



INTERNET ARTICLE

Refurbished Lothair Oxidation Ponds handed over to the community

29 April 2024

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and Msukaligwa Local Municipality officially handed over the refurbished Lothair Oxidation Ponds Waste Water Treatment Plant to the community at Silindile on 23 April 2024.

The project came about as the previously existing ponds have proved to be no longer sufficient due to the developments within Silindile township and the accumulation of sludge in the ponds. The other challenge that led to the project was the vandalism of most parts of the treatment plant where electrical equipment, pipes and the fence were stripped and stolen. The project was also a result of a notice from the Department of Water and Sanitation to open a criminal case because the plant was non-compliant and polluting water resources and the environment.

The scope of the project which cost about R25 million included desludging and disposal of nine ponds to an accredited landfill site, HDPE lining including sand layers to nine ponds, upgrading of the inlet structure, installation of dosing facility, replacement of damaged sewer pipes and blocked manholes, installation of concrete apron and walkway around the pond, replacement of electrical LV connection and MV line, installation of floodlights around the plant, supply and installation of new concrete palisade fence and gates, replacement of irrigation system which included pipes, valves and pumps, regravelling of access road, refurbishment of the admin block and storage container, and the refurbishment of ablution facilities. The project was implemented and completed according to specifications and will address its intended purpose.

The socio-economic benefits of the project included 25 work opportunities for locals and business opportunities for six local SMMEs who benefited from the 30% allocation.

The refurbished oxidation ponds plant was officially handed over to the community by the Executive Mayor of Msukaligwa Local Municipality, Cllr Nkosi and the Provincial Head of DWS Mpumalanga, Ms Dudu Sifunda.

In her address to the community, the Executive Mayor, Cllr Nkosi called on the community to take ownership of the infrastructure and protect it from vandalism. "What brings us here today is to handover this project to you, the community. We saw that the plant was small and could no longer serve the whole community and sewer was spilling and polluting the environment and water resources. The plant was also vandalised and electrical cables and other

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components stolen. We are therefore here to handover the project to you to ensure proper sanitation here in Silindile. We are giving the infrastructure to you to ensure that you protect it and ensure that nothing is broken and stolen. Community members, we are pleading with you to take ownership and protect the infrastructure. As a municipality, we also have the responsibility to appoint qualified process controllers so as to comply with the Green Drop certification criteria”, she said.

DWS Mpumalanga Provincial Head, Ms Dudu Sifunda also stressed the importance of the community taking ownership of the plant and protecting the infrastructure. “As the Department of Water and Sanitation, we are happy that the municipality used the grant funding well to implement and complete the project. We are also happy that local people benefitted from this project in terms of job opportunities and business contracts. We also thank you, the community for working together with the municipality in ensuring that the project is completed. We are happy with the project and trust that as the Executive Mayor has said, you will take care and protect the infrastructure. There is a slogan I like that says “nawe uliphoyisa” meaning that we are all police of the plant and infrastructure. Let us do our best as a community to protect our plant and infrastructure”, she said in her address to community members..

The Provincial Head also reminded the municipality of the importance of operations and maintenance to keep the plant in good condition and also emphasised the importance of trained and qualified process controllers. As the plant was previously vandalised, she also reminded the municipality of the importance of security to prevent a recurrence of the theft and vandalism.

Themba Khoza

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