

**MARY JANE MPHAHLELE**

THE WESTERN Cape Department of Public Works says Day Zero may see more schools closing if they do not have stored water when taps run dry.

Provincial deputy director-general for Public Works Gavin Kode briefed the provincial legislature's rules committee on what needed to be done to avoid the Western Cape's taps running dry.

"Most schools will have to close if they don't have their own safe supply from boreholes or rainwater tanks.

# Day Zero may close schools with no stored water

Many businesses will not be able to operate unless they can provide temporary toilets and drinking water."

It is predicted that the city will hit "Day Zero" on April 12, when all taps will be turned off. During this period, the City will move into full-scale Emergency stage 3. This means that water to households and businesses will be cut off.

There will not be enough water

to maintain normal services and taps, including those for toilets, will run dry.

Western Cape Premier Helen Zille assured principals and education officials at a mass meeting in Kuils River on Wednesday that schools would not close if Cape Town reached Day Zero.

She said every school had to have a water emergency plan and assured

stakeholders that officials would be available to assist in drawing up their strategies.

Kode said water supply would be limited to essential services, including hospitals and clinics. All government departments had to have plans which focused on critical service delivery areas and essential services as Day Zero approached.

He stressed that departments

needed to assess their staff requirements to render essential services.

Kode said most of the new sources, which included groundwater, desalination and reclaimed water from wastewater treatment plans, were far from complete.

"About 150 million litres per day of groundwater, 120 million litres of desalinated water and 22 million litres of reclaimed water are

planned to come online by the end of the year," said Kode.

ANC MPL Maurencia Gillion lambasted the DA provincial government for having no plans in place to avert Day Zero, other than asking Capetonians to save water.

"I think the province as well as the City of Cape Town don't have a concrete plan for Day Zero," said Gillion.

"My view on Day Zero is that a 'gogga maak vir baba bang' (an insect frightens a baby – in other words, scare tactics) moment is being used to scare the community of the Western Cape and particularly Cape Town.

"The City has no plan. All I can say is poor planning is what got us into a situation like this," she added.

Gillion urged the provincial government to stop engaging in blame games.

It should work with the national government on finding a solution before Day Zero hit, she said.