



Gamtoos-Besproeiingsraad
Gamtoos Irrigation Board

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Report from the Chairman



Tertius Meyer

The year 2021 came with its usual challenges. The greatest of these was surely the 20% availability of water from the scheme. It was hoped that good rains during 2021 would lessen the pressure experienced in the Valley. The critical level of the Kouga Dam after the 2020/2021 water year compelled the Board to make an allocation of 15%.

Notwithstanding the level of the dam, the scheme still requires attention. A need exists to intensify maintenance on the scheme and the necessary planning is in progress. Rienette and her management team have managed the delivery of water

well during an extremely difficult restriction of 80%. They are actively working on the scheme, and the difference that they make is evident.

We as the Board are grateful for their dedication and hard work. It is a compliment to hear from interested parties that the Gamtoos Irrigation Board functions well under purposeful and effective management.

Our prayer is that it will rain soon and alleviate the pressure of water scarcity.

Report from the Chief Executive Officer



Rienette Colesky

When you find your WHY, you don't hit snooze no more! You find a way to make it happen!"
Eric Thomas

Technology is an integral part of our everyday existence. It makes the world smaller by bringing that which you know and love closer to you. Every time that I upgrade my indispensable technology for a newer, fresher and faster version and scroll through the photo gallery, I realise how much happens in a year. My photo gallery speaks of a Gamtoos Irrigation Board that definitely does not snooze.

We have the privilege to work with an endless number of interested parties. Our main goal is certainly to be of service to our irrigators in all respects regarding water issues. However, we are in daily contact with government departments, municipalities and various local and provincial groupings. The Irrigation Board wants to make a difference at every level of our society. We want it known that we can make things happen, that we can make them work, and that we build

bridges between communities. We also want it known that the money that is entrusted to us by water users and government departments is spent effectively by our adding value to the purpose for which it was intended.

I am humbled to see how much dedication and passion my management team and every employee who is part of our team bring to the work with which they are entrusted. Over the past year we have created a culture of initiative and alternative problem-solving methods. That said, we still attach value to the high-quality solutions that have been successful historically.

The Board comprises a group of seasoned water users with a depth of knowledge regarding the management of bulk water supply. They render impartial input and guidance. Their decision-making focuses on that which is beneficial for the majority. The Board serves under the capable chairmanship of Mr Tertius Meyer. The other Board members are: Mr Marthinus Colesky (vice-chairman), Mr Khaya Katoo, Mr SG Ferreira, Mr Jacques du Preez, and Mr Manus Meyer.



Covid-19

It is unthinkable how the world changed in 2020. The Gamtoos Valley is no exception. All of us have, to a lesser or greater degree, been touched by the disease, by economic or financial challenges, and by death.

We think today with empathy of every family that has lost a loved one during this time.



Transformation

Gamtoos Irrigation Board was proclaimed as an irrigation board in 1991. It is a statutory body under the National Water Act of 1956. The intention of the National Water Act of 1998 was, among others, that irrigation boards should be converted to a water users' association. The primary goal of a water users' association is to manage water in a defined area. It has the legal format of a cooperative association of individuals who undertake water-related activities to the benefit of all.

During the past year a serious attempt at progress has been made by the Department with regard to the process of converting Gamtoos Irrigation Board into a water users' association. The goal of the Department is that this new water management entity should involve the total hydrological area of the catchment area and that other geographical areas should all come together under one banner. Various public participation meetings with interested parties were held during the past year, and currently the Department awaits feedback from this process.

The goal of a larger, more comprehensive hydrological area is to carry out more effective water management by including everyone who has an interest in a particular water source in the management thereof.



Water Restrictions 2020/2021

Agricultural water users receive 60.188 million cubic metres of water from the Kouga Dam during a normal 100% quota year. Hankey and Patensie municipalities also receive an allocation, as does the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality ('the Metro'). During a full quota year, that entails 23 million cubic meters of water per year.

Agricultural users were restricted by 80% during the 2020/2021 water year. Kouga Municipality was restricted by 30%, as were the rest of the sources in the Algoa system. The Metro was restricted by 70% out of Loerie Dam.

This is the fifth consecutive year that the water users of our scheme have had their water quota restricted.

The drought of the past few years has changed the landscape of the Gamtoos Valley completely. Over the past five years it has been evident that the cultivation of vegetables has declined in our Valley. Vegetable farmers, who must meet the terms of their contracts to suppliers, have moved to more water-rich areas. Numerous dairy farmers, for the same reasons have, where they were able, adapted their agricultural activities or have also moved elsewhere. To a large extent, groundwater has been sought and extracted.

The level of the Kouga Dam stood at 3.89% on 22 July 2021. This is the lowest level it has ever reached.

It is exceedingly difficult, from an operational point of view, to manage an allocation of 20%. The four-day 'water shedding' has been the only feasible option. During these four days in a week a quarter of the average historical monthly percentage of a determined month is released into the system. That, in itself, has been at great cost to the water users.

Water loss is extremely high, and the average loss during the 2020/2021 year was 24.83%. In terms of volume, that is 5.2 million cubic metres and only a loss of 6.2% in the event that the full quota was released for agricultural and household use.

At the end of June 2021, water users had used 98.4% of the 20% quota. The Metro and the Kouga Municipality stayed within their quota. Both made use of alternative resources. Loerie Dam is, however, the only source supplying KwaNobuhle, Loerie and Thornhill.

Year	Kouga Dam level on 30 June	Allocation for the water year	% of the restriction used
2021	4.19%	15%	-
2020	7.11%	20%	98.4%
2019	44.98%	85%	84.2%
2018	7.89%	40%	113.00%
2017	18.65%	40%	98.8%
2016	68.03%	100%	93.8%
2015	100.27%	100%	82.4%
2014	88.97%	100%	73.2%
2013	87.18%	100%	80.9%
2012	87.96%	100%	78.7%
2011	100.93%	100%	70.2%
2010	34.42%	40%	89.3%

Operational Health

Maintenance

The low level of the Kouga Dam gave the Irrigation Board the opportunity during the latter part of the water year to perform important maintenance work on the dam wall:

- A great many tree stumps were removed from the platform of the flood gates.
- The flood sluice was serviced and repaired.
- The service sluice was serviced and the obstruction was removed from the outlet pipe.

Dry period

The 2021 dry period served as an important event that has changed the thinking of the Board and management in various respects.

The following are notable in terms of this dry period:

- The main canal as well as the branch canals were maintained and cleaned. In future, an attempt will be made to perform this task for the whole scheme in two weeks.
- The engineering firm MSW, which has been involved with our scheme for many years, performed an audit to monitor risk areas.
- We worked with 20 contractors, each with 10 employees. First aid, and health and safety training was given to these workers.
- Various Working for Water personnel were employed this year to do quality control.
- Once again, essential maintenance work was done to Buffelshoek. The Department is still in the process of replacing the syphon.
- The CD automatic sluice had to be replaced since it had reached the end of its lifespan.



Future plans

The following is also important in terms of our scheme:

- Plans have been put in place for the management of vegetation alongside the canal system.
- Dry land rehabilitation is necessary in various places along the canal system.
- Alternative (flexible) products will be used to prevent the same maintenance having to be carried out annually. This transition will happen gradually because these products need to be applied more slowly.
- Active planning is underway to prolong the service life of sections of the canal system. It is essential to target high-risk areas annually.
- There is a need to place rock traps in front of the syphons, which will make the cleaning of the syphons considerably easier.
- It is planned that all the syphons will have been cleaned by 2028. Then it will require a 12-year cycle to clean the 38 syphons and the 12 closed canals.

The Board is in the process of developing a new computer program with respect to the management of the water system. The goal is that the system will focus on the needs of the scheme and of the Gamtoos Valley water users. Currently, the program is in a test phase and will be phased in over the next year.

Over the past two years, a structured monitoring program has been systematically implemented to document all events around the scheme, attach a risk factor to each, and thus plan to minimise these risks. It is an extensive program that will make the future management of the scheme easier.



Financial Health

Financial statements 2020/2021

During 2019/2020, expenditure on the scheme was radically affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Board found itself in the rare position that not enough of the budget could be spent on routine work. The year 2020/2021 is another matter, however. Operationally, more than three times the allocated work was done during the dry period than during 2019/2020. That had a direct effect on consumable stock, but management also realised that the increased level of maintenance will need to continue if a significant change is to be made to the scheme.

The following is noteworthy:

- The total reserves of the Board amount to:
 - R29.0 million
 - R26.1 million (June 2020)
- Water tax collected amounts to:
 - R25.1 million
 - R26.8 million (June 2020)
- Water tax income amounts to 61.8% of income (2019/2020 = 70.2%). The reason for this is the water tariffs that were not increased during the 2019/2020 year.
- Working for Water income subsidises the income by 13% (2019/2020 = 13.5%).
- R5.5 million was spent on consumable stock with the aim of maintaining the scheme.
- The Board has no long-term debt.

A credit adjustment was made in terms of depreciation after the lifespan of the heavy equipment was re-evaluated. This amounted to a beneficial sum of R2 466 599 on the financial statement.

Budget 2020/2021

- An increase of 19.84% is recommended.
- Total budget: R36 001 450
- Water tax amounts to 68.9% of the total budget (2019/2020 = 63%) and Working for Water income subsidises the budget by 8.3% (2019/2020 = 13.7%)

Water tariffs for 2021/2022

An increase of 19.84% in water tariffs is recommended for the 2021/2022 year.

There is empathy for the immense pressure under which agricultural users find themselves. During the drought there was an attempt to allow minimal or no increases in terms of the tariffs, in the hope that the situation would improve. The need for operational maintenance and the aging of our scheme has led to a need for more funds.

The commission income from the Department of Environmental Affairs projects (Working for Water) has declined over the past few years and its contribution to our budget is becoming all the more uncertain. For the current budget year, we can only budget for half the usual anticipated income because we find ourselves at the end of a departmental financial cycle. The loss of the Working for Water income and the lack of sufficient increases during the previous water years has necessitated that the Board makes a relatively large adjustment.

Description	Previous Tariff	New Tariff
Water resource management charge (DWS)	R 200.80	R 203.20
Consumptive charge on main canal and Kouga Dam (DWS)	R 322.40	R 325.60
Gamtoos Irrigation Board water taxes	R2676.80	R3306.20
Total (Basic of 80% or less of full allocation)	R3200.00	R3835.00
Grand Total (Full Allocation)	R3576.92	R4286.58

Amounts do not include VAT.

The Board strives to maintain the scheme well and a substantial difference is evident in comparison with other schemes.

Working for Water Programme

The Natural Resource Management (NRM) projects of the Department of Environmental Affairs forms a big portion of the Board's activities and, although few of the full-time personnel of the Board are involved in giving life to these projects, the extent of the work cannot be underestimated.

The Board implements 34 projects with a total budget of R45 million for 2021/2022 (R82 million for 2020/2021).

The Department is also experiencing its own challenges. Audit findings that were made by the Auditor General have necessitated that the Department changes certain processes. The result is progress at a snail's pace to the effect that, during the current year, only six months' work will be done, for which only six months' budget is allocated.

The end of March 2022 is also the end of the current contract with the Department. Tenders were already submitted early in January. The result of these tenders will determine whether there will be certainty regarding commission income. It is expected that future work will not ensure the current level of commission.

Various offices of Working for Water, under the banner of Gamtoos Irrigation Board, exist in the province. The area extends from Matatiele near the Lesotho border all the way to Tsitsikamma. The 30 personnel, who were exclusively employed for this work, are managed by three Area Managers. The areas are GBR East, under Mr Andrew Knipe; GBR West, under Mr Edwill Moore; and GBR North-East, under Mr Justice Ngcengane.

Over a substantial number of years that we have implemented Natural Resource Management projects, the Board has built up unique knowledge around implementation. This has also given us the opportunity to be involved in communities that we would otherwise not have come to know, and in that way we have been able to make a difference in the lives of many people in terms of job creation. In addition, this work has also had a direct impact on our environment and on water security.



Our People

Farewell Pat

Mrs Pat Oosthuysen retired on 31 August after 39 years. She had been a part of our organisation and the administrative department since 1982.

Pat played an important role in the life of every person who, over the years, was a member of the Irrigation Board's administrative department. She has an outstanding knowledge of her field and was a devoted and conscientious employee. She is a lady who worked with accuracy and speed, and she had the memory of an elephant when it came to numbers.

It was an honour to work with her and we are grateful for her long, dedicated career at the Irrigation Board.



Mrs Pat Oosthuysen

Welcome Learners

During March 2021, 10 learners from our local communities joined us as part of a plant propagation course. These learners were chosen during a strict selection process from a large pool of applications. Their course comprises thirty per cent theory and the rest of the time they spend undergoing practical training. The learners have been posted to the farms of five of our water users.

It is hoped that this programme will afford an opportunity to young people who would not otherwise have been able to study, and also to supplement a niche of the labour market within the citrus industry.



The Road Ahead

The Gamtoos Irrigation Board is a unique working environment. Management moves ahead purposefully under the guidance of the Board to attain its goals. We learn every day. We strive to live out the core values of our organisation. We hold each other accountable. It keeps this organisation busy and on the go. It is fun and exciting.

We recognise the need for knowledge and advice and, over the years, we have involved a group of interested parties in the business for this purpose. Within the organisation, we recognise the specialised knowledge of each individual and the contribution that they can make in terms of decision-making. This rests on the principle that the input of the group can ultimately lead to a far better solution than the decision of a single individual.

In the year ahead, the following will be of importance:

- The conversion into a water users' association.
- Involvement of and service delivery to our commercial water users.
- Involvement and empowerment of our developing water users.
- Striving towards effective water management during a very challenging year of restrictions.
- The implementation of operational goals in order to make a discernible difference every year to an aging scheme.

"Asimi, siyaqhuba."
"We do not stand still; we move forward."

www.gamtooswater.co.za

