

UPL Water Use Licence Forum

Minute Note of meeting held at 10:00 on Thursday 14 May 2026

at Grace Family Church, 400 Umhlanga Rocks Dr

Present (as per the attendance register)

Mr Masiphula Babalo (MB)	Resident
Ms Jo Barnard (JB)	Urban Mgt / Umhlanga UIP
Mr Luke Bodmann (LB)	Kinvig & Associates (Online)
Mr Norman Brautesth (NB)	NBA Law
Mr Siyabonga Buthelezi (SB)	DWS
Ms Namisa Dlamini (ND)	EWS
Ms Bhavisthra Dukhea (BD)	DWS
Ms Ayanda Duma (AD)	eThekwini
Dr Mark Graham (MG)	GroundTruth
Ms Vicky King (VK)	Metamorphosis
Ms Michelle Lotz (ML)	eThekwini: Biodiversity Management
Mr Bongani Mthembu (BM)	SDCEA
Mr Gerhard Mulder (GM)	Resolve Communications
Mr Sanele Ndawonde (SNd)	EDTEA
Mr Allimuthu Parumal (AP)	WESSA
Ms Mandisa Poswa (MP)	Tongaat Hulett
Mr Ricky Rajkaran (RR)	UPL Ltd
Ms Londiwe Satimburwa (LS)	eThekwini
Ms Prisha Sukdeo (PS)	EWS
Mr Dave Wilson (DW)	EWS
Mr Celokuhle Zondi (CZ)	SDCEA
Ms Nombulelo Zungu (NZ)	KZN EDTEA

Secretariat

Ms Rose Owen (RO)	Phelamanga
-------------------	------------

Apologies

Mr Des D'Sa (DD)	SDCEA
Mr Neo Leburu (NL)	DWS
Mr Greg Mullins (GMu)	eThekwini
Ms Yugeshni Naicker (YN)	EDTEA
Mr Jeremy Ridl (JR)	MSF

KEY TO INITIALS – ALL MEMBERS

AA	Antony Arbuthnot
AD	Ayanda Duma
AM	Andrew Mather
AMp	Ayanda Mpofu
AMpu	Azile Mpukwana
AP	Allimuthu Perumal
BD	Bhavisthra Dukhea
BM	Bongani Mthembu
CL	Colin Levin
CM	Colleen Moonsammy
CZ	Celokuhle Zondi
DD	Des D'Sa
DW	Dave Wilson
FH	Francine Hattingh
GM	Gerhard Mulder
GMu	Greg Mullins
GR	G Ragusammy
JB	Jo Barnad
JBa	Jacky Barrington
JE	Jarrold Evans
JH	Jameer Harichand
JR	J Ramnarand
KY	Kirsten Youens
LB	Luke Bodmann
LS	Londiwe Satimburwa
MB	Masiphula Babablo
MGo	Mi Govender
MG	Mark Graham
ML	Michelle Lotz
MP	Mandisa Poswa
NB	Norman Brautesth
ND	Namisa Dlamini
NL	Neo Leburu
NZ	Nombulelo Zungu
PM	Philile Mwandla
PS	Prisha Sukdeo
RE	Rico Euripidou
RO	Rose Owen
RR	Ricky Rajkaran
RS	Rupert Sebire
SBa	Santosh Bachoo
SB	Siyabonga Buthelezi
SN	Shaun Naidoo
SNd	Sanele Ndawonde
TB	Tandi Breetzke
TM	Terri Maclarty
TR	T Reddy
TT	Takalani Telekisa
VK	Vicky King
YN	Yugeshni Naicker

ACTION

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES

1. RO welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting. RO informed the meeting that there is a Dictaphone to record the meeting for minute purposes. If anyone had anything they did not want recorded they would need to make this known.
2. She introduced herself and asked all in attendance to introduce themselves and the organisation they represent.
3. RO asked all to ensure they signed the attendance register and checked their details. RO confirmed that all I&AP details are kept on a computer and not in the cloud. She would not share any stakeholder information with anyone. If she is aware of any processes that are relevant to any stakeholders, she will share information with them.
4. RO asked for any apologies, these are noted above.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF DRAFT AGENDA

1. The meeting agreed and the agenda was accepted and adopted.

3. PURPOSE AND FORMAT

1. RO noted that this meeting is with regards to the UPL Water Use Licence Authorisation requirement to establish a Water Use Licence Authorisation Forum.
2. The forum functions to assist UPL in reporting on its license and ensuring compliance.
3. The secondary purpose includes receiving reports, providing comment to UPL, DWS, and WUL conditions, informing the public of progress, taking a collective approach to assist UPL, and promoting transparency based on meaningful involvement of key parties.
4. The forum meets quarterly as per the reporting schedule.
5. Attendees were asked to treat each other with respect, allowing for robust but respectful debate.
6. The facilitator provided an overview, stating that UPL needs to provide reports on the implementation status of their Water Use License (WUL). The forum receives these reports, asks questions, and shares information to build knowledge for the department, UPL, and stakeholders.
7. It was clarified that the forum cannot issue legal requirements to UPL; this can only come from the department. The forum works alongside UPL and DWS to strengthen data and information sharing and improve compliance actions.
8. The meeting's focus was on the Water Use License compliance discussion, separate from any MSF item.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2026

1. Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted and signed.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING NOT COVERED BELOW

5.1. ToR amendments

1. RO presented the ToR amendments as had been proposed at the previous meeting. She had sent the proposed amendments to DWS for input. They had confirmed they were satisfied with the proposal and it was not contradictory to the Permit.

2. The amendments were:

- Amendment to clause 4.2 and 4.6
- New clause at 4.3

4.2 Meetings are scheduled at a minimum tri-annually, held quarterly or as per reporting schedule.

4.3 Meetings may be called sooner than schedule or additionally to the tri-annual schedule as required.

4.6 Meeting venues will be accessible to members and may include an online option. No more than one meeting per year may be held online exclusively

3. AP suggested that in the event a fourth or additional meeting is required this could be held online. 4. RO noted this. The meeting agreed on the ToR amendments. It was agreed that the amendments made the ToR could be adopted and the change implemented immediately. 5. RO to update the ToR to allow that any additional meetings could be held online and distribute the updated and adopted ToR to all stakeholders.	RO to update and send
5.2. WUL Amendment Update 1. MG updated the meeting noting that essentially, a review was undertaken based on the original water use license. Certain items were identified that required amendment, which went through consultation and public participation and was submitted to the department about a month ago. The application for amendment sought tight alignment with water use license conditions and the storm water bylaw applications to ensure parity. 2. BD responded that it has been presented to the decision committee and they are finalizing documents. DWS can give a decision once it has been issued and signed. 3. AP asked if the water use license and water service providers are grouped together? 4. BD responded noting that most functions that were under the national department have now moved over to the Pongola-Umzimkulu Catchment Management Agency (CMA). It doesn't change much for an applicant; the people you speak to are the same, but we report to a board and a CEO. Water use licensing, and compliance have been handed over to the agency	
6. MUNICIPALITY REPORT <i>[link to .pdf presentations available in the annexure]</i> 1. AD from EWS Scientific Services Department within Water and Sanitation, provided a presentation on water quality monitoring for the Ohlanga catchment in response to questions raised and sent to the Municipality. 2. AD noted that there are two branches within the department, Pollution and Environment, and Laboratory Services. 3. The lab takes samples every day and results are uploaded to their system. Pollution and Environment does the field investigations for surface waters, rivers, beaches, and trade effluent. eThekweni monitor more than 150 river water sources. They measure parameters from biological, like E. coli, to chemicals and metals. The frequency of monitoring depends on the site; rivers might be once a month, but below treatment works is weekly. They share river results monthly on their website, including an E. coli map. 4. AD highlighted that relevant to this forum the Ohlanga catchment includes residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Major infrastructure includes the Phoenix and Ohlanga treatment works and multiple pump stations. 5. They have five sampling points on the catchment. For this presentation, she would be focusing on E. coli. Over 12 months, the system has been characterized as being in a critical condition. At the river mouth, above and below the Phoenix works, and upstream, E. coli levels have trended way above the acceptable threshold of 1,000. 6. Issues identified include sewer blockages, broken pipelines, non-operational pump stations, and the fact that the Phoenix works is not operating at full capacity. We also have three informal settlements in the catchment influencing results. 7. AP queried the statement that Amawoti is considered an informal settlement, there is formal homes and infrastructure. And more being developed. 8. AD responded that if it is an approved development then they ensure there is sanitation provided, however where people build without approval they are not involved. 9. BM suggested, it is that there are informal developments in the area alongside the formal developments.	

10. AD informed the meeting of the Phoenix works improvements: maintenance of de-watering systems, grit removal, repairs to raw screw pumps, and refurbishment of digesters are underway. There is an aeration system upgrade and planned pond bypass improvements to improve final effluent quality.
11. It was queried if the pond bypass was a bypass of the treatment plant or just the final polishing?
12. AD responded that it was the final process where they polish the treatment. They've discovered issues at the ponds, so are bypassing them because the quality before the ponds is actually better than after. She went on to note other actions include temporary fixes for washed-away pipes and clearing identified manholes. All pump stations are currently operational.
13. MG asked follow up on the pond bypass; which parameters show lower quality after the ponds?
14. ND responded that it was high solids. The chlorine ends up not doing proper disinfection because of them.
15. MG suggested there was an opportunity for a better coming together. The effect of the spill on the tributary is no longer an issue; it's these broader catchment pressures. He indicated that they would love to work more closely with eThekweni and the community.

6.1. Sewage

1. RO thanked AD for her report. She noted that there were a number of queries at our meetings regarding the impact of sewage and the ongoing incidents of surcharging in particular from the Blackburn pump station. Forum members had noted that industry is doing extensive work on rehabilitation but is being held accountable for a system they aren't deteriorating.
2. DW responded noting that much of the surcharging is caused by abuse of the sewer system. For example they've taken two dogs out of the system in the last 6 months. Fats from restaurants are also a major problem. They are now asking for disposal reports from restaurants. Vandalism is also ongoing; people break into pump stations and steal cables.

6.2. Construction – Cornubia Phase 2

1. RO noted that a query that was sent was regarding abstraction of water from the stream for Cornubia Phase 2 construction
2. MG clarified this was tankers abstracting from the stream dry for dust suppression. That stream is running dry.
3. It was noted that this needs to go to DWS.

6.3. Sand Mining Ohlanga

1. RO followed up on the query sent to EW regarding Sandmining in the catchment.
2. EDTEA responded that it's a DMR matter, but they only have one enforcement group. The next operation will be targeting sites.
3. It was noted that there is a severe issue of sandmining in estuaries and the department is severely constrained with not enough enforcement officers.
4. All were requested to remain vigilant and report instances of sandmining.

[after the meeting the following contact information was provided for the reporting of sandmining NEMAComplaints@dmpr.gov.za and NEMAComplaints@dmre.gov.za].

7. WUL COMPLIANCE PRESENTATION

[link to .pdf presentations available in the annexure]

7.1. Overview and Background

1. MG provided an overview for those who were new to the forum
2. He highlighted that the PCD (Pollution Control Dam) was where polluted water from the spill incident in July 2021 was collected. The entire system was waterproofed with a

geosynthetic clay liner to prevent groundwater contamination. 3. In 2026, pesticide concentrations have notably declined; all pesticides have fallen below the MQL. The exception has been tebuthiuron which marginally exceeded the MQL in February and April. 4. To manage PCD levels and prevent overtopping, a UV/O3 treatment plant was built and trialled. 5. This forum was established as per the WUL and reports on the performance of the treatment process and discharge. There are a range of monitoring sites all the way down the system. MG highlighted that Diatoms (benthic algae) are also being sampled on a monthly basis, though this is not a WUL requirement. In addition it was noted that Ecotoxicity testing is done monthly although only required to be done quarterly. 6. MG noted that the sampling is showing a 100% removal of pesticides in most cases. The residual signature is dominated by herbicides such as amicarbazone, and metolachlor, which are typical in agricultural settings. 7. Pesticide concentrations remain typically low. There are no pesticides entering the estuary. Ecotoxicity results show the PCD is at level one—the lowest toxicity level possible. 8. Biomonitoring (diatoms and macroinvertebrates) shows that sewage and discharging sewers are now the main drivers of the system's condition, not pesticides. There is no impact from the discharge on the downstream health. It was highlighted that the biological health of the water in the PCD is similar to what is naturally occurring upstream. 9. MG noted that the team had implemented an “artificial substrate site” in the PCD, using a 2l coke bottle. Sampling was taken off this and it was noted that it indicated the PCD is considered a “Fair Condition”, it was the same as SW04 in stream condition above the discharge point.	
7.2. Ground Water Monitoring 1. MG reported that Groundwater monitoring around the PCD shows results are below the laboratory's ability to detect them. 2. Sediment sampling also shows nothing problematic. All parameters meet the license conditions.	
7.3. Discussions 1. LB asked for an update on the compressor which was mentioned at the previous meeting, they were due to install it. 2. MG confirmed that yes the compressor has been installed, he informed the meeting for those new that, the high humidity in Durban was causing nitric acid to form in the ozone generator, which was eating the electrodes. They imported a special air dryer from Italy to get dry clean oxygen into the plant and mitigate that risk. 3. A forum member asked how the site disposes of the contaminated charcoal? 4. MG responded that it is contained and sent off-site for thermal destruction. It was noted they have investigated if it could be renewed however the volume required is not feasible.	
8. PROPOSED MEETING DATES 4 February 2026 — amended to 2 February 2026 14 May 2026 13 August 2026 12 November 2026 1. RO noted that the forum had adopted the proposed tri-annual meeting schedule. She had looked at the spacing thereof and noted that the next meeting would be scheduled for mid-October. It was noted this would be an online meeting MSTEams meeting link would be shared with stakeholders. 2. RO would then schedule the 2027 meetings according to the tri-annual proposal with 2 in person and one online.	

9. CLOSURE

1. There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.47.

Read and confirmed this day of 20

Facilitator

ANNEXURE

The following link to the folder containing the presentations referred to above will be available in Phelamanga's Dropbox until the next meeting. Thereafter stakeholders may request any previous reports or presentations directly from the Phelamanga office.

PRESENTATION	LINK	FILE SIZE
GroundTruth Presentation	https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/kto66b5jmxtbu9zkvaopf/GT1365-UPL-WUL-Compliance-Forum-Meeting-14-May-2026.pdf?rlkey=wixm585u8ldk06a0v23eimwot&dl=0	3 068 KB
EWS Presentation	https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/astxqh7cbt7ww61mvnmrc/EWS-water-monitoring-OHLANGA.pdf?rlkey=7r51lmiqx292yf607vdvvmi37&dl=0	2 109 KB