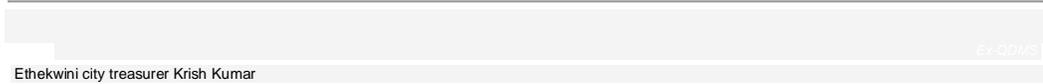


No more free water for residents

March 30 2012 at 10:20am
By Kamcilla Pillay



Ethekwini city treasurer Krish Kumar

Ethekwini ratepayers with homes valued more than R250 000, will no longer qualify to receive the first 9kl of water free per month.

Officials made the announcement at the tabling of the city's R31.3 billion budget on Thursday.

Residents also face a 12.5 percent water tariff increase, while businesses will see 15.5 percent increase.

Municipal treasurer, Krish Kumar, confirmed residents with homes worth more than R250 000 no longer qualified for the free water.

He said there was no rationale in not charging people for water if they could afford it.

He said that tariff increases usually attracted a poor response, but said that they expected positive feedback from the public with regard to this.

The paying population is very poor . they either have groundtanks, low pressure systems or live in houses worth less than R250 000, the value of an RDP house,+he said.

This is simply the right thing to do.+

He said that the move was pushed and supported by the infrastructure committee.

Kumar said the building of the Spring Grove Dam in Mooi River, meant a little more than 40 cents additional cost a kilo-litre for water, which pushed the tariff up to between four and five percent. Kumar said that the dam had put a major strain on tariff increases+

The bulk purchases tariff for the purchase of water from uMgeni Water increased by 17.2 percent, mainly as a result of this additional fee added to the bulk tariff as funding for the construction of the dam,+said the city in its report to the executive committee.

Notwithstanding this, every effort has been made to keep the proposed increases in the water sales tariff to a minimum. It should be noted that without the Spring Grove Dam, the increases would be approximately 7.5 percent and 10.5 percent respectively,+the report stated.

The municipality had recorded a R2.5bn spend over the past three years, and planned to spend R691m more during the 2012/13 year.

The funds would go towards the alleviation of problems such as water loss and extension of service areas.

Other cities such as Johannesburg had a 40 percent loss, while Msunduzi reported a 53 percent loss . developed countries lost water at a rate of 15 percent, he said.