

12 June 2024

Milestone for water governance in South Africa

The launch of four catchment management agencies (CMAs) by Minister of Water and Sanitation Senzo Mchunu during the Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA) conference being held in Durban this week, represents a true milestone for water governance, says Janse Rabie, AgriSA's head of natural resources. "This should be celebrated by all South Africans."

He says CMAs are intended to decentralise water resources management away from national government and are therefore fundamental to the proper application of the National Water Act (36 of 1998) and the National Water Resources Strategy of South Africa. CMAs are specifically constituted to be more responsive to water user needs and speedy decision-making around water resources management.

In terms of Chapter 8 of South Africa's National Water Act, CMAs are responsible for the protection, use, development, conservation, management, and control of all the water resources in that particular water management area (WMA). All spheres of government, water users, and communities in the WMA have to participate with CMAs as partners.

Under Minister Mchunu's leadership, the Department of Water and Sanitation reconfigured the number of CMAs to cover the Limpopo-Olifants, Vaal-Orange, Pongola-Umzimkulu, Mzimvubu-Tsitsikamma, Breede-Olifants and Inkomati-Usuthu WMAs.

"AgriSA has actively campaigned for the establishment of CMAs as part of its overall water strategy for the South African agricultural sector. As the largest user of South Africa's water resources (approximately 60%), the sector has a vested interest in sound management of this most crucial of South Africa's natural resources," says Rabie.

"AgriSA and its affiliated members look forward to constructive participation in the various CMA structures and wish to congratulate the Department of Water and Sanitation on this important milestone. We wish the newly appointed board and staff members of the CMAs the very best in the exercise of their duties and responsibilities."

To arrange media interviews, please contact:

Karen Grobler

karen@distinct.africa / 082 774 7008

