

PETITION AGAINST UNJUST TARIFF INCREASES

NW 373 Rustenburg Local Municipality

2026/2027 MTREF Tariff Book | Special Council Agenda Item 193 | 30 March 2026

Addressed to:

- The Executive Mayor
- The Municipal Manager
- The Chief Financial Officer

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND RATEPAYERS OF RUSTENBURG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, HEREBY OBJECT TO AND PETITION AGAINST THE PROPOSED TARIFF INCREASES AS TABLED IN AGENDA ITEM 193 OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL HELD ON 30 MARCH 2026.

PREAMBLE:

The Rustenburg Local Municipality (RLM) has proposed significant tariff increases across all service categories for the 2026/2027 financial year. While we acknowledge that municipalities must recover operational costs, we firmly assert that it is **unlawful, unconstitutional, and morally indefensible to increase tariffs for services that are not being rendered, are substandard, or are entirely non-functional.**

Section 152 of the Constitution mandates that local government ensure the provision of services in a sustainable manner. Section 195 requires that public administration be accountable and transparent. The proposed tariff increases stand in direct violation of these principles.

GROUNDINGS FOR OBJECTION:

1. Electricity: Basic Charges and Consumption Tariffs

The proposed electricity tariff increases include a **9.01% increase** across all residential and commercial consumer categories. The residential basic charge alone rises from **R446.86 to R487.12 per month**, with consumption block rates increasing across all tiers.

Grounds for objection:

- **Frequent and prolonged outages:** Residents and businesses endure load shedding from Eskom, compounded by RLM's own ageing infrastructure, cable theft, and transformer failures. None of these interruptions are compensated for.
- **Cost shifted to consumers:** Consumers are forced to purchase inverters, solar panels, generators, UPS devices, gas appliances, and candles entirely at their own expense simply to function during supply interruptions.
- **Small business losses:** Businesses lose perishable stock, machinery, and productivity with every outage, compounding the financial burden of the proposed tariff increase.
- It is fundamentally unjust to demand full payment for a service that is only partially delivered.

Demand: Suspend any electricity tariff increase until RLM demonstrates measurable improvement in supply reliability, a reduction in unplanned outages, and publishes a transparent infrastructure investment plan.

2. Water Basic Charges and Consumption Tariffs

The residential water basic charge is proposed to increase from **R116.00 to R126.44 per month (9%)**, with consumption tariffs increasing by **11%** across all usage blocks.

Grounds for objection:

- **Chronic supply failures:** Large parts of Rustenburg experience intermittent or complete water supply failures lasting days, without prior notice or communication.
- **Cost shifted to consumers:** Residents purchase water from private tankers, JoJo tanks, and buy bottled water at their own expense while simultaneously paying full municipal tariffs.
- **Constitutional right:** Section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution guarantees the right of access to water. Charging escalating tariffs while failing to supply water is a direct violation of this right.

Demand: Impose a moratorium on water tariff increases until a credible supply reliability audit is conducted, published, and infrastructure failures are rectified.

3. Community Halls: Boitekong Hall and Related Facilities

The non-refundable rental fee for community halls such as Boitekong Hall is proposed to increase from **R2,184.05 to R2,265 (+3.7%)** for 2026/2027. In addition, a refundable deposit of R1,042 is required upfront, bringing the total amount needed before the event to R3,307 of which R1,042 is returned after the booking provided there is no damage.

Grounds for objection:

- **Non-functional ablution facilities:** Ablution facilities at Boitekong Hall and several other community halls are completely non-functional. Residents who hire these halls are compelled to arrange and pay for mobile portable toilets at their own additional cost a burden entirely unacknowledged in the tariff schedule.
- The non-refundable rental fee of R2,265 is unaffordable for most community uses. Furthermore, requiring R3,307 upfront even where R1,042 is eventually refunded creates a practical financial barrier that excludes the very people these halls are meant to serve. While RLM collects this rental income, it is not meeting its basic maintenance obligations.
- The community hall is a public asset funded by ratepayers. Market-related rates for an asset in disrepair are unconscionable.

Demand: No rental tariff increase on any hall with non-functional ablution facilities. RLM must repair ablutions at Boitekong Hall and all similarly affected halls before any increase takes effect.

4. WA van Zyl Hall: Inaccessibility Due to Unaffordable Tariffs

The WA van Zyl Hall, recently renovated with public funds, carries a non-refundable rental fee of **R2,265 for 2026/2027** up from R2,184.05. A refundable deposit of R1,042 is required upfront in addition, meaning R3,307 must be found before the booking.

Grounds for objection:

- Despite recent renovations, the hall is practically inaccessible to ordinary community members due to its prohibitive cost.
- **Excluded users:** At a non-refundable rental of R2,265 and requiring R3,307 upfront before the event grassroots organisations, youth groups, church groups, bereaved families, and school committees are effectively priced out of using the facility.
- Renovating a public asset only to price out its intended users is a failure of public purpose. The facility was built with community funds and must be accessible to the community.

Demand: Introduce a tiered, means-tested pricing structure ensuring affordability for non-profit, community, educational, and welfare organisations, with waivers or reduced rates for qualifying groups.

5. Rietvlei Cemetery: Grave Fees and Maintenance Failures

Proposed grave fees at Rietvlei Cemetery for adult residents increase from **R1,166 to R1,201 for 2026/2027**, rising to R1,238 in 2027/2028 and R1,276 in 2028/2029. Rietvlei is already among the most expensive cemeteries in the municipality, on par with Donkerhoek, yet receives comparable or worse maintenance.

Grounds for objection:

- **No perimeter fencing:** Rietvlei Cemetery has no functional boundary fence, leaving it open to vandalism, animal intrusion, and illegal dumping.
- **Overgrown with grass and vegetation:** Graves are covered by overgrown grass, making it impossible for families to locate and maintain the resting places of their loved ones. This causes immeasurable emotional distress.
- Residents are charged the highest burial fees in the municipality for a cemetery that is entirely neglected. This is a profound disrespect to the dignity of the deceased and their families.
- A cemetery is not merely a service, it is a final resting place. Its upkeep is a solemn municipal duty that cannot be neglected while fees rise.

Demand: No increase in cemetery fees at Rietvlei until it is properly fenced, regularly mowed, and maintained. RLM must conduct and publish a full audit of all municipal cemeteries with a maintenance action plan and timelines.

6. Old Age Homes and Municipal Flats — Rental and Utility Increases

The Municipality proposes the following rental increases for RLM-owned old age accommodation:

- **Kerk Old Age Flats 1 Bedroom:** 8% rental increase, continuing through 2028/2029
- **Kerk Old Age Flats 2 Bedroom:** 10% rental increase, continuing through 2028/2029
- **Geelhout Park Old Age Flats 2 Bedroom:** 10% rental increase, continuing through 2028/2029

In addition, old age homes fall under the **Residential Bulk Conventional electricity tariff**, proposed to increase by 9.01%, with the basic charge rising from R5,581.81 to R6,084.73 per month per complex.

Grounds for objection:

- **Vulnerable residents:** These flats house elderly residents, many on fixed SASSA grants or minimal pensions, with no capacity to absorb annual increases of 8% to 10%.

These facilities are in a documented state of severe disrepair. Residents are living with:

- **Mold on walls and ceilings:** posing direct respiratory health risks to elderly occupants who are already medically vulnerable. This is a health and safety emergency.
- **Broken geysers:** not repaired, leaving elderly residents without hot water for extended periods a basic human dignity and health hazard.
- **Broken stoves:** not repaired or replaced, forcing elderly residents to go without cooking facilities or fund replacements personally on fixed incomes.
- General maintenance backlogs: plumbing failures, broken windows, deteriorating common areas.

Charging 10% rental increases for accommodation in this condition is exploitative. These residents cannot relocate and are entirely dependent on the Municipality to fulfil its obligations.

Legal basis:

- **Section 10 of the Constitution** right to human dignity. Housing elderly residents in mold-infested, broken accommodation while raising rent violates this right.
- **Housing Act (Act 107 of 1997)** obligates all levels of government to ensure housing is maintained in a habitable condition. RLM is in breach.
- **Rental Housing Act (Act 50 of 1999)** imposes maintenance obligations on landlords. As landlord, RLM must maintain these units in a liveable state regardless of rental quantum.

Demand: No rental or utility increase on any RLM old age accommodation until all mold is professionally remediated, all broken geysers replaced, and all broken stoves repaired. RLM must immediately inspect all units, ring-fence a dedicated maintenance budget, establish a direct complaints channel with a 48-hour response commitment for health-related faults, and consider retrospective rent relief for residents who have endured these conditions.

SUMMARY OF DEMANDS

Issue / Service	Current (2025/26)	Proposed	Our Demand
Electricity Basic Charge (Residential)	R446.86/month	+9.01% → R487.12	Suspend until supply reliability improves
Water Basic Charge (Residential)	R116.00/month	+9% → R126.44	Suspend until supply failures addressed
Water Consumption (0–12KL)	R21.20/KL	+11% → R23.53	No increase until reliable supply guaranteed
Boitekong Hall — Non-refundable rental	R2,184.05	+3.7% → R2,265	No increase until ablutions repaired
WA van Zyl Hall — Non-refundable rental	R2,184.05	+3.7% → R2,265	Introduce tiered affordable pricing

Issue / Service	Current (2025/26)	Proposed	Our Demand
Rietvlei Cemetery (Adult Resident)	R1,166.00	+3% → R1,201	No increase until cemetery maintained
Kerk Old Age Flats – 1 Bedroom	Market-related	+8%	No increase until mold/geysers/stoves fixed
Kerk Old Age Flats – 2 Bedroom	Market-related	+10%	No increase until mold/geysers/stoves fixed
Geelhout Park Old Age Flats – 2 Bed	Market-related	+10%	No increase until mold/geysers/stoves fixed

LEGAL BASIS

This petition relies on the following legislative and constitutional provisions:

- **Section 27:** right of access to water and health care
- **Section 152:** local government must provide services in a sustainable manner
- **Section 195:** public administration must be accountable and transparent
- **Section 10:** right to human dignity
- **Municipal Systems Act s.4 (Act 32 of 2000)** community members' right to receive services
- **Municipal Systems Act s.74:** tariff policy must be equitable and reflect the actual cost of service delivered
- **Municipal Systems Act s.95:** customer care and management obligations
- **Housing Act (Act 107 of 1997):** obligation to maintain habitable housing
- **Rental Housing Act (Act 50 of 1999):** landlord maintenance obligations
- **MFMA Circular No. 132:** tariff-setting must consider affordability and service delivery realities

CALL TO ACTION

We call upon the Rustenburg Local Municipality to:

- **Withdraw or suspend** proposed electricity and water tariff increases pending a credible service delivery improvement plan.
- **Immediately repair** ablution facilities at all community halls before any rental increase takes effect.
- **Introduce tiered pricing** for community halls to ensure genuine accessibility for the communities they serve.
- **Restore and maintain** Rietvlei Cemetery fence, mow, and maintain it before any burial fee increase is applied.
- **Remediate all defects** in RLM old age accommodation (mold, geysers, stoves) before any rental or utility increase takes effect.
- **Publish a service delivery report** detailing what has been done and what is planned to address electricity and water supply failures.
- **Establish a Community Tariff Review Panel** including civil society, ratepayer associations, and ward committee representatives to scrutinise tariff increases before council approval.

SIGNATURES

We, the undersigned, hereby affix our names in full support of this petition:

#	Full Name	ID Number	Ward	Contact Number	Signature
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(Continue on additional pages as required)

PETITION DETAILS

Petition Coordinated By	
Contact Person	
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Date	
Ward(s) Represented	

SUBMIT TO: RLM Municipal Manager's Office | Ward Councillors | North West Office of the Premier | South African Human Rights Commission

Compiled with reference to the NW 373 RLM Tariff Book, 2026–2029 MTREF, Special Council 30 March 2026, Agenda Item 193, Pages 525–574. All figures drawn directly from official tariff tables.