A highlight of Water Week activities in Makana was a Water Loss Awareness Campaign by the municipality’s Beakeo Water Demand Project, undertaken in Vulekani. Together with Iowa, households in these areas have been hard-hit by water supply challenges over the past few years. With supply now restored and improved, it is essential that residents exercise every water loss management measure possible. As a result, Cllr Nomhle Gaba accompanied by Ward 13 Cllr Mthuthuzeli Madinda and municipal officials, joined a door-to-door campaign to engage with residents on 17 and 18 March 2014.

The purpose of the engagement was to identify sources of water leaks in the area, to raise the awareness of households regarding the action that they are expected to take to stop leaks and to hear the service delivery concerns of these residents. While it was found that a number of the complaints received were as a result of municipal service delivery challenges, it was also recognised that action or inaction by residents also contributes to water supply challenges. For example, on the walk-about it was found that a number of residents had removed water meters, in order to avoid bills. Where taps had been broken (or stolen) residents had not replaced these, resulting in ongoing and significant water leaks. Serious water losses are also experienced due to the non-repair of leaking toilet cisterns and household taps. With the assistance of a team of semi-skilled plumbers, funded by the former Department of Water Affairs, a number of repairs were fixed on the day.

Every member of our community had to bare the brunt of untimely water outages in 2013, and as the elected political leadership, Council has diligently exercised its mandate and moved quickly to institute a number of key measures to ameliorate this situation. It is with a great sense of cautious satisfaction that we take this opportunity to share with all residents and stakeholders the rapid progress that is being made by the Makana Water Intervention Project which places water services delivery across our municipality, on the path to long-term sustainability.

We are indeed pleased that the first fruits of this intervention are evident in the start-up of the academic year (January/February), the SciFest (March) and Graduation weekend (April) which have passed without a single report of water outage. The residents of Vulekani who have suffered terribly in the past, are also, like other wards, enjoying an uninterrupted supply of Class 1 water. While the Directorate: Engineering and Infrastructural Services is working hard to address the taste and smell issues that some residents are encountering with their drinking water, we remain confident that the new Department of Water and Sanitation will indeed restore our Blue Drop water quality status in the very near future.

I wish to place on record that we are indeed grateful that so many partners – local, provincial and national – have been so supportive of our dedicated efforts to ensure access by every resident served by the Makana Local Municipality to a stable supply of water, of satisfactory quantity and quality. It remains our firm resolve to do all that is necessary to ensure that every citizen can drink water from the tap with complete confidence in Makana. We will not rest until this is so. It is however, also necessary that every resident of Makana exercises their responsibility to treat water with the necessary respect, as they repair and report water leaks, ensure that they pay for services rendered and continue to use water sparingly.

Cllr. Zamuxolo Peter Executive Mayor

“Extensive Water Meter Replacement Programme gets underway”

Project partners

Extensive Water Meter Replacement Programme gets underway

A significant contributor to the water supply challenges faced by Makana in the past has been the 752 of the approximately 16 000 water meters across the municipality are faulty which leads to inaccurate billing and a massive loss of vital revenue. With financial and technical assistance from the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the Municipality has taken the decision to embark on an extensive meter replacement programme, which will see the implementation and/or replacement of relevant areas, bulk and domestic meters. As a matter of urgency and to improve accuracy, bulk meters will be replaced at top consumers such as the Military Base, hospital and Correctional Services. Meter replacement at Rhodes University will reduce the number of meters to be read from 136 to approximately 20. This action will result in enhanced revenues and will contribute towards the rollout of “smart” water management technologies in Makana (See our next Progress Bulletin to learn more about the SCADA system targeted for implementation in late 2014).

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Guaranteeing Water 12 Community Water Supply

Unreliable electricity supply has caused many supply interruptions and damage to equipment. An application has been lodged with Eskom by Amatola Water, on behalf of Makana, for a new municipal power line which will run along an existing road in the Thomas Baines Nature Reserve. It is anticipated that this application will be successful and allow access to stable electricity supply necessary for effective service delivery, in the coming months. An additional transformer will be located by the grid in the interim to ensure that water supplied through the Howions Point Pump Station continues to flow.

Simultaneous breakdowns in both pumps at this pump station have in the past caused very serious service delivery failures. A second intervention at Howions Poort is therefore to ensure uninterrupted operations at this pump station, which is focussed on ensuring that the pumping equipment is of the highest standard. Enhancements to both pumps have been completed, with the repaired pump coming into operation on 15 April.

The municipality has invested significant capital to purchase a 3rd pump to safe guard supply, and this will arrive by late July 2014.

“Work is progressing well in Makana. Upgrades of the Settlers and Howions Poort raw water pump stations and the James Kleynhans WTW purification system by refurbishing the pumps, motors, valves and the electrical control panels, is also underway. The intervention will improve the integrity of this raw water pumping system to Woosiek WTW and the reliability of possible raw water supply from James Kleynhans WTW.”

Towards optimum efficiency at Waainek Water Treatment Works & High Level Reservoir

Maintaining the water level in the High Level Reservoir fed by the Waainek WTW at 80-100% by controlling the release of water and rationing usage was one of the key crisis interventions necessary to restore a moderate level of supply to consumers that had endured long interruptions in 2013. Over the years, the dam has played a key role in enhancing the efficiency of the water treatment works, and therefore its ability to feed the reservoir. A massive effort by the team from Amatola Water (AW), who sacrificed their festive leave, resulted in an increase of the 300 cubic metres (~300 000 litres) of sludge being removed from the Waainek and James Kleynhans plants during the period 24 December 2013 to 2 January 2014.

Implementing upgrades at the Howions Poort Pump Station

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Funding secured through a Bank of South Africa (DBSA), has made it possible for Makana to meet a second request at Botha’s Hill, which was put into operation in March 2014. This infrastructure investment has increased storage capacity in the area, which will go a long way to improving the quality and quantity of water supply to residents on the Eastern side of town.

Vulcan Upper

Fingo Village, Lower Makahasky, Vulka Lower Newton, Kwadncancma

Tantji Reservoir

Due to the key decisions taken by the Makana Municipalities to restore sustainable service delivery has been to undertake work that will address the serious water pressure problems experienced across the city. By re-directing Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) funding to this urgent action. Finding solutions to pressure problems at the Army Base, Correctional Services, Cradock Heights, Fingo Village, the Industrial Area, Joz, KwaDincama, Nearton, Somerset Heights and Vulka has been an immediate priority. A rapid breakthrough has been made with water supplied from the previously non-operational Tantji Reservoir now possible, bringing much relief to households in Vulka. This facility was commissioned for full operation during Water Week 2014.