

# Water restrictions possible for North Coast

BY SHANNON HOPKINS

"The North Coast is at risk of having water restrictions if action is not taken to increase water supply to the area," said Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWA) chief engineer of national water resource planning, Neil van Wyk.

Van Wyk said with the establishment of the King Shaka airport and developments springing up at Blythedale and Mandeni, more water supply to the North Coast would be vital. However, he said the process would take a number of years to be established.

DWA is currently conducting a KwaZulu-Natal water reconciliation strategy study including Durban, Pietermaritzburg and the North Coast as a solution to the need for water.

The reconciliation committee is working hand in hand with iLembe district municipality and Umgeni Water to achieve this. Van Wyk said the first phase of the project, which includes an overview study of the area and existing infrastructure, has begun and will cost in the region of R6 million.

He said the team is looking at options of recycling effluent for agricultural use, which is currently not widely practised in South Africa and at possibly establishing desalination plants to purify seawater.

Ilembe director of technical services, Jogie Naidoo said iLembe municipality has been working on a number of solutions in conjunction with DWA.

He said work would take place in stages and that each stage would cost in the region of R 200 million or more.

The short-term solution to increase yield in the Ballito area is to put in a 17-kilometre bulk water pipeline between the Avondale reservoir in Groutville to the Honolulu reservoir near Shakaskraal, which will be supplied by Mdloti River-fed



The Hazelmere Dam near Tongaat that supplies most of the North Coast with water. Photo: Jason Lowry.

Hazelmere dam. Service provider Umgeni Water has started the environmental impact assessment part of the project and the contract is in the process of being awarded. Naidoo said work should begin in 2009.

There are also plans to increase the capacity of Hazelmere dam by 2010 from 24 000 cubic millimetres to above 30 000 cubic millimetres by raising the dam walls.

In the long term, he said there is the possibility of damming the Umvoti River at either Fawsley Park west of the R102 outside Stanger or at Umvoti Poort near Greytown, but this will probably only be built by 2023. Naidoo said this project would eventually be linked to the Albert Falls dam to ensure constant water supply to the North Coast.

Naidoo said another option to sustain the Zinkwazi, Blythedale, KwaDukuza and Mandeni areas will be to connect them to the Thukela River. This will include the building of a new treatment works and large diameter pipeline to these areas. The Thukela River will eventually also feed water into the Hazelmere dam.

"These long term plans depend on whether the Macambini development goes ahead or not. It is unwise to build all this infrastructure if it falls away," said Naidoo.

