

## Umgeni Water implements four new Corporate Social Responsibility projects

In less than a year since the formal implementation of a Corporate Social Responsibility policy, Umgeni Water continues to make a tangible difference to the communities in its operational area through the sponsorship of life-changing projects.

In the past financial year an estimated nine community-focused initiatives received Corporate Social Investment funding from Umgeni Water, after the process of deliberation by the Corporate Social Investment Committee and approval by Exco had been followed. Since adoption of the CSR Policy, total sponsorship of R1, 4 million has been provided towards projects that included the construction of more classrooms to ease overcrowding at a school, the purchase of equipment to perform cataract procedures on indigent patients, the construction and equipping of a Library Resource Centre at a school, the upgrading of a school laboratory and resource centre, the provision of school uniforms to learners from poor households, the reconstruction of informal homes that had been affected by elements of the weather, sponsorship of a soccer tournament that made it possible for a community to attend at no charge, part sponsorship of a Municipal Managers' Forum meeting, part sponsorship of a meeting of women managers of municipalities, part sponsorship of a community-focused municipal event to coincide with the Mandela Marathon, and numerous Mandela Day initiatives that were undertaken by members of the Board and staff of Umgeni Water.



*Food for the poor: Umgeni Water opened its heart to families living in Inanda, Durban, when it handed out groceries to them during a community function. The handover of groceries was done by the Chief Executive of Umgeni Water and, Cyril Gamede, the Mayor of Durban, James Nxumalo, and Councillor Shelembe.*

The act of benevolence expressed by Umgeni Water was warmly embraced by stakeholders, including the political leaders of municipalities, and received positive media coverage, creating widespread awareness of Umgeni Water's role in the empowerment and upliftment of communities.

With these initiatives and projects now in the stage of implementation, four new projects have been adopted by Umgeni Water for financial sponsorship, support and implementation. They are:

- The establishment of a concrete products manufacturing plant in Maphephethwa, Inanda, that will create jobs and, when fully functional, allow its owners to sell their products to building contractors and others. Umgeni Water has already assisted with the establishment of a co-operative that will manage and operate this business and will also provide funding for the purchase of equipment. The Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) will assist with the formulation of a business plan.
- A comprehensive education programme is to be launched to create awareness of the dangers, risks and violation of municipal by-laws and of the rights of servitude owners through the illegal encroachment onto servitudes. In relation to Umgeni Water, numerous cases of unauthorised encroachments have been reported and discovered at Umgeni Water-owned servitudes that house pipelines and other water delivery

infrastructure. The education programme will involve targeted media, deliberations with stakeholders and interested and affected parties, with a view to encouraging the prevention of servitude encroachments.

- An artificial wetland is to be established at the Darvill Wastewater Works that will ultimately be used for reeds and other plants to be grown for future use as material to manufacture baskets and other handicraft that members of communities can sell to generate an income. It is envisaged that the project will create jobs through the cultivation, harvesting and manufacturing processes.
- On 19th November 2013 a water conservation and infrastructure projects information sharing programme was held in Bruntville, Mooi River, as part of a Presidential visit to inspect progress in the construction of Spring Grove Dam. At the meeting in Bruntville, attended by an estimated 10 000 people, President Jacob Zuma shared information on the Greater Mpofana Bulk Water Supply Scheme, which is to be constructed to supply potable water to nodes along the R103 between Lions River and Mooi River. Spring Grove Dam will be the source of raw water supply to the Greater Mpofana BWSS, and a water treatment plant is to be built adjacent to the dam. The WTP will supply water to two reservoirs, one in Bruntville and the other in Nottingham Road. President Zuma spoke about the crucial role Umgeni Water was playing in the provision of water to communities and said the Greater Mpofana BWSS would resolve water shortage-related problems that exist in the R103 nodes. Umgeni Water was one of the sponsors of the event that was held at Spring Grove to host the President.

As awareness of Umgeni Water's Corporate Social Responsibility grows so does the number applications for funding and other support. Presently 14 applications are in the possession of the Secretariat of the Corporate Investment Committee which will be considered at the committee's next meeting, tentatively scheduled for January 2014.

As part of the monitoring process, recipients of funding are requested to provide quarterly reports to the Corporate Social Investment Committee on progress on spend and on the projects for which funding had been received. In this regard, the beneficiaries have thus far been compliant.

It is the intention of the Corporate Social Investment Committee to obtain greater participation by staff through suggestions on projects and or initiatives for support or other ideas for tabling at committee meetings. Staff are, therefore, urged to send their suggestions to Clarissa Naidoo.



*The Chief Executive of Umgeni Water, Cyril Gamede, is interviewed at Spring Grove Dam by presenter for the Morning Live television programme, Ayanda Allie-Payne*



*Seen at Spring Grove Dam during the Presidential visit were, from left, Themba Khumalo from the Department of Water Affairs; Thami Hlongwa, GM: Finance Umgeni Water; Trevor Balzer, Acting Director-General of DWA; Ayanda Allie-Payne of SABC-TV; Cyril Gamede, CE UW; Ashley Starkey, KZN Regional head of DWA; and Shami Harichunder, Corporate Stakeholder Manager UW*

*Issued by the Corporate Stakeholder Management Unit*