



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### INTERNET ARTICLE

#### **Ermelo WWTW Refurbished for Optimal Functionality**

28 September 2016

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) funds the refurbishment of the Ermelo Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) to the tune of around R31 million. The refurbishment project oversees the whole plant from the pumps, electrical components up to the dry beds.

It will ensure that the plant functions optimally and complies with the required and set standards once completed. The refurbishment project is also meant to prevent the pollution of water resources by the discharge of non-compliant effluent.

As the custodian of South Africa's water resources, the Department of Water and Sanitation is responsible for the effective management of the nation's water resources to meet the needs of the current and future generations. South Africa is a water scarce country, therefore it is of utmost importance that our water resources are well looked after so as to prevent pollution to our limited water.

In discharging its oversight functions, the Department encountered high levels of sewer pollution which negatively impacted on water quality in our water resources. Upon further investigations, it was discovered that the pollution came mostly from dysfunctional Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants. Wastewater Treatment Works in most municipalities are in a state of decay due to lack or poor maintenance. The situation is also compounded by the fact that communities are increasing but the infrastructure is still the same, which leads to overloading and spillages we experience. Most plants are operating above their design capacity.

The Department of Water and Sanitation is intervening in the municipalities mostly affected by sewer spillages through the funding of the refurbishments of the Wastewater Treatment Works. Wastewater Treatment Works need to be operating optimally to ensure that treated effluent of acceptable standards is discharged into the water resources.



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As we are currently experiencing the worst drought in decades, every drop of water is crucial for survival, therefore we cannot afford to lose precious water in our rivers due to sewer spillages from dysfunctional Wastewater Treatment Works.

Communities are also encouraged to prevent sewer spillages by blockages through throwing foreign objects in the sewer systems. They must make it their responsibility to report sewer blockages and spillages to the municipality and also to the DWS call centre on 0800 200 200.

**Themba Khoza**