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## Consumers to pay 7,5% more in rates

Unless paying high water bills, Kouga consumers can expect to pay 7,5% more for water and property rates in the new financial year from 1 July.

Tariffs for water will increase by 11%, sanitation by 9%, refuse collection by 8%, electricity by 7,57% on average and the Environmental Management Fee (EMF) by 6%.

In addition householders in the St Francis Bay Canals and Village areas will also be paying an extra 25% of their rates for the SRA Levy.

The Kouga municipality said total operating expenditure for 2018/2019 amounted to R796,785-million, which is a 5,48% increase when compared to the 2017/18 adjustment budget.

The total operating revenue for 2018/2019 is R753,717-million - an increase of 9,39% or R64,69-million when compared to the adjustment budget.

Funding for the operating budget will be obtained from various sources, such as services of electricity, water, sanitation, the EMF and refuse collection (53,08%), property rates (23,45%), plus grants and subsidies from national and provincial government (16,4%).

The capital budget for the financial year 2018/2019 amounts to R67,745-million, which is R 1,685-million or 2,43% less than the 2017/18 adjustment budget. It will be funded from government grants and subsidies, as well as internal funding.

Though the consumers are paying

more the municipality's financial position has improved. It has improved to such an extent that internal funding can be used to boost its capital budget for the first time in years. Executive Mayor Horatio Hendricks says.

The municipality will endeavour to secure additional funding to continue upgrading infrastructure and expanding services to all communities. Unused and little used land has been identified and plans for the sale of land are in place were in place.

Land for commonages and emerging farmers also remains a high priority.

The Mayor said to cut down on lavish spending he and the Speaker will each drive his own car and the Mayoral Committee members have also been reduced by one person - from six to five.

The new budget makes provision for staff costs of R 272,8 million. This figure represents 34,24% of the total operating expenditure.

Repairs and maintenance for the 2018/19 year is budgeted at R37-million, equating to 4,85% of the total operating budget.

This percentage is below the municipality's target of 8%, but the money will go to where it is needed most, with at least 7% of this allocation to be spent on infrastructure assets.

In addition R 6,5 million will be used to replace the fleet that is no longer functional.

## Pro poor budget aims to end bucket system

The municipality is making strides towards compiling a pro-poor budget, that aims to address illegal electricity and bucket toilets.

The biggest capital project for the new financial year is the multi-year upgrade of the Sea Vista Waste Water Treatment Plant, where the municipality will be spending R18,5 million in 2018/2019.

The upgrade will put in place the bulk infrastructure needed to unlock the financial of new RDP houses in the area.

This upgrade is part of Kouga Council's approved Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and budget for the 2018/2019 financial year, that was approved at the end of May.

In his first budget speech, Executive Mayor Horatio Hendricks said facilitating job creation and rolling out basic services to the poorest of the poor have been prioritised in Kouga municipality's budget for the new financial year, starting July.

Funding had also been set aside to address the ongoing dependence of informal areas on the bucket system. More than 4 000 Kouga households still use buckets. The municipality is launching a multi-year programme in 2018/19 to eradicate the system, with R2,3-million being allocated for the first year of implementation. This will "remain

the number one priority for this municipality until every bucket is removed and burned, never to be used again," the mayor said.

In addition, steps will be taken to eliminate illegal electricity connections over the next 12 months.

"We will spend R1-million of our own internal funds in the new financial year to install power at hot spots. A further R8,8-million in grant money will be used for the electrification of current and future housing projects," the mayor said.

R500 000 has been set aside for extra stand pipes and the upgrading of roads in informal areas while 700 wheelie bins have been procured to improve refuse collection in these communities.

On the cards for the new financial year will be the development of two new cemetery sites at Lorie and Thornhill. Plus 4,3-million has been budgeted for the upgrading and fencing of sports fields, with the emphasis on Wards 1 and 2.

The creation of jobs is prioritised for the duration of his term in office the mayor said. However, the municipality says it will not create jobs. It aims to create an economic environment and good governance to attract external investment.

## More boreholes in water search

Kouga Municipality is to expand its borehole programme in this new financial year to secure water for residents who are each asked to use only 50 litres a day during the drought.

The municipality has budgeted R1,5 million for the drilling of boreholes to secure water for all residents.

The municipality is also installing Jojo tanks at homes of elderly residents in the Gamtoos Valley to catch water for their homes on rainy days.

Interim Executive Mayor, Horatio Hendricks has asked residents to use water sparingly and to use a maximum of 50 litres of water per person per day, said Hendricks.

Storage levels at Kouga's main dams stood at 8,4%, Churchill at 17,14% and Impfu at 33% during the first week of June.

The Mayor asked community leaders, and ward councillors to educate the

public about the negative impact of vandalism has on water infrastructure.

People need to report any water leaks and any broken water metres immediately to avert incurring huge water losses," he said.

The Kouga Council imposed water restrictions in December 2016 and the following prohibitions are still in place:

- \* The use of hosepipes, sprinklers and drip systems.
- \* The watering of gardens, lawns and grassed areas.
- \* The washing of paved areas, walls, roofs, buildings and similar structures, vehicles or other equipment.
- \* The filling of swimming pools, padding pools, fountains and ponds.
- \* The connection of a hosepipe or any form of irrigation system to a tap supplying water from the municipal water supply system, except for fire-fighting purposes.

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## Eskom aims to keep lights on this winter

Eskom is doing all it can to keep electricity going in the country this winter. This is according to the power utility's board chairman, Jabu Mabuza, who said while the risk of load shedding always exists, we remain confident that

management is on a direct course to keeping the lights on for South Africa this winter.

Mabuza also said Eskom has secured 22% of the funding it needs in the new financial year.

-Source SA News.