

KZN air quality monitoring stations non-functional

Richards Bay Clean Air Association data vital to pollution- and health-watch

Dave Savides

THE Richards Bay Clean Air Association (RBCAA) has weighed in on recent parliamentary debate over KZN's present inability to conduct air quality monitoring or to do any pollution-related health assessments.

The matter was placed in the spotlight earlier this month during a sitting of the Legislature, in response to a formal question submitted by the DA regarding the operational status of the province's six air quality monitoring stations.

The KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) revealed that none of the province's monitoring stations are operational, and that remedial action will only be undertaken on three stations in the next financial year.

Among them is the King Cetshwayo station, located at the KZN Agriculture Extension Office.

While the DA's provincial spokesperson on environmental affairs, Hannah Lidgett, noted that 'this collapse was allowed to happen under the neglectful eyes of the previous administration', she said it was 'equally alarming that the department has no

data on the health impacts of poor air quality on communities'.

According to EDTEA's response, uMzinyathi, uMkhanyakude, King Cetshwayo, Harry Gwala and Zululand stations are expected to receive monitoring infrastructure only between 2026 and 2029.

Adding to the concern, the department confirmed it has not commissioned any studies or assessments on the health impacts of poor air quality on communities.

This has particular relevance to areas like uMhlatuze, where coal dust and factory gas emissions are a recognised hazard.

"The DA finds it unacceptable that the provincial government remains unaware of the extent of harm caused by air pollution while simultaneously delaying meaningful intervention for years to come," said Lidgett.

"Without data, there can be no accountability - and without accountability, communities will continue to suffer needlessly."

RBCAA responds

"The absence of ambient air quality monitoring stations means there is no way of determining what communities are being exposed to and at what concentrations," said Sandy Camminga, RBCAA



None of the province's six air quality monitoring stations, including the King Cetshwayo District station, are presently able to monitor air quality or to assess any potential air pollution health impacts

communications officer.

"In the absence of robust air quality data, a health study cannot be undertaken as this would form the basis of such a study.

"Simply repairing the monitoring stations will not ensure the stations remain operational. The operational and maintenance costs for an air quality monitoring network are significant.

"Funds need to be allocated annually, and spare analysers need to be on hand to allow for immediate replacement should an analyser fail - failing which data capture will be significantly compromised and will result in flawed statistical analysis which will not support any form of a study."

She pointed out that RBCAA data is made available to the local, district and provincial

authorities, as well as to environmental assessment practitioners for the purposes of conducting EIAs for proposed developments, and has historical and live data freely available via its website.

"The RBCAA is an example of the importance and value of an independent air quality monitoring network.

"We have a wealth of air quality experience and expertise available at our disposal by virtue of our membership and their commitment.

"The tried-and-tested formula and the long-term success of the RBCAA strengthens the fact that integrated air quality management is not limited to the local authority and is better accomplished as a collective."



New waste collection trucks, yellow plant and skips on show at the uMhlatuze Central Sports Complex on Monday Erwin Kruger

New waste removal trucks for city

Dave Savides

ATTEMPTS to improve the city's much-maligned waste collection service received a boost on Monday when new trucks were unveiled at the Central Sports Complex in Veldenvlei.

Thanking residents for their

patience, Mayor Xolani Ngwezi said the acquisition of these modern vehicles is expected to improve reliability of waste collection across the municipality, stating that in the next few weeks the city will be adding more trucks to its ageing fleet.

Referring to the new acquisitions as

'a good start', Ngwezi said residents can anticipate more consistent services, leading to a cleaner and healthier environment.

Acknowledging that 'more still needs to be done to improve matters', he pledged more trucks so as to ensure consistency as expected by residents.



Celebrating the delivery of new waste vehicles and yellow plant on Monday are Cllr Mkhize (community services chair) Mayor Xolani Ngwezi, Deputy Mayor Christo Botha and Speaker Tobias Gumede

Outlook Engineering Contractors cc T/A

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