



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### Newcastle holds a Water & Sanitation Forum Workshop

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In an effort to provide entry-level knowledge on water and sanitation issues, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Water and Sanitation held an informational presentation with forum members of the Newcastle Water and Sanitation Forum this week.

The event took place on Wednesday, on 6 September 2016.

The purpose of the educational workshop is to provide information to forum member's on what the department is all about and the methods they can use when engaging with communities. The workshop also provided an opportunity to assist forum members to be informed on how to handle water and sanitation issues from their communities including engaging with the local municipality.

"This forum is a champion in terms of helping to improve water and sanitation service standards to addressing grievances from people on the ground" said Bheki Ngubo from the KZN DWS during his opening presentation. He said the forum provides a platform for the community to articulate their grievances on water delivery and added that the forums will assist with campaigns to educate communities about saving water and changing daily habits to make sure that water is preserved and conserved.

The Newcastle forum was established to address community issues pertaining to service delivery in the water and sanitation much quicker and to get relevant authorities to attend to community needs including providing information that members have as part of education and awareness campaigns.

"There is no doubt that water is not only essential for human life, but that it is a vital factor for production. There is a pressing need to improve the water-use efficiency by communities. Collecting rainwater from our own roofs is one of the ways of ensuring the collection of water as we are currently facing drought," Ngubo said adding that "Looking back in history, rainwater harvesting system has been one of the methods that we grew up using. As part of this approach water storage tanks in rainwater harvesting systems act as retention tanks. Not only do they store the water but they also contribute to avoiding the run-off of water" said Siboniso Ndlovu from Policy & Strategy.

"While wasteful water use is almost systemic in South Africa, the good news is that there are many options available to us that can help drastically reduce our water consumption. Greywater re-use is one of the easiest that can implement by communities. The process can help to lower water consumption," Ndlovu emphasizes during his presentation.

DWS has been establishing Water and Sanitation forums across the country to help ease water issues that communities are faced with on a daily basis. "The establishment of Water and Sanitation forum follows a call by the Minister of Water and Sanitation as a way of creating a two way communication between communities and department in addressing water and sanitation issues. I am confident that this forum will help assist to ease and reduce service delivery protests as this provide communities with a voice in the management and delivery of water and sanitation services in their own area" said Nonhlanhla Mahlangu from DWS Directorate IGR during her conclusion remarks.

**Mbali Mahaye**