

While the nature of the problems and risks vary across the country, from drought in the Eastern Cape to reduced water table levels in the Free State's borehole-fed supply system, the shortage of skills means that most municipalities are not even aware of the kind of risks they are facing – let alone the solutions that will be required. Therefore Moeti urges municipalities to invest in hiring skilled water specialists and risk managers who will be able to produce and implement comprehensive and auditable risk management processes.

“Unless municipalities start acting more responsibly by recruiting the right skills, we will continue wasting rather than conserving water, promoting the spread of disease and poor health while draining state resources for continual and expensive crisis management – as opposed to consistent and comparatively inexpensive maintenance,” concludes Moeti.

► **INFO**

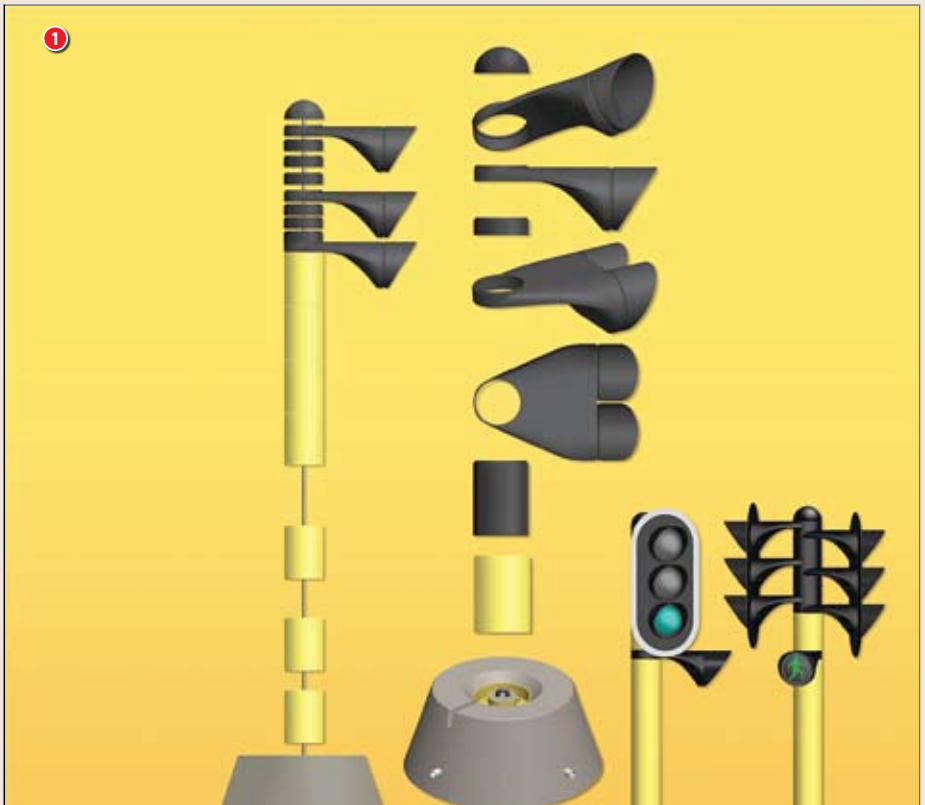
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VELA VKE ASSISTS WITH WATER AND SANITATION FOR RURAL SCHOOLS

AS PART OF A NATIONAL initiative to eradicate the backlog in delivery of services to rural schools, the Department of Water Affairs has initiated a three-year programme to address these health related issues.

Anton Helberg from the Vela VKE George office was tasked with implementing this programme on behalf of Eden District Municipality in the Kannaland, Oudtshoorn and Hessequa areas. The scope of works included the construction of new ablution blocks, water supply lines, waterborne sanitation and on-site water purification.

Safe drinking water and basic sanitation are critical contributors to the rural health of school children. For example, unfiltered water increases body toxins, and the presence of lead in the water lowers the IQ in children, causing learning disorders, hyperactivity and central nervous system damage. Nitrates used in fertilisers, which wash into the water system, can cause cancer. Chlorine interacts with decaying



plant matter to form trihalomethanes, another known cancer-causing agent.

The process of purifying the drinking water is by reverse osmosis and ultra violet light. This process removes all the unwanted pollutants in the water including bacteria and ecoli. Various pre-treatments are used depending on incoming water quality.

The project is scheduled for completion in 2010 and will drastically improve health, hygiene and the quality of facilities at 18 schools, for over 900 primary school children in the Eden District.

► **INFO**

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MODULAR TRAFFIC LIGHT SYSTEM SET TO REVOLUTIONISE TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND REDUCE COSTS

THE MODULAR TRAFFIC Light System (MTLS) was conceived and developed in response to the high number of serious injuries and

- ① *MTLS components*
- ② *An assembled MTLS*

fatalities among motorists around the world. Thirty per cent of all motor accidents worldwide involve vehicles impacting traffic lights and street poles. Of these accidents 2,5% are fatal and many more result in serious injuries (University of Adelaide, Australia study, 1999).

Instead of offering an impacting vehicle a high level of resistance, the MTLS is designed to collapse on impact. This dramatically reduces the level of damage to the motor vehicle and in turn greatly increases passenger safety.

The steel poles and signal head systems that are used in current traffic light systems are expensive. When they have been knocked down, the entire assembly needs to be replaced. This process is time-consuming and costly, typically involving a large work crew, a heavy truck and construction equipment. The pavement surface is often damaged in the accident as well, and needs to be repaired with a fresh concrete foundation.

An entire MTLS installation is 30% more cost-effective than traditional systems, saving money in terms of both materials and installation times. The MTLS utilises the latest polymers and cutting-edge computer design technology to create an integrated system that enables the quick and easy construction of an infinite variety of signal-head combinations. The light weight of the