

Minister launches new weather radar network

In March Minister of Water & Environmental Affairs Buyelwa Sonjica officially launched the South African Weather Service's (SAWS's) new state-of-the-art weather radar network. The R240-million network, which comprises 12 new Doppler (10 S-Band and 2 X-Band) weather radars, has catapulted South Africa to the forefront of weather and climate forecasting technology. The network replaces the SAWS's existing 30-year-old

radar system to bring about a substantially improved weather observation network. Among others, the new radars will play a vital role in enhancing adaptation tools and products such as the Severe Weather Forecast project and the Flash Flood Guidance system. "South Africa cannot afford to be left out of the scientific process that will assist our communities in the long term, especially with the major concerns of climate change now

upon us. We need to keep our place at the cutting edge of technology and assist our scientists to achieve the ideals of the work they have to carry out for a better South Africa," noted Sonjica. Three new radars have already been installed at Irene (Gauteng), Bethlehem (Free State) and Mthatha (Eastern Cape). For a more detailed technical report on the benefits of the new weather radar network see the next issue of *the Water Wheel*.



One of two new mobile X-band Doppler radar systems to be deployed to the Oliver Tambo and Cape Town International Airports. Among others, the radars will be used to detect wind shear, which can be very dangerous for aircraft during take-off or landing.



Weather radar network project manager Georgie George (far right) explains the workings of the new network to SAWS Chair Khungeka Njobe, DWEA Minister Buyelwa Sonjica, and Department of Environmental Affairs Director-General Nosipho Ngcaka.



Minister of Water & Environmental Affairs Buyelwa Sonjica and South African Weather Service Chair Khungeka Njobe at the plaque unveiled at the official launch of the new weather radar network.



DWEA Minister Buyelwa Sonjica cuts the ribbon on one of the new weather radars.