

Water and Sanitation in the News

Sewage pump raises a stink

Residents of Platberg in Ladybrand, about 120km east of Bloemfontein, have asked the Mantsopa local municipality to fix the sewerage pump station and to clear the spillages that are polluting the area.



For months, residents say, they have had to endure the stench that is polluting the air and had to walk over sewage spillages that are now a permanent feature in their streets. The station has been dysfunctional for months and is not even secure while the manholes are left open, posing a great risk to children in the area. Residents say they have complained about the matter but their pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

For Joe Philip, a resident, the stench has become unbearable. Yesterday he told The New Age that he wanted the municipality to fix the pump station. "How can they expect people to live like this? We are expected to understand that the municipality does not have any funds to fix the station, but this is not decent," Philip said. Maria Koos said she was worried about the children who play near the spillages. "These are children and if we don't watch them all the time they may get seriously injured due to the open manholes," she said...

Source: *The New Age (Free State)*, 1 Jul 2015

Context

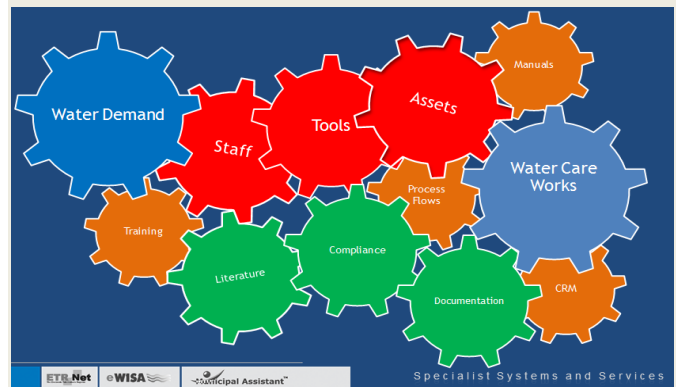
After several complaints by the opposition party (DA) to municipal officials to repair the pump station and to prevent the spillage of sewerage, the municipality has reportedly only dug a trench, allowing the sewerage to flow into a fresh water stream that flows through Platberg and Manyatseng into the Cathcart Dam. The Cathcart Dam stores the town's fresh water supply and is now wilfully being polluted by the

municipality, placing the safety of the town's drinking water at risk.

According to the Department of Water and Sanitation the situation continues due to requisite procedures that have to be followed in order to fix the pump station. The Department says a team visited the site on 12 March 2015 to verify facts about the complaints that were received on the sewage spill. Some of the findings of the site visit include the discovery of an overflowing pump station in Platberg, as well as a water leakage next to the newly built hospital. The Department's spokesperson Sputnik Ratau said the municipality is in the process of fast tracking paper work in order to get the supplier for the pump station to be fixed. "In this regard the Department would like to highlight that its role on this issue was to monitor the compliance side," says Ratau. "The municipality is still responsible for operating and maintaining its infrastructure..."

Source: *Infratructure.ws*, 02 July 2015; *DAMPL*, 29 June 2015

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