



**water affairs**

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

2011 -11- 01

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Reference: 2/1/5/1

**MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

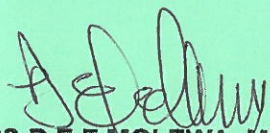
**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION NO. 223 FOR ORAL REPLY**

A draft reply to the above question asked by Mr G R Morgan (DA) is attached for your consideration.

  
**ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

DATE: 01/11/11

  
DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

  
**MRS B E E MOLEWA, MP**  
**MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

DATE: 20/11/02

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY

QUESTION NO. ★223

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 25 OCTOBER 2011  
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 34)

No. ★223. Mr G R Morgan (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) What is the current status of the response to the acid mine drainage problems in the (a) western, (b) central and (c) eastern basins;
- (2) (a) what is the nature of the pumping and treatment facilities that are due to be installed at each basin and (b) when is the pumping and treatment facilities expected to be installed at each basin?

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**REPLY:**

- (1)(a) The Department has approved an immediate (emergency) solution entailing the upgrading of an existing mine water treatment facility following a due diligence conducted on all the basins. This upgrade will make it possible to treat (i.e. the neutralisation of mine water) 27 – 32 million litres of mine water per day. The procurement process for this upgrade is underway.

To supplement the immediate solution, a short-term solution has also been formulated which will be operated parallel to the immediate solution to ensure the treatment of all mine water decanting in the Western Basin.

- (1)(b) A short-term solution (i.e. the neutralisation of mine water) has been proposed. This solution is aimed at preventing the underground mine water level in the Central Basin from reaching the Environmental Critical Level (ECL) that has been set at 186 metres below the surface.
- (1)(c) A short-term solution (i.e. the neutralisation of mine water) has been proposed. This solution is aimed at preventing the underground mine water level in the Eastern Basin from reaching the ECL that has been set at 290 metres below the surface.
- (2)(a) The short-term solution largely entails the installation of pumps in all the basins to extract underground mine water and to maintain the ECLs. The construction (or upgrade) of mine water treatment plants will employ neutralisation processes to adjust the pH of mine water and to remove heavy metals.
- (2)(b) The projected dates for the commissioning of pumping and treatment facilities are as follows:

Western Basin	February 2012 (immediate solution) August 2012 (short-term solution)
Central Basin	August 2012
Eastern Basin	February 2013

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