



Xerxes Eshket

Existing infrastructure reused

While the existing pipelines in the region are not being replaced, they are reaching the end of their service lives. Rodrigues says: "We can't remove these pipes because they are the sole bulk-water supply lines at the moment. However, once the new pipeline is up and running, the existing system will be converted into a distribution line for the rest of its service life. Sections will be converted to pick up water from the reservoirs at a lower pressure and distribute it into the region. This will help to avoid the cost of constructing new distribution mains. We are busy with the ultimate size of the project. It can only be expanded so much before it needs to be duplicated in another manner. The availability of water at source, Midmar Dam, is also taxed by all projects feeding off the dam so there is a limitation as to how far this project can expand."

Managing existing supply

A number of other initiatives are under way to improve the management and efficiency of water distribution to Ethekwini. Maintenance is partly proactive and partly reactive as the municipality moves towards a planned asset-management approach.

In the 2009 financial year, R37,3-million was invested in various water-loss reduction projects and another R65-million has been budgeted for the current year.

The municipality buys 880 Mℓ of water daily from Umgeni Water but only sells about 590 Mℓ to consumers. Mark Shepherd, of the JOAT Group, observes that the difference is made up of two main elements: illegal theft of water, and leaks which account for about 300 Mℓ/day of lost water. "These leaks are caused by aging infrastructure, operational practice, damage



Ethekwini Water & Sanitation

Restart

As work comes to an end on the first phase of the project, construction is set to start on the next.