

Water leaks for weeks at public works offices

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Amid reports that Eastern Cape municipalities have lost more than half-a-billion rand due to water losses, water has been running uncontrollably outside the department of public works offices in Amalinda for several weeks now, prompting anger from nearby residents.

Theo Pienaar, who looks after the grounds of the nearby Fairlands Old Age Home, said he had noticed there was an issue several weeks back.

Pienaar built a dam on the grounds of the retirement home, diverting water from a stream through the home's pond so that it cleans the pond naturally as it flows back out to its path.

He noticed something was different when the usual trickle into the pond turned into a steady stream which flowed 24 hours a day.

Upon noticing this, he followed the water upstream through the bush to its source – metres away from the back of the Amalinda public works building.

The exact source of the water is unknown as it is hidden within thick bush.

Close by, also in the bush, is a lone manhole cover. The water is also flowing down a grassy embankment into the gutter of the Amalinda off-ramp on the N2.

Pienaar said he had informed Buffalo City Metro (BCM) of the problem at the beginning of last month.

Public works spokesperson Vuyokazi Mbanjwa yesterday confirmed water was running uncontrollably near their premises.

She said her department had only become aware of the issue following a visit from a BCM official who showed departmental officials the leak.

“However we are trying to

ascertain and confirm the ownership of the waterline with BCM as the line is outside public works offices' yard and on municipal land.

“Public works, in conjunction with BCM, is trying to sort out this problem. But the area where the leak has been identified, is bushy and too inaccessible for a swift remedy. Attempts are being made to clear the area,” Mbanjwa said.

BCM also confirmed they were aware of the problem.

Spokesperson Bathandwa Diamond said it was first reported in mid-July “and we spent days checking trunk mains from Dawn Reservoir as water flowing in stormwater drains past Fairlands Old Age Home were reported”.

“Subsequently it was traced to the public works complex in Amalinda and they were notified and requested to effect repairs. A plumbing contractor is on site carrying out repairs,” Diamond said.