

# Umgeni Water is set to bail consumers out

By Alicia Moodley

THE Umgungundlovu District Council's total mismanagement of the community services it is supposed to supply could result in Umgeni Water having to ensure people in this area continue to receive potable water.

Spokesman for Umgeni Water, Shami Harichunder, said the uMgungundlovu district municipality had accumulated a debt of R10.3-million over a period of four months. Harichunder said the District Municipality had explained fully how the debt accumulated, but that it could not simply be "written

"In terms of the Public Finance Management Act, Umgeni Water cannot 'write-off' the debt."

Umgeni Water, together with the District Municipality, has formulated a proposal on how payments can be made to reduce and eliminate the existing arrears," said Harichunder.

He said Umgeni Water was also in discussion with the National Treasury concerning a possible resolution to the matter.

"Umgeni Water, for its part, has, in the course of discussions, made suggestions on how similar challenges can be avoided by the municipality in future," he said.

Harichunder assured that while the District was in

fact in debt, Umgeni Water would not stop their services to the people.

"Umgeni Water will continue to provide potable water in bulk to its customer while negotiations continue to try to resolve the matter," he said.

The Sun's sources said that many profitable, viable options for effective billing were put forward to the District Municipality but were rejected. "They seemed to have their own agenda.

"Had they accepted one of the options put forward, I have no doubt that there would have been a proper billing system a long time ago and water sales revenue would have been collected timeously," the source said.

