



## Submission on the Knysna Municipality's Draft 2024/25 Budget

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Submitted by: Development Action Group (DAG)<sup>1</sup> as part of the Asivikelane Campaign<sup>2</sup> representing informal settlements communities in the Knysna Municipality.

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Based on an analysis of the Knysna Municipality's draft 2024/25 budget<sup>3</sup>, DAG and informal settlement residents in the Knysna Municipality would like to submit the following recommendations to be considered in the final budget.

- **While it is encouraging to see a dedicated allocation of R51,5 million for repairs and maintenance, this is almost R20 million less than the original allocation that was in the 2023/24 adopted budget.** We urge the Municipality to reverse the cuts to its overall repairs and maintenance budget. We are concerned about the Municipality's seeming inability to spend its repairs and maintenance allocations, and we urge the Municipality to put measures into place to ensure this allocation is spent appropriately.
- **The Municipality should provide a separate line item for the repairs and maintenance of communal taps and toilets and its connection infrastructure in informal settlements.** Broken water and sanitation infrastructure remains a major challenge in informal settlements, and dedicated funding to address this will ensure that residents can use the infrastructure which is already in their settlements.
- **The Municipality should provide separate line items for the servicing of chemical and portable toilets.** This information will show residents how much the Municipality is

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<sup>1</sup> [www.dag.org.za](http://www.dag.org.za)

<sup>2</sup> In March 2020, the International Budget Partnership South Africa (IBP South Africa) and its civil society partner organisations, including DAG, launched the Asivikelane Initiative. This initiative gives a voice to informal settlement residents in South Africa's major cities who face severe basic service shortages. It supports informal settlement communities to monitor the delivery of water, sanitation and refuse collection services and to engage with their municipality about these services. [www.asivikelane.org/about/](http://www.asivikelane.org/about/)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.knysna.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Annexure-A-Main-budget-tables-and-Supporting-tables.pdf>

spending on these interim services, and also assist them in holding the Municipality accountable for this expenditure.

- **The Municipality should include in its final budget dedicated funding to support skills training for communities to participate in basic repairs and maintenance of infrastructure in informal settlements.** Informal settlement residents have indicated that they are keen to repair minor faults themselves. By setting aside funding to pay for skills training, the Municipality can make sure that residents can actively contribute to relieving some of the repairs and maintenance pressures in informal settlements.

### **1. Asivikelane’s evidence of the lack of repairs and maintenance of informal settlement taps and toilets**

Since March 2020, the Asivikelane campaign has collected evidence which shows that in many settlements in Knysna, residents have no or inadequate access to water and sanitation. Over the same period, residents have consistently reported that the lack of repairs and maintenance of communal taps and toilets is one of the main contributors to the inadequate access to water and sanitation.

For example, in November 2023, 58% of Knysna informal settlement residents participating in Asivikelane said that the municipality takes up to seven days to repair broken services, while 10% said it can take between one and three months. Slow response to broken taps and toilets is concerning, and it leads to overuse and damage to functional facilities. It also poses safety concerns. One resident said, “If the tap gets damaged you have to go to Section 2 for water and it’s far and dangerous because you have to walk through the bush to get there.”

Knysna Municipality has various fault reporting systems, e.g., WhatsApp channels and Customer Care Lines. Nonetheless, 93% of residents who participated in Asivikelane in November 2023 indicated that they either report a fault to the ward councillor, ward committee member and/or another resident. This means it takes longer for the reported fault to get to the team responsible for repairing and maintaining broken taps and toilets.

In addition to this, Knysna officials and the Western Cape Local Government diagnostic assessment<sup>4</sup> indicated that the Infrastructure Services Directorate has a shortage of staff members, particularly general/artisan workers, whom we assume are responsible for on-the-ground repairing of broken services. This is possibly one of the reasons the Municipality is not responding swiftly to broken taps and toilets in informal settlements. Residents have indicated that they would be happy to find a way to work with the Knysna Municipality to repair minor faults to their water and sanitation facilities, this will address the delays in repairing faulty taps and toilets.

In October 2023, Asivikelane conducted a physical verification of taps and toilets in some of the Asivikelane settlements in Knysna. The key issues that came out of the physical verification with taps were low water pressure, leaking taps, broken tap valve, and some

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.knysna.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Spec-Age-1-March-2024.pdf> page 64

residents reported that there was no water. The issues with toilets were blocked toilets, missing or broken toilet seats and seat covers, the flushing mechanism not working, and broken toilet handles.

*Please go to page 4 to see some of the images taken as part of the physical verification.*

## **2. What does the Knysna Municipality's draft 2024/25 budget say about repairs and maintenance?**

The table below shows that a total of R51,5 million has been allocated for repairs and maintenance in the 2024/25 draft budget. This is 2% less than the R52,8 million allocated for this purpose in the adjusted 2023/24 budget. In turn, the adjusted budget was almost R20 million less than the original allocation for 2023/24. While the Municipality does not explain these decreases, one reason might be that the municipality is struggling to spend its budget for maintenance and repairs, possibly because they don't have enough workers to do repairs and maintenance.

We are happy to see a 5% increase for Sanitation Infrastructure and Stormwater Infrastructure. However, it is concerning to see a 5% decrease for Water Supply Infrastructure, given the water supply challenges with the current infrastructure. We assume that money from these budgets will fund repairs and maintenance to informal settlement taps, toilets, and connector pipes.

It is particularly concerning that the Knysna Municipality doesn't show what has been set aside for repairs and maintenance of taps and toilets in informal settlements, given the ongoing reports of broken taps and toilets, including broken pipes connecting water to facilities, and broken pipes leading away wastewater.

In addition to this, the National Treasury guideline indicates that municipalities should allocate at least 8% of the total value of their Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE), for repairs and maintenance. It is disappointing that the Municipality's share has fallen to 4,6%.

**Budget allocations for repairs and maintenance by asset class<sup>5</sup>**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		2024/25	% change between 2023/24 full-year forecast and 2024/25 draft budget
	Outcome	Outcome	Adopted budget	Full-year Forecast	Draft budget	
Total Repairs and Maintenance	52 539 000	57 005 000	74 266 000	52 815 000	51 574 000	-2%
Water supply infrastructure	12 070 000	11 740 000	13 823 000	9 963 000	9 451 000	-5%
Sanitation infrastructure	6 406 000	8 031 000	9 661 000	2 953 000	3 097 000	5%
Stormwater infrastructure	2 129 000	678 000	1 166 000	540 000	566 000	5%
R & M as % of PPE	3.4%	5.0%	6.6%	4.8%	4.6%	

As indicated above, we urge the Municipality to ringfence funds specifically for the repairs and maintenance of informal sector taps, toilets and pipes to ensure that enough money is spend in these settlements to make sure all residents have access to working taps and toilets.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.knysna.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Annexure-A-Main-budget-tables-and-Supporting-tables.pdf>  
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**Images of taps and toilets taken from the physical verification that was conducted in October 2023 by Asivikelane in Knysna.**



*Figure 3 Toilet in Victor Molosi, no flushing system*



*Figure 1 Toilet in Victor Molosi, blocked toilet*



*Figure 2 Toilet in Victor Molosi, broken door*



*Figure 6 Tap in Rosemore, not firmly attached*



*Figure 4 Tap in Rosemore, low water pressure*



*Figure 5 Tap in Rosemore, no water coming out*