

Massive investment in water and sewerage upgrades

Ambitious plans to upgrade water and sewerage services in the Ugu District Municipality are coming to fruition.

The balmy Hibiscus Coast of KwaZulu-Natal presents visitors with an idyllic view of sunshine, surf and siestas along a coast renowned nationwide as a holiday Mecca like Margate nearby.

But the Ugu District Municipality continues to walk a tightrope between meeting the high-quality service needs of prime coastal-strip landowners and visitors while expanding the provision of basic services to poor peri-urban and rural people in the hinterland.

Compounding the challenge of cross-subsidisation is the need to access substantial funding to finance comprehensive upgrades of water and sewerage facilities.

Additional capacity is needed to meet central government targets for the provision of services to the poor while Ugu also needs to maintain and replace aging infrastructure – under even greater pressure during holiday peaks when the district's total population of about 800 000 swells up by at least 30%.

The creaking service endured by coastal-strip residents, who comprise only 16% of the district's total population, is a major concern to the district municipality because these are the very people whose funds provide the municipality with the basic income to do its job.

Ugu's challenges were highlighted by *Water Sewage & Effluent* in January 2007 ("Ugu seeks solutions"). In this edition, we focus on the impressive progress that the district municipality has made in meeting and overcoming some of the delivery challenges it faces.

The municipality has a total budget of about R1-billion (year ending July 2008). The budget for capital works amounts to about R460-million – about 60% is for water and sewerage. The six municipalities cover a total area of



Photographs by Blake Wilkins

5 866 km². Ugu is responsible for the provision of potable water and sanitation to Umdoni, Vulamehlo, Umzumbe, Hibiscus Coast, Eziqoleni and uMuziwabantu. The district municipality's area stretches from Scottburgh to Port Edward along the coast and inland beyond Harding. Max Pawandiwa, Ugu's

Coastal divide

High-rise developments, white sand and abundant sunshine attract multitudes to the seaside towns while, a few kilometres inland, low-income earners share standpipes and VIP toilets where the municipality has been engaged, for several years, in providing basic services.

Idyllic tightrope

The namesake Hibiscus is recognised as a symbol of an idyllic holiday Mecca but Ugu walks a tightrope between meeting high-quality service needs while expanding the provision of basic services.

Monitoring station cum call centre

The Ugu District Municipality has launched a new, 24-hour call and response centre at its new Shelly Beach headquarters. It will:

- Monitor an upgraded telemetry and control system that is being implemented.
- Monitor more than 500 pumps in the water- and sewage-treatment network, among other equipment.
- Integrate Faultman software as part of the monitoring system, supplied by the Durban metro, expected to be commissioned in about two years.

general manager: water services, believes that, with the execution of its strategic plan, coupled with the completion of the plethora of projects in concept, planning and execution phases, the municipality is well on the road to overcoming many of the water and sanitation challenges it has identified.