

Sumitomo Rubber champions community development with school borehole project

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Tyre manufacturer, Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA), recently partnered with Gift of the Givers to provide running water to a KwaZulu-Natal school that has not had any for the past five years. Overflow water can now also be supplied to the surrounding community.



Amancamakazana Primary School caters for 1,882 learners, many of them children of employees at SRSA's Ladysmith tyre manufacturing plant. The school now has running water for the first time in five years thanks to the borehole project completed by SRSA and Gift of the Givers.



Overflow water will be supplied to the local community provided there is sufficient water supply and storage at the school.

Joanne de Freitas, CSI manager of SRSA, which manufactures the Dunlop, Falken and Sumitomo tyre brands, said giving back to the community is an ongoing priority. With education being a key pillar in SRSA's corporate social investment strategy, the team came across Amancamakazana Primary School, in the St Chads district of Ezakheni, nearly 15km from the tyre manufacturer's state-of-the-art Ladysmith plant.

When the SRSA team found that the school, which has 1,882 learners, has had no running water for the past five years, they were eager to get involved and assist with their water dilemma.

"Many parents of learners at the school are employed by SRSA at our Ladysmith factory and their hard work and commitment to the company makes projects like this possible," said SRSA CEO, Lubin Ozoux.

"It goes without saying that drinking water and sanitation are basic human rights. Over and above this, water was desperately required to protect their staff and learners from Covid-19," he added.

De Freitas explained that with the assistance of the borehole specialist team from Gift of the Givers, SRSA were given the green light to drill for a borehole at the school. The extensive process involved a hydrologist to assess that the area was suitable for drilling within the school grounds.

"We are grateful to the school's head mistress, Mrs Sibisi, for allowing the team to drill in five different areas of the school with their large drilling equipment, showing everyone's commitment to find water. It was a noisy and very dusty exercise on the school grounds, but on the fifth attempt, we hit water!" she says.

The borehole water samples were sent for bacteriological, chemical and physical tests to determine whether it could be

used as drinking water or for sanitation purposes only.



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Saying cheers to running water are Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA) CEO Lubin Ozoux, principal of Amancamakazana Primary School, Mrs Sibisi, SRSA CSI manager Joanne De Freitas, and Jaaved Khan of Gift of the Givers.

“We are pleased to report that the water was passed for drinking and complies with South African National Standards SANS241. This is a requirement for safe drinking water and the water needs to be regularly tested. The water is pumping at 1,200 litres per hour and has subsequently been rerouted through to all the taps, bathrooms and admin offices of the school,” says De Freitas.

In addition, the water pipes have been extended with taps installed to supply water to the adjoining community. Overflow water will be supplied to the local community provided there is sufficient water supply and storage at the school.

Borehole water has numerous benefits including being rich in minerals and chemical free. Borehole supply increases property value, decreases the demand on the municipal water supply and allows for growing of fresh vegetables.

“SRSA will continue to look for sustainable projects in 2022 and beyond. Our focus will be in the Ladysmith region and we will be carrying out future projects under our CSI Education pillar. We are committed to improving the quality of education and educational facilities in the district by supporting various projects,” says De Freitas.

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