

## Water and Sanitation in the News

### Climbing Higher for a Better View: Keys to Successful Water Management

Many utilities are moving to a traditional business mind-set rather than continuing as largely compliance-driven entities. This is challenging leaders to apply asset management and smart infrastructure strategies, to become more programmatic in managing water, and to consider the big picture in addressing public needs. Given the range of challenges facing water utilities from aging infrastructure and inadequate revenue streams, to maturing workforces and rising customer expectations, it is increasingly necessary to do all of this.

As an industry, we still tend to silo too many decisions. By failing to consider all interdependencies and moving forward with too little information, we can create future problems in the process of addressing immediate needs. It is also essential to proactively consider interdependencies in the development and maintenance of infrastructure systems, rather than address specific waste or supply needs in isolated fashion as they demand immediate attention.

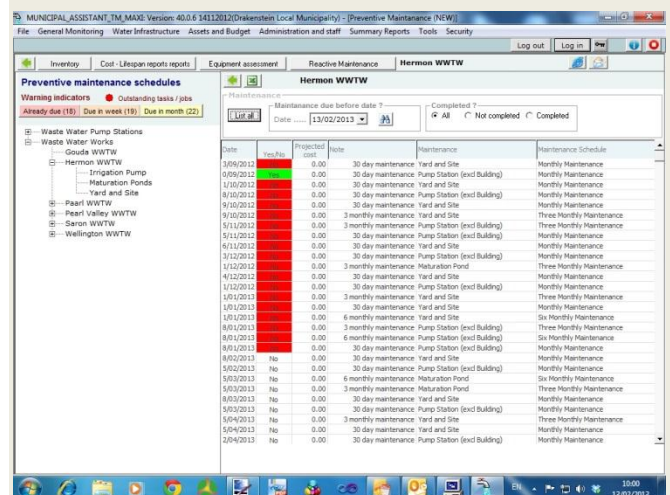
**Identifying actionable plans that balance competing interests, such as water allocation, rate affordability, and necessary investment, requires an all-encompassing approach.** For this reason, we continue to advocate the adoption of best-practice asset management. Asset management programs are also powerful ways to optimise capital spending. Risk-based planning and proactive prioritisation of needs enable utilities to base investment decisions on actual asset condition and can help reduce overall capital spending requirements. Utilities that make investment choices based on proven asset management principles are climbing upward for a better view.

Data-driven decision-making is also gaining momentum as utilities move toward a smart integrated-infrastructure paradigm. Advances in data analytics can provide significant cost benefits in terms of how a utility or a specific asset is managed. **Utilities can use data to identify, detect, and repair problems before they become potentially catastrophic asset failures.** Smart analytics give us the integrated information needed to optimise water, wastewater, and other systems.

Holistic management of systems, assets, and information is not an end-all solution. But adopting any or all of these approaches offers a favourable foothold for an industry faced with the need for a higher vantage point so the interconnectedness of challenges is easier to detect and far-reaching ripples are easier to predict. In any organisation or industry, leaders are the people who climb off their plateaus for that view.

Source: *Water Online*, 25 Feb. 2015

The **Municipal Assistant™** system enables users to approach water and sanitation from a higher vantage point by recognising and analysing the interdependencies of functions related to water treatment and supply. It is a water operations and asset management system that has provided critical support to water service authorities and industries in southern Africa for the past 9 years.



The Municipal Assistant™ was developed as an operational information system to assist with the assessment (on component level including cost and lifespan), operations, maintenance (preventive and reactive) and management of water and wastewater facilities and related infrastructure. The system helps ensure that assets and people perform at optimal levels, which reduce service disruptions due to asset failure or human error, thereby reducing future maintenance costs.

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WAMTech are specialists in implementing technology systems for improved governance, focussing on Water and Public Health Information Systems

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