

## **Construction of Western Aqueduct continues according to plan**

Durban's largest ever bulk water pipeline, the Western Aqueduct (WA), is making steady progress and reaching important milestones.

Head of eThekweni Water and Sanitation (EWS), Ednick Msweli, said this week that the WA would have a significant impact on the future development of the eThekweni region.

“With unemployment at record highs and a need to fast track the establishment of industry that will beneficiate commodities and manufacture for export in order to both grow the regional economy and create jobs, the provision of good water infrastructure has never been more important. With the completion of the WA, Durban will have some of the best water infrastructure in the country,” he said.

The WA - which was divided into two phases – will bring water into Durban from the Midmar dam and recently constructed Springgrove Dam. It will significantly strengthen the capacity of bulk water supply and meet the needs of the greater eThekweni region for the next 30 years.

The first phase of the Western Aqueduct, which measures 20km and stretches from the Umlaas Road Reservoir to Inchanga, was commissioned at the end of 2012.

The R1,8-billion\* second phase of the Western Aqueduct which continues from Inchanga to Ntuzuma is making steady progress and is expected to be commissioned in 2017.

Martin Bright Project Manager for the Western Aqueduct second phase explained that the massive second phase had been divided into a number of related contracts.

The first two contracts comprise of a 14 kilometre stretch of pipeline extending from Inchanga to Alverstone Station and then on to Ashley Drive in Hillcrest have been completed by Cycad Construction and WK Construction respectively.

Both these contractors have already moved off site. Msweli said that the eThekweni Municipality was pleased that both projects had been completed and met stringent quality standards.

As a result of the severe drought being experienced lately, the rehabilitation of the areas where the pipeline was laid, has been delayed but completed under difficult circumstances.

Work on the 25km stretch of the pipeline which extends from Ashley Drive to Ntuzuma which is being carried out by Esor Construction, is progressing well and is on schedule for completion in September 2017.

He said that a 7km branch line to Tshelimnyama is being carried out by Esor Construction and is on track for completion towards the end of 2016. This runs along Haygarth Road and under the N3 to the water reservoir in Tshelimnyama and this pipeline will alleviate water shortages in this area.

The large Ashley Drive Break Pressure Tank was designed by the Western Aqueduct Consultants Joint Venture has been completed by ICON Construction. This 20 million litre Break Pressure Tank has just won the South African Institute of Civil Engineers (SAICE) Award for Technical Excellence at a formal ceremony on the 10 June 2016 at the SAICE Durban Branch Awards. In the submission entry the following aspects of this project were highlighted; that it showcases the civil engineer's leadership and management skills, not to mention technical competence, in bringing together a team of specialists in the disciplines of civil, structural, hydraulic, geotechnical, roadwork, mechanical, electrical, electronic and telecommunications engineering, as well as other related fields such as environmental, heritage, security and planning.

A second reservoir – known as the Wyebank Break Pressure Tank - is also well on the way to completion during the third quarter of 2017. This break pressure tank has also been designed by Royal Haskoning DHV and is currently being built by ICON Construction.

Msweli thanked eThekweni residents for their patience both during the construction of the completed sections of the pipeline and during

on-going construction.

“Unfortunately, traffic disruption will still be felt as a result of work in Kloof, Wyebank and Kwadabeka. The section of the road M13 off ramp to Willingdon Road is due to commence in July 2016. The temporary railway crossing at the Kloof Station will be terminated at the end of June and traffic will revert to flowing along Church Street as the pipeline along Church Street is now complete,” he said.

Work will continue along Wyebank Road for the foreseeable future.

Road surfaces will remain temporarily unsurfaced but once sufficiently long stretches of road have been completed, these will be resurfaced.

“We would like to urge residents to continue to be patient as this mammoth project draws to an end. It is extremely complex and often requires us to work on a number of different segments of the pipeline at the same time. We also need to co-ordinate our operations with those of other service providers who often need to relocate the likes of electricity and fibre optic cables,” he explained.