



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



WQM POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR SOUTH AFRICA

WQM SYMPOSIUM KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Department of Water and Sanitation
31 May 2017

KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water in South Africa:

- Precious and limited resource
- Must support our economic growth and the health and well-being of a growing population
- Is necessary to sustain our environment and our future existence.
- One of the main threats for the ability for our existing supplies to achieve its potential is the deterioration in its quality.



KEY NOTE ADDRESS



Water in South Africa:

- The effects of polluted water on human health, on aquatic ecosystems and on various sectors of the economy, including agriculture, industry and recreation, can be disastrous.
- These hazards are preventable through effective and innovative management.

KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water Quality in South Africa:

- Water quality is however a complex issue.
- The end result of either polluted or clean water in our rivers, wetlands, aquifers and estuaries is the outcome of the actions of many contributing sectors and actors.
- Water containing waste may run off of land or may be discharged directly into water resources.
- The nature of contamination also varies widely and is dependent on:-
 - the volume of water in the resource ,
 - contributions from the natural geology and soil, and
 - the land and water uses that are taking place upstream.



KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water Quality in South Africa:

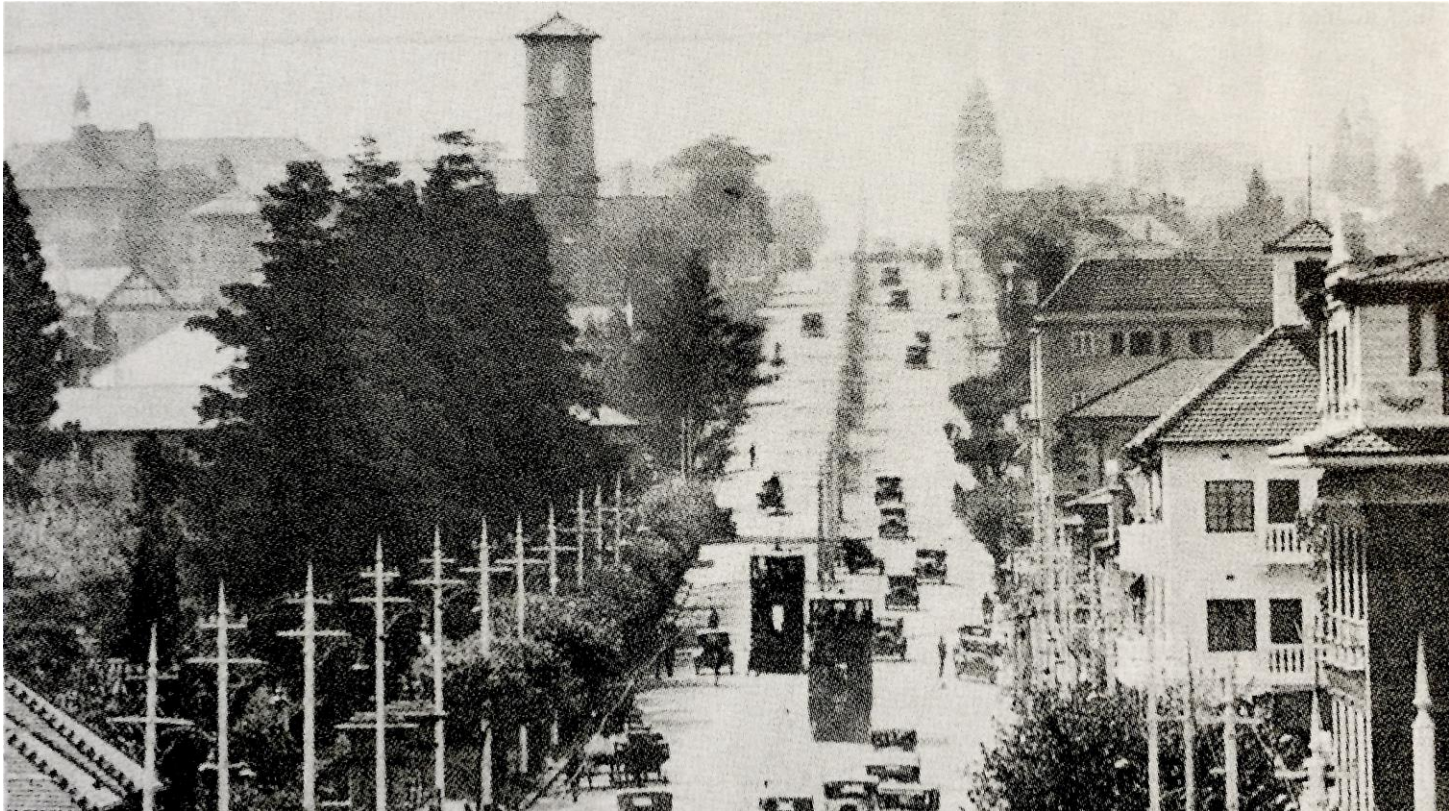
- There is also a large “people factor” that contributes to the state of water quality in our country.
- People have in the past and will continue to make decisions that affect our resources.
- To guide these decisions and set the rules a number of policies have been developed. These policies should change as the times and knowledge changes.
- To help us prioritise and understand the steps that are necessary strategies are developed.
- To help us to ensure performance and implement these steps various tools are needed and mindsets must be molded.



KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water Quality in South Africa:

- In South Africa, water quality management dates back all the way to the 1900s, when effluent water had to be disposed of onto land instead of being returned to the resource



Johannesburg: Main street, 1912

KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water Quality in South Africa:

- In 1956, the Water Act came into effect. The act aimed at the control of domestic and industrial use of water and the treatment and disposal of effluent from point sources. To assist with this in 1962, uniform effluent standards were published and were amended in 1984.



KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water Quality in South Africa:

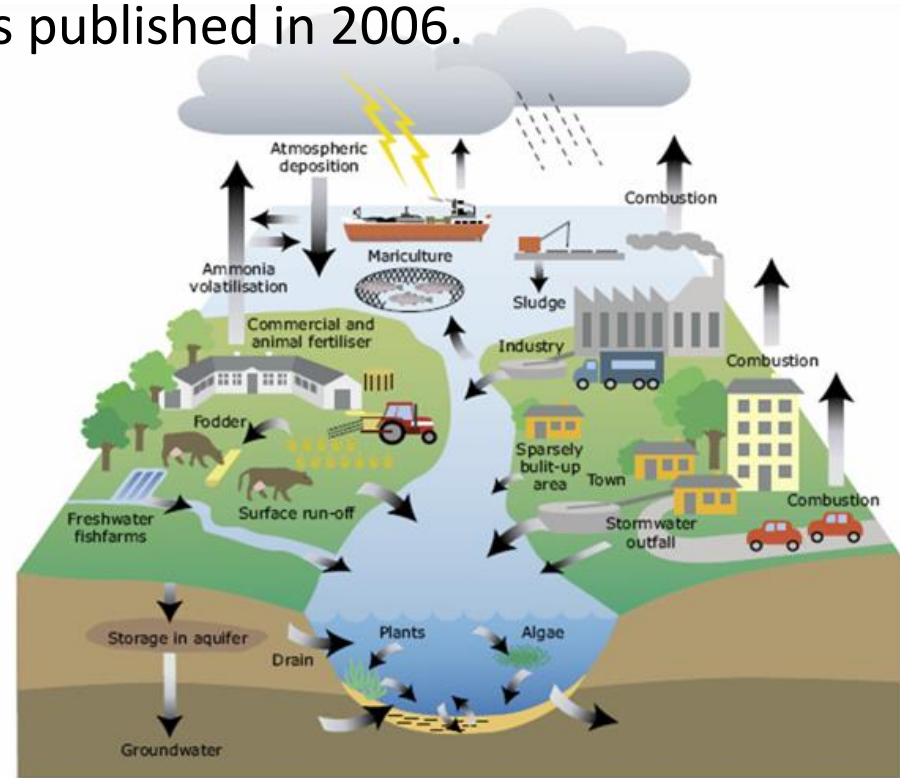
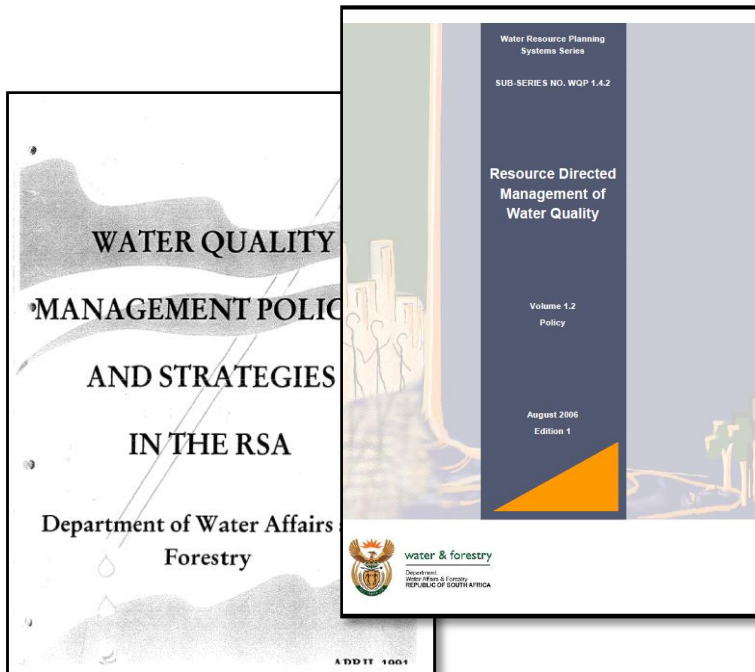
- In 1991, the first policy on WQM was published. This policy moved the country forward and for the first time acknowledged that water quality in SA could not be managed by only looking at the sources of pollution and that the needs of the receiving environment should also be considered.



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Water Quality in South Africa:

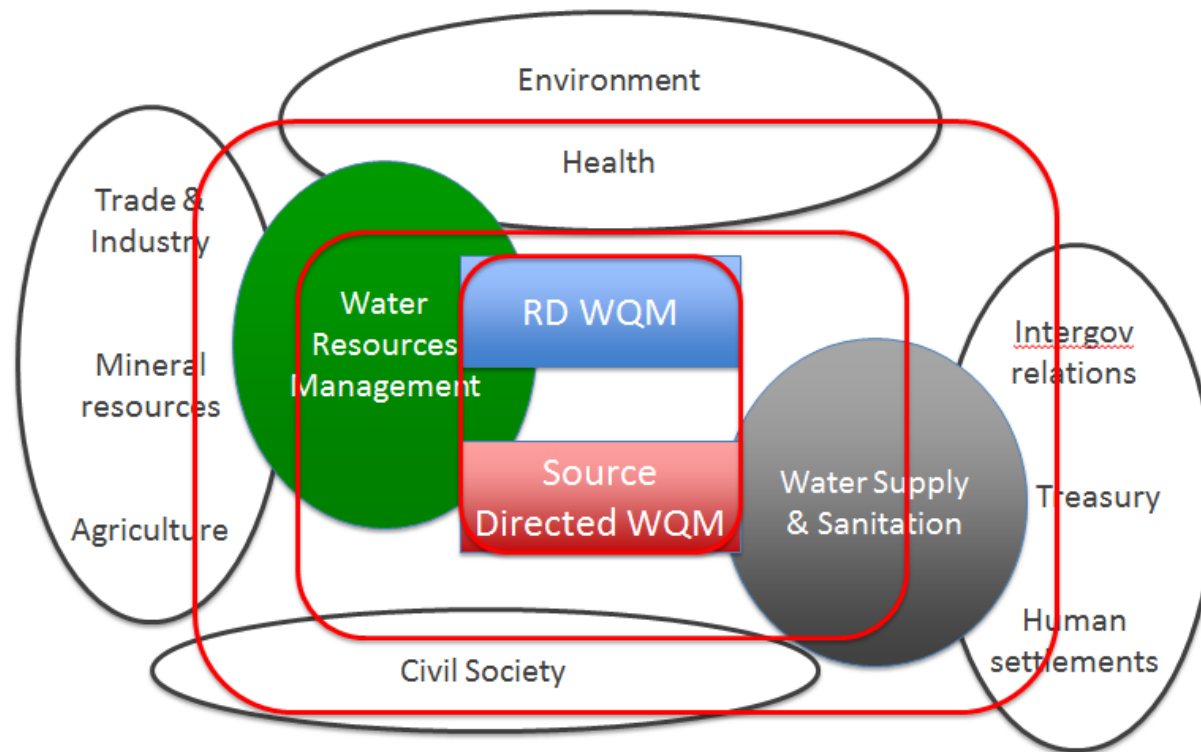
- The principles from the 1991 Policy would later be taken up into the new Water Act of 1998 where Resource Directed Measures would now direct the limits for contamination within a IWRM framework.
- To support the implementation of the new framework, a policy describing the resource directed management approach to water quality that should be followed was published in 2006.



KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water Quality in South Africa:

- In 2015, it was realized that despite the fact that our management instruments were well conceived, a far more interactive and integrated approach that requires a new sense of partnership and engagement across sectors was needed. This resulted in the development of the IWQM policy, which has recently been put on the table..



KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water Quality in South Africa:

- This policy sets the **strategic direction for managing water quality** in the country and is a resounding call to all south Africans to protect this precious and scarce resource.
- It calls for **an integrated programme within government,**
- Innovative and constructive **partnerships with the private sector and civil society,** and
- New and more **effective methods for enforcing compliance** with legislation.



KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water Quality in South Africa:

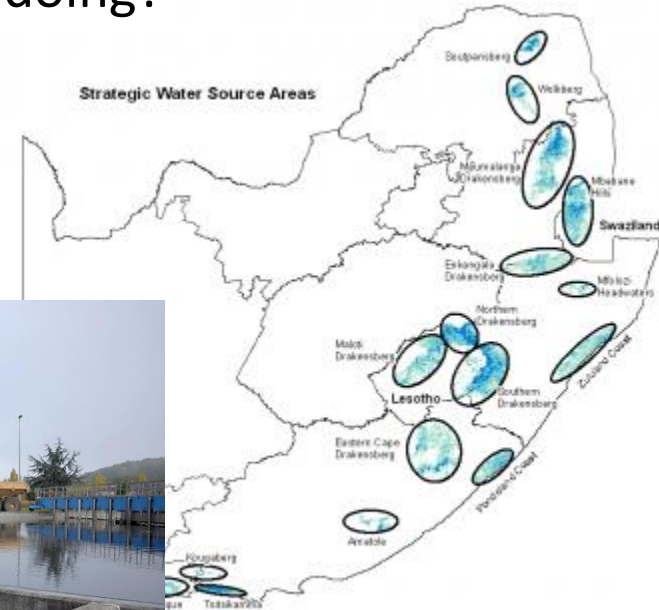
- We have however had many policies before and the key will lie in its innovative and effective implementation.
- It is hoped that in the development of the strategy and implementation plan for this policy, **new ideas and a renewed passion may arise to assist the sector in enhancing the countries economic development, ensure that our environment is not harmful to health or well-being and to restore part of our natural heritage** which so many of us enjoy and on which communities are directly dependant.



KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Water Quality in South Africa:

- Some of the questions that may be asked are:
- What is working well that should we continue doing?
- What are we doing that we could do better?
- What are the new things that we should start doing?



KEY NOTE ADDRESS

I would like to thank all of the stakeholders who have put their energy and ideas into crafting the policy and strategy and look forward to working together to implement our new vision for water quality management in South Africa.

