

## **Umgeni Water-WSA partnerships bag six Blue Drop Awards**

Umgeni Water is determined to ensure excellence in drinking water quality and the management of this product.

The organisation, in partnership with its Water Services Authority customers, has scooped six Blue Drop awards in the 2010 assessments (first reported on at the Municipal Water Quality Conference in Cape Town in June 2011), compared with one award in the previous two years. The assessments were conducted by a team of technical experts from the Department of Water Affairs in eight key performance areas that form the nucleus for Blue Drop Certification. The Blue Drop process measures and compares the results of the performance of Water Service Authorities and their Providers, and subsequently rewards (or penalises) the municipality upon evidence of its excellence (or failure) according to the minimum standards or requirements that have been defined. Blue Drop measures water quality excellence, including compliance with national standards. A score greater or equal to 95% is required for Blue Drop certification.

The six awards were made to:

- ◆ UW . eThekwini (including Durban Heights, Wiggins, Midmar, DV Harris, Hazelmere, Amanzimtoti, Maphephetwa WW)
- ◆ UW . Msunduzi (including Midmar and DV Harris WW)
- ◆ UW - Ilembe (Dolphin Coast, including Hazelmere WW and Siza Water)
- ◆ UW - Ilembe (Groutville, including Hazelmere WW)
- ◆ UW - Ugu (Scottsburgh to Pennington, including Umzinto WW)
- ◆ UW - Ugu (Mathulini, including Mtwalume WW)

### **eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality**

The judgesq comments: %eThekwini Metro and Umgeni Water worked well to maintain the illustrious Blue Drop status for the eThekwini main system. The panel of inspectors was impressed with the level of preparedness shown for the assessment by both the municipality and Umgeni Water.+

### **Ilembe District Municipality**

Inspectorsqcomments: %Ilembe District Municipality showed improved performance. With the exception of three water supply systems, most of the 39 registered supply

systems showed increased Blue Drop scores. The Department commends Ilembe, assisted by Umgeni Water, for excellent management of drinking water quality in the Dolphin Coast and Groutville water supply systems which qualify for Blue Drop certification status. While the municipality (assisted by WSPs) maintains efforts to further improve on all aspects of drinking water quality management, urgent attention should be given to disinfection of water supplies in supply systems.+

#### Msunduzi Local Municipality

The inspectorsq comments: %The Department commends Msunduzi Local Municipality for excellent performance in the management and operation of the Msunduzi supply system which qualifies for Blue Drop certification status. The municipal officials and representatives of Umgeni Water were truly well prepared and found to place the required value to drinking water quality management practices. The municipality should, at the same time, maintain effort to develop a water safety plan for the distribution network, roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined, while management ensures availability of budget to meet deadlines for implementing control measures.+

#### Ugu District Municipality

The inspectorsq findings: %The regulator is most optimistic regarding the continued improvement of the drinking water management performance of the municipality. Apart from one system, Ugu District Municipality showed a marked improvement in Blue Drop scores for all 16 systems when compared with the 2010 results. The improved performance allows the Department to award four water supply systems with Blue Drop certification status. The Department acknowledges the contribution of Umgeni Water, as a bulk water service provider, in two of the supply systems receiving Blue Drop status.+

The Sisonke District Municipality and uMgungundlovu District Municipality did not have any drinking water supply systems which qualify for Blue Drop certification. The outcomes of these assessments were:

#### Sisonke District Municipality

The inspectorsq findings: The Ixopo system continued to perform well, which was largely as a result of the efforts of Umgeni Water. The findings made in relation to other systems were less than complimentary and suggest that a great deal of work has to be done in order to improve scores in the next Blue Drop assessments, due in 2011.

#### uMgungundlovu District Municipality

The inspectorsq findings: %The Department is encouraged to note that another nine water supply systems were presented for evaluation in an attempt to ensure that the municipality monitors its entire area of responsibility. Efforts to monitor drinking water quality in all the supply systems are further promise of improved drinking water quality management. The Department noted that some confusion existed

between the municipality and Umgeni Water over point of use sampling. The WSA should ensure the service agreement with Umgeni Water clearly stipulated requirements for monitoring.+

A total of eight Blue Drop certificates were awarded in KwaZulu-Natal, made up as: eThekweni MM/Umgeni Water (1); Ilembe DM/Umgeni Water/Siza Water (2); Msunduzi Municipality/Umgeni Water (1); Ugu DM/Umgeni Water (4). The best performing municipality in the province was eThekweni Metro with a score of 95,71%. Overall, KwaZulu-Natal has taken 3<sup>rd</sup> position as best-performing province, behind Gauteng (1<sup>st</sup>) and Western Cape (2<sup>nd</sup>).

The Blue Drop results of 2011 indicate that municipal drinking water quality management in KwaZulu-Natal varies from good to excellent, with four systems that need significant attention. Overall, the business of drinking water supply and quality management is satisfactory.

**Compiled by Shami Harichunder**  
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**Department of Water Affairs**

