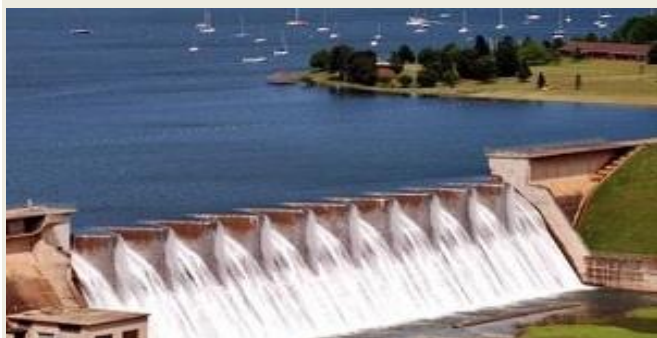


Water and Sanitation in the News

Midmar sewage pollution concern

Radio personalities, celebrities, government and environmental specialists -visited Midmar dam and Mpophomeni Township just outside Howick on 13 May and witnessed first-hand the raw sewage spilling into Midmar's tributaries. University of KwaZulu-Natal Master of Science student Sanele Ngubane said there was major concern with the water quality of Midmar dam and its tributaries that needed to be addressed. Ngubane said he has identified four sewage spillages and a suspected 11 more, leaking into the tributaries that lead into the Midmar dam. On Wednesday, World Wildlife Fund South Africa hosted the second day of their Journey of Water, visiting Midmar dam and the water catchments and wetlands in the surrounding area.



Ngubane, whose master's dissertation is on the pollution in Midmar dam, said he had run a number of tests on the water quality of the dam's tributaries and the results were worrying. He suggested that one solution to the problem may be to invest money and time into fixing the Mpophomeni sewerage infrastructure as that was the source of the problem. He also suggested that a waste water treatment plant be installed in Mpophomeni to take the strain off -Howick's water treatment plant...

Source: *The Witness*, 14 May 2015

Context

The pollution of South Africa's water resources with raw sewerage is becoming a growing problem – threatening the health and well-being of major parts of the country's population and economy. The dilapidating state of water and sanitation infrastructure in rural towns, especially in provinces such as the Eastern Cape, Free State, Mpumalanga, North West and Limpopo has led to growing incidences of raw sewage from municipal sanitary sewers contaminating local river systems. This in turn has led to an

increase in community protests. A considerable decline in the local agriculture and tourism activities is also noticeable in areas where water systems are contaminated.

Major economic centres are also impacted. The Midmar Dam, is located in the second largest economic region in South Africa near the town of Howick in uMngeni Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). According to [Save the Midmar Dam](#) project, the dam is important for supplying water to almost half the province's population, for having multiple recreational values (such as boating, swimming, water skiing, picnicking and fishing), and as host to the largest open water swimming event in the world (attracting > 50,000 tourists during the annual Midmar Mile).

Besides Midmar Dam's pollution problem, alarming media reports during the week warned of a project which will pump raw sewage into the Vaal Dam – a critical fresh water source for South Africa's economic heartland in Gauteng that is of vital importance to many communities along the dam's shoreline in the Free State. According to James Letuka, a DA member of the Free State provincial legislature, the project is in an advanced stage and is undertaken by the Metsimaholo Local Municipality, which includes Sasolburg, Deneysville, Oranjeville and Viljoensdrift. The project is apparently aimed at alleviating the pressure on the town's sewerage plant. A planned artificial reed bed project at the centre of Deneysville was recently canned after it was met by opposition from the community.

In March 2015, the AHi called for an immediate nationwide assessment by water experts of all incidences related to the deliberate discharge of raw sewage from municipal sanitary sewers into South Africa's river systems and wetland areas. The business association argues that an action plan is urgently required to investigate such incidences, to stop the discharge, to ensure compliance and to act against those found guilty of gross neglect.

Source: *News24*, 18 May 2015; *Health24*, 26 March 2015

The **Municipal Assistant™** systems helps to protect water resources from being affected by pollution, by facilitating the proper management and operational activities of waste water and water treatment plants.

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