



Celebrating 10 years of monitoring air quality and supporting responsible industrial development



Fair Comment

Decade of noble effort appreciated

WITHOUT doubt, the Richards Bay Clean Air Association has had a massive impact on industrial development and daily operations in what is now known as the City of uMhlathuze.

The RBCAA has been acknowledged at the highest Government levels as the country's leader in the gathering and analysis of air quality data.

It has managed to successfully interact with industry - its partners - as well as the general community, who are kept informed and educated on serious health and safety issues.

Indeed, one shudders to think what might have been the situation had not the RBCAA come into existence.

While new air quality legislation has been enacted, the watchdog role of Government is severely hampered by lack of staff and resources in the various Departments tasked with monitoring pollution and penalising offenders.

The balance between job creation through attracting industry, and protecting the public

from potential danger is a fine one, and the two are not mutually exclusive.

The RBCAA has taken seriously its local role as guardian of the earth's atmosphere: not anti-industry, but pro responsible development.

It is there when Environmental Impact Assessments are in progress, adding its valuable scientific data to the pool of knowledge capital; fearlessly challenging potentially harmful outcomes; and advising on mitigatory measures so that industry can expand without compromising the man in the street.

The City's inhabitants owe a huge, ongoing debt to the Richards Bay Clean Air Association.

Its 10-year commitment has at times been the only safety net for the vulnerable public, living as we do in an industrial city which by that very nature poses risks.

The RBCAA has been a major risk limiter over the past decade.

Its positive role is worthy of the full support of the City, industry, Government and the public.

- Dave Savides

REGULATORY INVOLVEMENT:

The Municipality has from the outset been involved with and supported the RBCAA. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (DAEA) and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism both of whom elected to withdraw from the RBCAA.

WHAT WE MONITOR:

SO₂ (Sulphur Dioxide) – 5 sites
PM₁₀ (Particulate Matter) – 1 site
TRS (Total Reduced Sulphides) – 1 site
Dust fallout – 12 sites
Pollen and Fungal Spores – 3 year monitoring programme (2001 – 2004), at 4 sites.

HOW WE ARE FUNDED:

The monitoring system is financed by its members on the principal of "polluter pays".

BUDGET for 2007:

R2.06 million

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- The use of RBCAA data by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) to assist in the development of the National Air Quality Management Programme (NAQMP) and the State of the Air Report for South Africa.
- Our greatest success has to be the RBCAA's involvement, through the use of our data, in assisting the uMhlathuze Municipality to develop an Air Quality Plan for the uMhlathuze Municipal area

ACCESS TO OUR DATA:

- Monthly and Annual Reports: These can be accessed via the RBCAA website www.rbcaa.co.za or you can contact Lindiwe on 035-789 5083 or Sandy on 035- 786 0076.
- Live data: Can be accessed via our website.

HOW TO LOG A COMPLAINT:

- E-Mail: Send your complaint to complaints@rbcaa.co.za with the following information:
 - Name and tel number
 - Location
 - Date
 - Time
 - Details of complaint
 - Physical symptoms, if any.

- Telephone: Lindiwe on 035-789 5083 or Sandy on 035-7860076 After hours complaints that require immediate attention can be reported to the Municipality Environmental stand-by person via the Fire Department on 035-7973314

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

- Report air pollution incidents
- Attend public meetings and participate in Environmental Impact Assessments
- Remember your constitutional right to breathe clean air

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER:

Any organisation who has an interest in air quality may apply to become a member of the RBCAA. New industries are required to become members and Community organisations are encouraged to apply for membership.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Public Officer:
Sandy Camminga
035-7860076
Operational Manager:
Lindiwe Khumalo
035-789 5083

THANK YOU:

The RBCAA wishes to extend their sincere thanks and appreciation to the following individuals and organisations for their support;
Chris Jenkins (The Mercury)
Mhlathuze News (uMhlathuze Municipality)
Ms Anthony and her staff at the Zululand Observer deserve a special mention. They have been with us every step of the way and have singlehandedly ensured that the RBCAA data reaches you, the public, and for this we remain forever grateful.

Quotes

"Being involved in the design work for the Richards Bay Clean Air Association in 1997 was both an adventure and a privilege. The Richards Bay pioneers that helped start the system are hopefully proud with what they helped achieve. Most importantly, with what we have contributed to improved air quality planning while Richards Bay and Empangeni have grown."
Quentin Hurt (RBCAA Project Manager – Ecoserv)

"International delegations have hailed the RBCAA's monitoring system as one of the most sophisticated they have seen and on a par with international standards"
Peter Leah (Founder Member & Chairman 2006)

"For the sake of community and environmental health the Richard Bay Clean Air Association (RBCAA) has done its best to work with polluting industries while raising serious concerns about air pollution in Richards Bay. It is a difficult task. The Zululand Environmental Alliance (ZEAL) congratulates RBCAA for the solid work it has done in its first ten years, and for the future, Amandla!"
Jim Phelps (Chairman, ZEAL)

"The most important for me has been the working together of the community, Government Departments and industry. I believe we have done something very unique"
Fred Phillips (uMhlathuze Municipality)

"We have raised awareness of air quality issues far beyond what they ever were. The fact that we can now see the Municipal Authorities talking about "no-go" areas is quite a step forward, because that whole concept of "no-go" areas came from the Association and from the use of our model to demonstrate pollution levels."
John Selby (Founder Member & Chairman 2000- 2004)

"The positioning of any future industries in the city should be done so that there is no further increase in pollution levels over the residential areas."
Chairman's report 2003

"The future of the Association will be to maintain vigilance on new developments but also to encourage the existing operations in Richards Bay to plan for emission reduction programmes."
Chairman's Report 2004

"The situation is such that we believe there is evidence of a steady deterioration in the air quality in Richards Bay, which in certain areas has reached the point where no further industrial or residential developments should be allowed to occur."
Chairman's report 2005

"Emission reduction programmes and the establishment of non-emitting industries are crucial to the growth of the City of uMhlathuze and the health and well being of its residents"
Chairman's Report 2006

"The success of the RBCAA is a victory for public pressure and community involvement!"
Sandy Camminga (Founder Member)

Who we are

The Richards Bay Clean Air Association (RBCAA), is a Section 21 (not for gain) Company, that was established in 1997 as a result of public concerns regarding the levels of air pollution in Richards Bay.

The success of the RBCAA lies in the commitment and dedication of its members and the level of service delivery by Ecoserv. This together with the unique relationship between industry, authorities and the public has ensured that the RBCAA boasts one of the most successful, most accurate and best maintained ambient monitoring systems in Southern Africa.

Founder Members

- GEOF BLEWETT – AECI now AAFC
- HARALD SCHRODER (DR) – Bayside Aluminium
- ELIZABETH WOOD – Pollution Liaison Group
- GERHARDUS DU PLESSIS – IOF now Foskor
- PETER LEAH - Mondi
- FRED PHILLIPS – uMhlathuze Municipality
- GERRIT COETZEE - DEAT
- SANDY CAMMINGA - Resident
- CHARLOTTE SULLIVAN - Resident
- JOHN SELBY – RBM

Current Members

There are currently 23 members. Of these 16 are from industry.

- AAFC
- Bayside Aluminium
- Exxaro KZN Sands
- Felixton Cane Growers Association
- Foskor
- Hillside Aluminium
- Island View Storage
- Lafarge
- Mhlathuze Water
- Mondi Business Paper
- Mondi Packaging
- National Port Authority
- Richards Bay Coal Terminal
- Richards Bay Minerals
- Tongaat – Hulett Sugar
- Tata Steel
- Bay Hospital
- City of uMhlathuze
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
- Founder Member (S.Camminga)
- Honourary Founder Member (P.Leah)
- Richards Bay Ratepayers and Residents Association
- Zululand Environmental Alliance



What we do

The RBCAA monitors and predicts air quality within the uMhlathuze Municipal area and makes recommendations on air quality issues. The Association is an advisory body with no regulatory powers. Decisions about air quality remain the responsibility of Government.

How we came to be

The proximity of a number of key industries to the residential areas has increasingly been a cause for concern, particularly from an environmental perspective. A petition against an emission incident at Indian Ocean Fertilisers (now Foskor) in 1994 that forced the evacuation of the central business district became the turning point that galvanised public pressure on Government to focus on air pollution issues in Richards Bay.

Aim

From the outset our aim has been to develop an effective tool that would assist in the management of air quality in Richards Bay, in accordance with the principal of improving the environment for the benefit of all, we have succeeded way beyond our wildest expectations!