



CENTRAL OUTER WEST RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

On the road again

by Alan Smaldon

At long last the Shongweni bridge over the M13 is undergoing essential repairs. Therefore lane closures on the eastbound lanes are in place until May, when the work is expected to be completed.

Phase 2 of Stockville Road upgrade is also in operation, this will last until May or June depending on weather and other difficulties that may arise. There are three more phases after this which will result in the road being far more vehicle friendly. If residents are required to make use of it, please take more care whilst driving through there.

The M13 itself is undergoing rehabilitation of its eastbound lanes between Hillcrest and Kloof. Solar road studs are also being replaced along the westbound lanes between Pinetown and Hillcrest. Traffic delays will result. Martin Gardiner, head contractor for M13, had the following to say: "With the improved weather, we have finally got going on rehabilitating the road and have had a good run this week. Other than on Saturday, we have been working at

night, so not many people see what's going on, even if they hear the reversing hooters and the banging of the asphalt truck tailgates whilst tucked up in bed. With regards to the road studs, they are busy around the Maytime area, working during the day, and should be through in a couple of weeks."

WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

The COWRA website is: www.cowra.co.za and our Facebook page is at: www.facebook.com/CentralOuterWest

We provide regular crime reports on the Facebook page, and on the website you may find such information as past AGM reports, reports of speakers and other useful information. We also provide a link to the area councilor's website, where lots of further useful information can be found.

MEMBERSHIP

COWRA membership is only a small annual fee. These fees are applied mostly to administration costs, and as contribution to NTU (National Taxpayer's Union). Please support us by becoming a member. Email admin@cowra.co.za for information.

COWRA Newsletter

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Heavies through Everton

On 26 Nov 2013 this double-trailer rig was on its way to Brackenhill Road through Kloof/Everton. All the driver had was a limited hand-drawn sketch showing the M13, Hillcrest and Inanda Road. He got lost in Everton and ended up in Forest View Drive at the 120 degree Y-junction with the Ocean View and Falls View Drive cul-de-sacs ahead.

Fortunately being a competent driver, he was able to manage with minor damage to the trees, the sidewalks and his vehicle to return to the M13. He had to uncouple both trailers and maneuver them individually around the junction to retrace his route, which took more than an hour.

The most common mistake for drivers, who are coming from the M13 and not familiar with the area, is to miss the 90° left bend of Everton Road where it joins with Pearson Road. Had this truck taken that turn, he might have ended in an even worse predicament down Acutts Drive.

The sight of heavy duty trucks 'accidentally' entering Everton's narrow roads is becoming a common phenomenon.



A few years ago the Ethekewini Council upgraded the status of Acutts Drive (at times a single lane road through the Everton forest) to a Class-4 road. Class-4 roads are considered link roads between residential areas, capable of 200 vehicles per hour. In this case Acutts Drive has been proclaimed a link from the M13 to Waterfall/Hillcrest. We suspect that this status upgrade has now put Acutts Drive as a through-road for trucks when they plan their routes by GPS.

One can only hope that the Council is still planning to put up signs that might discourage these heavies from taking the Gillitts/Everton turn-off in future, or possibly to revise the Class-4 status of Acutts Drive. As it is, the sensitive environment is already showing signs of stress under the increased traffic load.

Chairman's request

I know most residents are now deeply concerned about crime. Neighbourhood Watch groups have sprung up in most of our suburbs and, thanks to them, the crime rate has definitely reduced. I am a member of the Gillitts 2 neighbourhood watch and also attend the weekly Sector meetings held by SAPS. From these I obtain news of incidents which have occurred, the modus operandi and other details which I pass onto our members via our mailing list. I am also a member

of the Gillitts CPF sub-forum and so attend the Hillcrest CPF monthly meetings.

However, one of my major considerations is the lack of membership in COWRA. Sad to say we appear to be the only active Ratepayers Association presently operating in the Outer West. Other news I pass onto members via the mailing lists are road works and closures, news on rates, voting registration; in

short, anything I consider helpful to residents.

Therefore, I am asking you to try and assist our membership by encouraging your relatives, neighbours and friends, should they live within the boundaries of Ward 10, to support COWRA for their own good.

Municipal Madness

The news has recently been filled with sights of delivery protests all over the country. While from many this might just draw a comment like "The South Africans are toy-toying again", there seems to be a deep-rooted cause behind these protests.

In a recent article in Business Day and other newspapers, it was revealed that municipalities across South Africa are owed as much as R90 billion by the communities. That's R90,000,000,000 owed in unpaid services to all municipalities together. This figure was marked at around R30 billion in 2009.

Our own Ethekewini was only able to collect R10 billion out of a forecast of R24 billion for 2012/2013. R1.7 billion of the outstanding amount is still termed "recoverable". However, according to our own ward-councilor Rick Crouch, Ethekewini has a positive cash-balance of R5 billion. Despite the continuous struggle to collect debts, our municipality seems to be financially stable.

The current service debt for Tshwane Municipality (Pretoria) is not known, but right at this moment that municipality is trying to secure a loan for R1.6 billion to pay off short-term debt. This happens while it is already indebted to the value of over R5 billion.



Eskom is apparently owed surprisingly little (compared to the figures above); only R1.4 billion in arrears. This includes 52 municipalities who are over 90 days in arrears, and for example Matjabeng (R232 million) which has not paid for any electricity since July 2013. One wonders if Traditional Affairs Minister Lechesa Tsenoli has revealed the correct numbers here.

It is only to be expected that municipalities cannot continue to function under this burden of debt. The result is that many municipalities are unable to pay their own creditors such as

Eskom, and regional water suppliers. To prevent complete melt-downs or being disconnected from service suppliers, unpaid services are now rapidly being terminated by these municipalities, resulting in the inevitable protests mentioned at the opening of this article. With all this happening in an election year, ANC ward councils are likely to lose lots of votes to other parties.

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Other sources: National Taxpayers Union