

Water is safe to drink

REFERENCE is made to the article entitled "Montrose: residents fear water safety" (*The Witness*, March 23).

On March 13, Msunduzi Municipality and Umgeni Water jointly published a public notice in *The Witness* informing residents of the area that an exercise was being conducted by Umgeni Water to ensure water safety.

The following is a quote from the notice: "Recent monitoring has indicated that there is inadequate residual chlorine in the reticulation system. The water leaving the two treatment works is fully disinfected, but should there be contamination in the reticulation, there may not be enough chlorine to deal with the

problem. Umgeni Water is investigating the cause of this problem, but in the interim has changed from chloramine, a form of combined chlorine, to a higher dose of free chlorine to pre-empt any health risks. This change will be effective for up to three weeks. During this period, sensitive consumers could detect unusual taste and/or odour of chlorine in the water."

Umgeni Water's level of residual chlorine is above the 0,5 mg/litre recommended by South African National Standard 241, but is less than the maximum limit of four mg/litre allowed. As the notice explained, this is being done in a controlled manner in order to improve the efficiency of disinfection

of our water. In fact, the maximum total chlorine leaving the waterworks is three mg/litre, and most consumers are receiving considerably less than this.

The introduction of *The Witness* report says: "Montrose residents are concerned that their water may not be fit for consumption".

Umgeni Water and Msunduzi Municipality would like to assure consumers that, while the chlorine content may be noticeable in taste and smell by some sensitive consumers, the water is safe for human consumption.

SHAMI HARICHUNDER
Corporate Stakeholder Manager,
Umgeni Water
Pietermaritzburg

