

## SA Water Demand Exceeds Supply

Written by Rudi Prinsloo

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Water problems experienced in South Africa are as a result of water demand exceeding available supply, and not lack of proper planning, a water expert said on Thursday.

SA Institute of Civil Engineering water division chairman Chris Herold was speaking during a public debate held at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) on whether or not local water was safe to drink and the water challenges facing the country.

"This is a serious problem, especially if we cannot purify polluted water [quicker]. Infrastructure and works are not being built fast enough and there is no capacity [civil engineers] to do the work," Herold said.

The Water Affairs and Forestry Minister had once said that by 2013 water supply was going to exceed the resource demand. "2013 is already upon us as the water demand already exceeds available supply," he said.

"This is not because there is no proper planning, but delayed implementation. We need to impose demand management," Herold said.

He also noted that water coming from projects in Lesotho was not reaching the Vaal dam but being hijacked by farmers on its route.

Herold was joined on a panel of experts by Rand Water chairman at UJ Dr Kobus van Zyl, Professor Mike Muller and Dr Anthony Turton from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

Turton raised the concern that water, which was a flux, was being managed as stock.

"We need legislative framework. We have it [framework] in place but we need technical know-how people. People who know how to do the work and can check if it is done well," Van Zyl said.

The water experts were hosted by The Weekender and the Institute for Race Relations to also discuss the problems faced by municipalities during the recent cholera outbreak.

The cross-border cholera outbreak linked to Zimbabwe and Mozambique has seen more than 10,000 people treated for the disease in South Africa since November last year and more than 50 of them have died.

Muller said the outbreak was merely bringing attention to the local water problems.

"There are people copying our [water] laws but implementing them better than us. Our image outside is that we are world leaders but coming home and reading our newspapers, we have problems," he said.

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