



**Thungela Response | The Mission Magazine Media Enquiry**  
**2023.03.07**

1. We understand that a concrete seal at the south shaft of your Kromdraai site failed, which resulted in the AMD spill that went on from the 14th to the 20th of February. Within Thungela's water management plan, were there any other measures in place to stop this kind of disaster from happening? Or, is it normal to have one barrier (e.g. a concrete seal), between toxic water and a healthy river?

*The incident took place at the South Shaft which forms part of an old mine that was last operational in 1966. The shaft had been sealed since 2019. Our initial investigations determined that a concrete seal at the shaft had failed leading to an uncontrolled water release into the Kroomdraaispruit and travelled approximately 60km to Loskop Dam. The water originated from old underground workings which is acidic and rich in metal.*

2. According to the Mail & Guardian, your colleague, Mpumi Sithole, the executive head of corporate affairs, said "Despite a water management plan in place, the volume of water exceeded the maximum capacity for treatment at the dosing site and flowed into the Kromdraaispruit resulting in lowered pH levels of the water." How was Thungela Resources not aware of rising water volumes? Or, was Thungela Resources aware but unable/unwilling to do anything about it?

*Khwezela Colliery has a water management plan in place. This plan includes multi-level systems to address water accumulation and decant management post-mining. Despite these controls, the Kromdraai water management strategy failed, largely due to criminal activity, including the theft and vandalism of critical infrastructure designed to prevent such an event.*

3. Sithole is also quoted as saying Thungela Resources is "devastated" by the disastrous effect on the environment. She says, "We are fully committed to responsible management of water resources and will do what is in our power to take corrective steps." What does that actually mean? What is Thungela Resources doing, now a year later, to restore the Wilge River and Loskop Dam and to ensure this kind of thing never happens again at any of Thungela Resources' mines?

- *Over the past year, significant work has been undertaken in conjunction with various government departments and third-party authorities in the fields of aquatic ecology, biodiversity, and water. This started with our appointment of 'The Biodiversity Company' as an independent technical expert to develop and implement a collaborative river rehabilitation plan.*
- *We collaborate through an expert committee comprising representatives from Thungela, The Biodiversity Company, the Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency, and a leading authority on*



*aquatic ecology. This panel meets monthly to discuss the rehabilitation plan and track progress across several activities. In addition, an expert review panel comprising recognised experts and a specialist from the Department of Water and Sanitation guide and provide assurance on the sampling and monitoring components of our rehabilitation plan.*

- *We undertook a review of historical data to determine the health of the river system prior to the event and completed a comprehensive sampling exercise to determine the system's current ecological status. We continue to collect and analyse data during low and high-flow conditions. We are encouraged with the progress that has been made in restoring water qualities to pre-existing levels in all but one part of the river system.*
- *Biodiversity monitoring continues and it is pleasing that fish spawning activity has been noted.*
- *We also supported the Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency in a crocodile satellite tagging exercise to assist in monitoring the health of the river system.*
- *All approvals are in place and construction is set to commence to construct a fish breeding facility at Mabula's ground hornbill project at Loskop dam.*

4. Has Thungela Resources set up a fund to try finance the restoration? How much is Thungela Resources dedicating to the process? Engineering News reported last year that Thungela had R8 billion in gross cash dividend within the first half of 2022. How much of this whopping stash is being devoted to environmental restoration's where Thungela is solely responsible for the damage in the first place? There are mentions of an 'environmental rehabilitation' trust and 'green fund' - how are these resources being devoted to fixing the Wilge and managing its restoration?

*Thungela has set aside the necessary financial and human resources to implement the interventions contained in the rehabilitation plan. We continue to approach the rehabilitation with the necessary level of urgency and commitment, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.*

ENDS

