

THE UNFORTUNATE TRUTH

Harties Metsi a me (Biological remediation project?)

The Harties Metsi a me project has been a dismal failure.

7th September 2010

Dear Community member it is vital that you take cognizance of the contents of this letter, the failure of this project is already impacting on your business, property value, your recreational activities and most of all your health.

As the founding chairperson of HWAG (Hartbeespoort Water Action Group) and later acting as a consultant to the Metsi a me project I have an intimate knowledge of how the project has been conducted and why it has failed. (*I have tried my best to influence it positively but to no avail.*)

The Department of Water Affairs Regional Office representative has lied to the community of this area as well as the public of South Africa by insisting that the water quality has improved and in some cases that the water is "pristine". Even more seriously the Regional Representative has lied to his own superiors to cover up the failures of the project (In his own words "the problem is too complex to monitor"). If the problem is too complex to monitor how can he make statements to the effect that there has been an improvement in the water quality?

The attempt to convince the Government that Metsi a me has achieved something went the final step when a Parliamentary Portfolio Committee (Water and Environmental Affairs) visited the dam in July 2010. The Committee was due to meet with stakeholders around the dam on Friday the 30th July. This meeting was suddenly cancelled and specific "positively disposed or unenlightened" community people were invited to meet with the Committee the day before. They were specifically chosen to put a positive spin on the Metsi a me project for the Committee.

The RMP (Resource Management Plan) which should have provided some results by April 2008 has achieved absolutely nothing and like all other commitment made by the Regional Office has been distorted to suit some obscure objective.

Funds allocated to the Metsi a me project have been diverted to other purposes while making use of the sympathy generated by the sorry state of Hartbeespoort to elicit funds from the Department and overseas donors.

There are many people in South Africa concerned about water quality and what the Government is doing about the problem. As with Hartbeespoort Dam the voices are not coordinated and organized into a collective.

I would like to call on you to provide your support to the revival of HWAG to represent the community around this dam and to allow it to speak on your behalf, be you an individual, homeowner, business representative, a community representative, development, homeowners association or an interested party.

Please indicate your willingness to participate or support by return e-mail.

Significant enough response will result in a public meeting which those who respond will be invited to, to discuss the details of the failed project as well as a way forward.

Yours sincerely
Garry Mackay HWAG