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Water and Sanitation in the News

South Africa's great thirst has begun

Eskom's electricity woes have hastened the failure of water infrastructure around the country. For many South Africans, the water crisis is already here. For others, research and projections show, it is only a matter of time – and perhaps not a great deal of time. Thanks to load-shedding, and a shortage of water when electricity is restricted, the thirsty future could arrive in major urban centres as soon as this summer.

Early last year, four people died in violent protests over a lack of water in the Mothotlung township outside Brits in North West. In the glare of national publicity, water was quickly restored. But on Monday, almost exactly a year later, taps in the township again ran dry. When the water flowed again on Tuesday, it was brown.

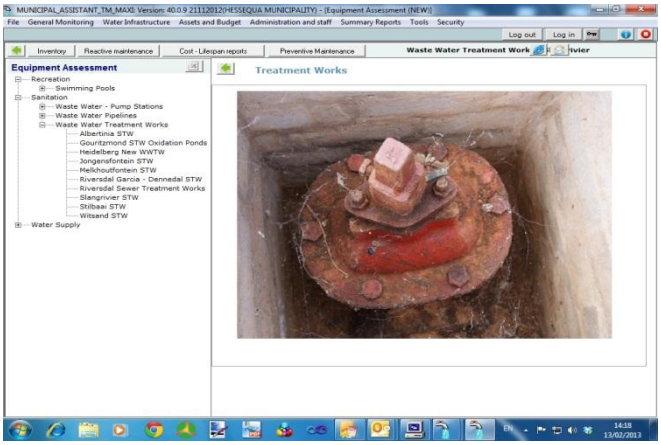
In 2013, a two-week water outage in Grahamstown saw academics, in their formal caps and gowns, march in lockstep on the city council offices, with township residents following, brandishing placards. On Monday night, the water supply went off again without warning in a section of the township overlooking Grahamstown. In 2014, the residents of Thlolong outside Kestell in the Free State were promised that a new dam would solve their water woes. On Wednesday, a resident, who did not want to be named for fear of reprisal, said neither the dam nor emergency water supplies were anywhere to be seen.

In Johannesburg, some suburbs were warned this week to expect weekend water outages because of scheduled maintenance at a pumping station – the same station that left some of the same suburbs, and some hospitals, without water for days last year. The maintenance plan was later postponed.

These are no longer isolated cases. According to government officials, about a third of all towns are in some form of serious water distress. The department of water considers one in 10 municipal water systems to be totally dysfunctional, and, of those that are working, a quarter experiences regular service disruptions of more than two days at a time…

Source: *Mail&Guardian, 23 Jan. 2015*

In order to have a better understanding on the current status and remaining lifespan of water infrastructure in the South Africa, it is crucial to obtain accurate data. **WAMTechnology** conducts comprehensive asset assessments prior to the implementation of our **Municipal Assistant™** system. WAMTech staff surveys drinking water and waste water sites in conjunction and consultation with each client, and captures all asset information. We conduct thorough checks and open every manhole on site, climb in chambers, climb on top of reservoirs, crawl through fences, lie upside down, etc. in order to get the most accurate information.



Asset information is captured at **component level**, including photographs *(see figure above)*, name, category, responsible person, purchase date, life span, condition, usage, main component, purchase amount, dimensions, supplier, etc., and this data is loaded into the Municipal Assistant™ system for future daily and operational use. Providing users with such an extensive database of the assets and the conditions thereof, makes it possible to **more efficiently and cost effectively carry out targeted asset maintenance and upgrade tasks**.

During the field surveys and asset data collection, municipal staff members accompanying the WAMTech technical team participate in the joint technical discussions as part of the asset condition evaluation and possible actions to be taken to address the problems. We also provide training of municipal staff on site to complete future assessments.

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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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