



PUBLIC STATEMENT & MEDIA BRIEFING

Oudtshoorn Water Crisis: Residents Welcome Municipal Engagement but Demand Clear Timelines and Action

14 April 2026

Residents and stakeholders of Oudtshoorn acknowledge the Municipality’s written response of 13 April 2026 regarding the ongoing water quality crisis, infrastructure planning, and governance concerns. While the response provides important context, several critical issues remain unanswered — and urgent clarity is now required.

At the same time, it is important to note that the Municipality has, **in principle**, accepted the core demands that residents intended to escalate through the “Clear Water Mandate” petition. These include:

- **Recognition of the need for a Water Treatment Works (WTW)** at Raubenheimer Dam
The Municipality confirms the need has been recognised for years and is included in planning documents.
- **Acknowledgement of the need to improve maintenance and asset management**
The Municipality notes the National Treasury benchmark and admits funding constraints.
- **Acceptance in principle of a Water Advisory Committee (WAC)**
The Municipality states that the proposal “will be considered within existing governance and oversight frameworks.”

This represents meaningful progress — but **principle without timelines is not action**. Residents now require clarity, commitments, and implementation.

1. Water Advisory Committee: Acceptance in Principle, but No Process or Timeline

The Municipality’s response states:

“The proposal for a Water Advisory Committee will be considered within the existing governance and oversight frameworks...”

Residents welcome this acknowledgement. However, the response does not indicate:

- When the proposal will be tabled
- What process will be followed
- Who the municipal liaison will be
- When the Committee will be established
- Whether the Municipality supports the proposed composition (engineers, hydrologists, municipal officials, business/agricultural stakeholders)

Given the urgency of the water crisis, residents call for:

- **A joint scoping meeting within 14 days**
- **A draft Charter to be finalised**

- A Council resolution by 30 June 2026

This aligns with the petition timeline and ensures meaningful oversight.

2. Maintenance Spending: No Response to the 0.4% Crisis

The Municipality did not respond to the most serious financial concern raised:

“The AGSA report for 2022/23 actually listed the infrastructure maintenance at an alarming 0.4%.”

(Positioning Paper)

This is far below the National Treasury benchmark of 8% and directly linked to:

- Turbidity spikes
- Repeated “Boil Water” notices
- Asset deterioration
- Failure of purification infrastructure

Residents request a direct response on:

- Whether the Municipality acknowledges the 0.4% figure
- What corrective plan exists
- How the 2026/27 MTREF will address the maintenance deficit
- Whether quarterly maintenance ratio reporting will be implemented

3. Water Treatment Works: Acknowledged Need, but No Commitment

The Municipality confirms:

“The need for a Water Treatment Works at the Raubenheimer Dam has long been recognised...”

However, the response does not address:

- Whether the Municipality agrees that filtration is essential for SANS 241 compliance
- Whether the WTW will be prioritised in the 2026/27 IDP
- Whether the R320m dam expansion will be deferred until purification is funded
- Whether the Municipality supports ring-fencing future grants for filtration

Residents reiterate:

Water quantity without water quality is not potable water.

4. Blossoms Wellfield: Quantity Solution, Not a Quality Solution

The Municipality highlights the stabilising role of Blossoms, but does not address the core issue:

- Blossoms water is mixed with turbid dam water
- Blossoms does not reduce turbidity
- Blossoms does not prevent boil-water advisories



- Blossoms does not replace filtration

Residents request explicit confirmation of these facts.

5. IDP Alignment: Still No Clarity

The Municipality states that the IDP “balances” priorities, but does not address:

- Why dam expansion remains prioritised without filtration
- Whether purification will be elevated as the primary priority
- Whether the IDP will be amended to reflect the urgent need for a WTW

Residents request a clear statement on whether the 2026/27 IDP will be updated accordingly.

Conclusion: Constructive Engagement, but Action Now Required

Residents welcome the Municipality’s willingness to engage and its **in-principle acceptance** of the key demands. However, the community now requires:

- **Clear timelines**
- **Concrete commitments**
- **Transparent processes**
- **Formal establishment of the Water Advisory Committee**
- **A direct response to the maintenance crisis**
- **A prioritised plan for a Water Treatment Works**

The community remains committed to constructive collaboration and looks forward to a full municipal response within 7 days.

Issued by:

Garden Route First Interim Committee

On behalf of concerned residents and stakeholders of Oudtshoorn