



## 2013 National Water Conservation Awards

The Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi, announced the 2013 winners of the Water Conservation and Water Demand Management Sector Awards at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand on 18 October 2013.

The Department of Water Affairs has a vision of a South Africa that has an embedded and actively applied culture of water conservation and water demand management in which all sectors must share water resources in an equitable and sustainable manner. Through the Water Conservation and Water Demand Management (WCWDM) Sector Awards, the department seeks to create a platform and an enabling environment for all role players and stakeholders from all sectors to start appreciating and understanding the importance of conserving water.

This is the fourth event of its type which recognises excellence in the field of Water Conservation and Demand Management and this year sixty four (64) nominations were received across four categories, namely:

- Agriculture
- Mining & power
- Domestic or Local Government
- Business

During this evening water users who have implemented exceptional Water Conservation and Water Demand Management projects were recognised.

Yakhe Mgudlwa from Metsi-a-Lekoa, the Water Services Unit of the Emfuleni Local Municipality was present to receive the top honour in the most competitive category of the annual WDM awards, namely the Domestic or Local Government: Local Municipality category. The award was presented to Emfuleni (Sasol & GIZ) in recognition of their Project Boloka Metsi, which targeted the reduction of physical losses in prioritised areas,

conducting education and awareness in the community and schools with regards to water-conservation issues, and the support of new and existing community plumbing businesses. The cumulative savings that will be released through these initiatives are expected to trigger reinvestment in the water-conservation activities. Furthermore, positive results have been achieved with respect to job creation in water-related services especially amongst the youth.

Johannesburg Water, came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Metropolitan and District Municipalities category and was recognised for their water demand management training initiative that involved training approximately 300 engineering and operational staff. The training topics included pressure management, pressure reducing valve maintenance and basic design principles. The objective of the training was to highlight the importance of pressure management as a leak reduction tool and to equip staff with the necessary skills to undertake maintenance on pressure reducing valves. Pam Gounder and Ian Cooper from Johannesburg Water were present to receive the award.

Tshwane Metro, came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Metropolitan and District Municipalities category and was recognised for its continued WDM interventions which have helped to reduce its water losses and Non-Revenue Water to approximately 25% which is one of the lowest for any major city in South Africa. Trevor Westman from the COT, was present to receive the award on behalf of the City and it is the first time that any city has been recognised in consecutive years for its WDM efforts. Tshwane is aiming to reduce its leakage levels even further in years to come and has created an internal unit dedicated to the efficient use of water throughout the city.

The fourth award was presented to Andre Kowalewski from the Drakenstein Municipality in the Western Cape. This is the second time that Drakenstein has received recognition for its efforts in the WDM field. Drakenstein Municipality came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Domestic or Local Government: Local Municipality category. Mr Kowalewski has been actively involved in reducing water wastage for many years and was one of the first Municipalities in the Western Cape to introduce pressure management on a large scale using some of the most advanced equipment available which is imported from Europe. Mr Kowalewski has driven its Non-Revenue Water down to approximately 10% which is one of the lowest levels anywhere in South Africa. The award was presented in recognition of their recent efforts to lower leakage even further in specific areas which experienced very high levels of plumbing leakage within the households. This is a problem issue in many parts of South Africa and the efforts of Mr Kowalewski demonstrate that progress can be made on a sustainable basis if properly implemented.

In summary it was a very positive outcome, particularly for Emfuleni (Sasol & GIZ) with its 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Domestic or Local Government: Local Municipalities category, all four winners are being supported by the Pretoria based WRP Consulting Engineers and its local subsidiary 4Water in the case of Klein Drakenstein. This is the third time in a row that a project supported by WRP has taken the top honours in the national awards with previous recipients being City of Ekurhuleni, Emfuleni Local Municipality, and the City of Tshwane. The awards are becoming more prestigious each year and are certainly the top accolades in the Water Conservation and Water Demand Management arena.