



WRC – 40 years of serving South Africa

The Water Research Commission recently celebrated 40 years of service to South Africa's water sector by hosting a technical conference at Emperor's Palace. The conference, which was held over two days, brought together more than 400 delegates from the entire water spectrum, from researchers to scientists to representatives from government, industry and non-governmental organisations. A total of 125 eminent scientists and subject experts presented on progress and knowledge gaps under various themes. A special publication, *WRC – 40 Years of Excellence* – was also launched.

Without the leadership of the WRC and the contribution of the country's research community South Africa would not be the vibrant country it is today, noted Department of Water Affairs (DWA) Acting Deputy Director General Mbangiseni Nepfumbada.

"Today, our country is much better prepared to deal with its water-related problems owing to the Commission's meaningful contribution to the development of the capacity in the water sector; the broadening of the country's water-related research and development base; and the continued commitment to direct and fund research on critical issues." In the past five years, the WRC has employed about 3 000 students on its research projects. The Commission supports around 300 research projects a year with a budget of about R150-million.

The event proved a high note to Prof Rivka Kfir, who is leaving the WRC after ten years as CEO. In her closing speech she said: "I hope I leave behind an effective and vibrant WRC that with your support and under the leadership of the Board and highly capable management will grow and lead the country from strength to strength." □

(Photographs by Lani van Vuuren and Hlengiwe Cele)



Dr Jackie King of consultancy Water Matters related her experiences in developing environmental flow assessment methodologies.



Keynote speaker Prof Brian O'Connell of the University of the Western Cape.



Golder Associates' Dr Ralph Heath with Water SA Editor Tamsyn Sherwill.



Prof Giel Viljoen of Free State University catching up with Pieter van Heerden.



Harry Biggs of SanParks and Prof Jay O'Keeffe of Rhodes University.



Retired Prof Giel Laker and former WRC Deputy CEO Dr George Green.



Pieter Viljoen of the Department of Water Affairs in discussion with WRC Research Manager Chris Moseki.



DWA Acting Deputy Director-General Mbangiseni Nepfumbada with WRC outgoing CEO Prof Rivka Kfir and Chair Dr Janine Adams.



Prof Maggie Momba of the Tshwane University of Technology with Adesola Illembade of WITS University.



Water Wheel Editor Lani van Vuuren with WRC 40 Years author Petro Kotzé.



WRC's Eileen Hugo with keynote presenter MmaTshepo Khumbane.



WRC Chair Dr Janine Adams with outgoing CEO Prof Rivka Kfir.



Groundwater recharge expert Dr Ricky Murray.