



## **DROUGHT HAS TURNED THE WESTERN CAPE INTO A DISASTER AREA**

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The Cape Chamber has appealed to all businesses throughout the province to do everything possible to save water and to make plans to use less water in the future.

The drought has turned the Western Cape into a disaster area and we have to take urgent measures to reduce water use, but we must also see it as a long-term problem.

We have all been guilty of taking water for granted and that has to stop right now. We can look back and see some of the things we should have done, but that does not solve our immediate problems. I appeal to all businesses that use a lot of water to do their own recycling and reuse water in toilets for example. It may require some re-plumbing but these emergency measures can become permanent water-savers for years to come.

There is no doubt that water will become more expensive in the future and every business should plan to use water more efficiently. The electricity crisis and the shocking tariff increases forced people to find way to use less electricity and now we must do the same with water.

Rain water tanks are an obvious measure. Many industrial buildings have extensive roof areas and are in a position to collect large quantities of water for their own use and for neighboring industries. Once again this could lead to long-term cost savings just as solar geysers produced long-term electricity savings.

In this country we are obsessed with land issues but the real problem is water. Think of the highly productive farms along the Orange or Gariep River. Water that would flow into the sea makes the desert bloom.

It was also important to hold the authorities accountable for some poor planning. It is a scandal, for instance, that the massive quantity of waste heat from the Koeberg nuclear power station is not used in flash evaporation chambers to desalinate sea water for our very dry West Coast. The technology is old hat and used extensively throughout the Middle East.

All municipalities should be forced to set targets for recycling water. In Cape Town six percent of water is recycled and this is simply not good enough, although it is probably better than most municipalities in the province. We



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have a crisis and my hope is that it will change our thinking. There is a lot we can do to make the future a better place.

Janine Myburgh

President of the Cape Chamber

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