 Million Filtration Gap:** Municipal records as far back as 2022 admitted that a **R100 million treatment plant** is required to stop water turbidity, yet the project remains unfunded while millions are diverted to borehole projects that do not solve the filtration crisis.
- **Quantity versus Quality:** The R150 million Blossoms Wellfield project pumps clear water into a distribution network that is immediately contaminated by "muddy" raw water from the Raubenheimer Dam due to a lack of sand filtration.
- **Constitutional Breach:** Residents argue they are being charged for "potable" water but receiving "raw" water, forcing households to incur the private electrical / gas cost of boiling water to make it safe for consumption.

### The Demand for Oversight:

The group has invoked **Section 18 of the Municipal Systems Act** to demand the establishment of an independent **Water Advisory Committee (WAC)**. This body, consisting of professional engineers and hydrologists, would provide the technical oversight necessary to ensure future grants are ring-fenced specifically for water purification technology.

### Next Steps:

The Municipality has been given **7 days** to respond to the Positioning Paper. Failure to engage will result in the launch of a town-wide "**Clear Water Mandate**" petition and formal escalation to the Western Cape Provincial Government and the National Department of Water and Sanitation.

**"Residents are not asking for more water; they are asking for the water they already pay for to be safe to drink,"** says Dr. DV Farrell of the Garden Route First Interim Committee.

### Media Enquiries:

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