

Water and Sanitation in the News

Sewage sludge at Shongweni

Normally packed with picnickers, canoeists and other water sport enthusiasts, the Shongweni Dam has been deserted since a floating brown sludge of what appeared to be sewage was spotted last week. Visitors are greeted by warning posters as they enter the dam area, one instructing them about the green algae which cause a skin rash, but perhaps the most glaring one being about the sewage. "No paddling allowed, the dam is full of sewage but you can paddle at your own risk."

The Shongweni Dam Nature Reserve staff also gives verbal warnings to visitors not to fish or swim. Zolani Nozondela, who works at the Msinsi Nature Reserve, said the sewage had inconvenienced canoeists who used the dam to practise for the Dusi Canoe Marathon which takes place in three weeks' time. Shongweni reserve's Gerry Bruton said there was no evidence that the sewage had been deliberately pumped into the dam despite rumours of someone having seen "honeysuckers" doing so. "The field rangers also went up the river to investigate if there was a source, but they did not see anything. But some of the farmers have said this tends to happen whenever there are heavy rains, as it washes down from the communities upstream," said Bruton.

Source: *IOL News*, 02 Feb. 2015

Context

In 2014 a report by the Water Research Commission indicated that South Africa is at a "tipping point" in terms of what is required of municipalities to comply with, what needs to be achieved and what is appropriate and necessary to ensure an acceptable and reliable level of performance in terms of waste water treatment technologies. Yet, crumbling infrastructure, poor efficiency and chronic wastage aren't the only things putting a squeeze on our water supply. A European Union report noted in 2013 that pollution was so widespread that it made it "difficult to estimate the magnitude of the problem". It found that South Africa generates such large amounts of harmful waste, that it is "more in line with that for developed countries". Yet we have a "very limited" ability to deal with it.

The EU report revealed that only 5% of hazardous waste is dumped at the correct waste disposal sites. The scarcity of our water is threatened by not disposing of hazardous or industrial waste properly, and is further impacted by the domestic waste produced by rapid urbanisation, it warned.



Around half of South Africa's urban population now lives in informal settlements, according to a World Bank report published in August 2014. With "a very low level or absent" waste management system in these areas, it is not just these communities who are threatened by water borne diseases, but the surrounding local population too, the EU report cautioned.

Source: *News24*, 03 Nov. 2014

The **Municipal Assistant™** helps to address these challenges by uniquely combining into a single user friendly system the following core functionalities: Water quality monitoring and management; Evaluating and reporting compliance with regulatory water quality standards and criteria (SANS 241, licensing conditions and Blue Drop and Green Drop specifications); Assists the user in the compilation of various reports (including a Blue Drop/Green Drop reporting facility); Asset management to ensure optimal performance of facilities to produce good quality drinking water and discharge; Operational and maintenance scheduling of equipment and staff utilisation; Assist with routine and process control inspections and incident reporting; and Compilation of operational and maintenance budgets to ensure timeous preventative maintenance and replacement of equipment

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