



**WATER QUALITY BUFFALO REGATTA**

We acknowledge that concerns have arisen regarding water safety in the Buffalo River, which is a matter that we take with the utmost seriousness. These concerns have prompted discussions that we believe warrant open and transparent communication as we approach the 2024 Buffalo Regatta.

The safety of the water during the Buffalo Regatta has been a paramount focus for the East London Boat Association (ELBA) over the years. Water quality testing is an ongoing and rigorous process throughout the year, with a particular emphasis on the weeks leading up to the Buffalo Regatta and Selborne Sprints. Ensuring water safety is not only a priority for ELBA but also a mandatory requirement stipulated by the Buffalo City Municipality as a condition for hosting the event.

The comprehensive testing and monitoring process in place includes daily water testing two weeks preceding the Buffalo Regatta, and the results are promptly shared with key stakeholders, including Transnet and the Buffalo City Municipality's water and health departments. Any identified risks are escalated to a steering committee comprising representatives from the Municipality, Transnet, BCM Traffic, the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA), and the South African Police Service (SAPS).

Typically, areas prone to risk are those where sewage may potentially spill into the river following heavy rainfall. We evaluate water samples against the South African Guidelines on the Recreational Use of Water (March 2012). Water exceeding counts of 500 cfu/100ml E. coli is categorized as poor, indicating a potential health risk for those exposed to it.

The Committee also highlighted the importance of official approvals, stating, "Relevant officials are required to sign off on water safety before ELBA's approval to host the Buffalo Regatta is granted unconditionally."

While we acknowledge the presence of residential areas upstream and the natural factors, including increased rainfall in February, we want to reassure our participants, spectators, and the community at large that we are dedicated to regular water testing and are working collaboratively with municipal authorities to address any risks or concerns in preparation for the upcoming regattas.

The Buffalo Regatta Committee remains committed to ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants and attendees at the 135th Buffalo Regatta in 2024.