

# Watts on

The Official Newsletter of NamPower *Edition 1 - 2020*

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NamPower Centre 15 Luther Street, Windhoek; P.O Box 2864, Windhoek, Namibia;  
**Tel:** +264 61 205 4111; **E-mail:** [register@nampower.com.na](mailto:register@nampower.com.na)



# Employees Graduate Through RPL



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process by which individuals receive recognition for experience, skills and knowledge acquired on the job or informally in the past.

The process, which is often used by regulatory bodies or training institutions, assesses a person's skills or knowledge (acquired informally outside of a classroom or education environment) for the purpose of recognising competence against a given set of competencies.

RPL in Namibia is regulated by the Namibia Training Authority (NTA), as per the National RPL Policy.

*NamPower introduced the implementation of RPL in 2014 through its Education, Training & Development (ETD) Section under the Human Capital Department, and is currently busy with technical jobs in Peronmes grades 18 – 13.*

*NamPower's RPL process is guided and regulated by the NamPower RPL Policy which is aligned with the NTA's RPL Policy.*

NamPower's technical employees make up the majority of its workforce and among this group, are a great number of technical employees who have worked for the company for 20 or more years and have acquired extensive knowledge and skills, but have no formal qualifications. These employees are considered as one of the company's greatest assets as it is believed that these employees are among the richest in company and industry knowledge.

Although all NamPower employees undergo learning in the workplace through on the job training, (unfortunately) not all training is standardised and most of it occurs informally as a part of the work process and is usually not assessed or certified. Thus, this lack of formal certification or recognition of skills lead to

a myriad of issues such as slow or no career progression, lack of advancement in learning and demotivated employees.

NamPower's internal RPL program aims to address these issues by ensuring and ascertaining competences through assessments of the skills required for a job level. ETD supports these employees by designing, developing and conducting these assessments, thus empowering these employees to compete for positions/ promotions with those who have formal qualifications. This process recognises NamPower employees' acquired experience, skills and knowledge which are then assessed and equated to a formal Grade 10 certificate qualification.

ETD also supports employees by helping identify existing skills gaps for career advancement and/ or promotions.

Since the inception of the RPL program, at least

# Employees Graduate Through RPL *(continued)*

The following is the list of RPL graduates:

**AMD Grade 13**

Toivo Frans  
Opperman Rodney  
Julie Berend  
Gustav Armas  
Ndjabula Paulus

**NetOPs Grade 14**

Haman Johannes  
Haufiku Mateus  
Pameni Bernadino  
Hinda Isak  
Oswald Moche  
Kooper Hermanus  
Paulus Lukas  
R Kahungi  
F Kavari  
J Shaimange  
J Simon  
G Erastus  
L Kupembona  
T Angula  
E Nghishiyala  
L David  
P Namolo  
W Sindimba  
S Haidula  
Lazarus Kandukwa  
Bartolomeus Ishitile  
Josua N Ndevahoma  
Edward Ngairo  
Simon Mokhatu

Nelson Tjिताura  
Modostus N Namyome  
L Van Wyk

**GENERATION**

**Anixas PowerStation  
Grade 13**

Tomas Kashongo

**Ruacana PowerStation  
Grade 13**

Simon Nangolo  
Nduuviteko Nduuviteko  
Michael Simeon  
Ikasha Imasa  
Lukas Johannes  
Tate-ati Mokahwa  
Shipopyeni Shikoyeni  
Taumoneni Neingo  
Hinandendu Ambuga  
Jason Letuvene  
Kosmos Hidulka  
Petrus Namushala

**MWVS Brakwater Grade 13**

Amadila Nahum  
Rudolp Uirab

**Security Ruacana Grade 13**

Veiko Haupindi

100 employees from various sections across all regional NamPower offices in the country have been assessed. These employees are from various sections such as Stores, Security, Network Operations, Power System Construction, Motor Vehicle Workshops, Asset Maintenance, Ruacana Power Station and Anixas Power Station. Some employees have been found “Competent” and received certification, while others have been found to be “Not Yet Competent”.

ETD had its first RPL graduation ceremony in 2019. All employees who have been found competent since the inception until 2018, received their certificates at the ceremony. A second RPL graduation ceremony was held in Windhoek on 7 February 2020.

In addition, ETD has deemed it pertinent to have internally trained and qualified RPL assessors to assess

employees undergoing the RPL process. As such, NamPower through the Maccauvlei Learning Academy, trained 70 employees of whom 30 have been successfully assessed and certified. These assessors will be registered on the NTA national database, and will now conduct formal RPL assessments within NamPower, and nationwide.

The ETD Section continues to carry out the RPL process in NamPower in an effort to ensure that every employee who seeks skills validation, are recognised and awarded for their invaluable knowledge and experiences.

Looking to the future, the ETD section aims to be a centre of excellence and intends to expand the RPL to include higher education levels. ETD is already involved with adult based education, especially on the literacy aspect.



# Rural Electrification

## 30 years after Independence



NamPower continues to play its part in the realisation of Namibia's rural electrification, 30 years after the country's independence. The Rural Electrification Programme was initiated just after independence in 1990, to extend the national grid and provide electricity to rural communities. The programme targets rural communities and unelectrified public institutions countrywide.

The primary objective of the Rural Electrification Programme is to provide electricity to these communities, in order to improve the standard of living, increase economic and commercial

activities, thereby reducing unemployment through job creation, improve the quality of health and educational services, combat adverse environmental practices (deforestation) and reduce the rate of rural-urban migration.

To date, a total number of 2167 public institutions and more than 50 500 homesteads were electrified since independence, under the ministry's rural electrification programme. This means that more than 90% of public institutions and more than 20% of rural homesteads are now having access to electricity. The government has spent over N\$1.5 billion toward the rural

electrification programme. This is an immense achievement, given that at independence, rural electrification stood at 0%.

NamPower's decision to join the Rural Electrification Programme was aimed at augmenting the government's efforts to improve the citizens' standard of life. In line with its mandate and corporate social responsibility policies, NamPower understands that to extend power to rural communities in Namibia will lead to the improvement in the quality of life and provide opportunities for economic development.

*As early as 1991, NamPower started investing in rural areas and together with the Ministry of Mines and Energy, embarked upon the implementation of the Rural Electrification Programme. The utility steadily increased its rural electrification budget to N\$20 million from N\$15 million since the 2011 Financial Year, and in the 2012/2013 Financial Year, an additional N\$9 million was spent on providing and installing prepaid metres to village councils in the Southern Region. The budget allocated to the programme has since been increasing over the past few years.*

# Rural Electrification, 30 years after Independence *(continued)*

Priority areas to be electrified are normally chosen through the offices of the different regional councils and based on that, NamPower electrifies the identified areas. This is done considering available funds.

The latest rural area electrified under the NamPower Rural Electrification programme, is the Eiseb 10 area in the Otjombinde Constituency of the Omaheke Region.

Eiseb 10 is situated about 140 kilometres from Tallymanus and approximately 380 kilometres from Gobabis, and is an exit point to Gam. Government entities found at Eiseb 10 are a school, clinic, police station, water and forestry sub-office and a shop.

Omaheke regional governor Festus Ueitele, said with the latest NamPower connection, clinics, police stations and almost all schools in his region have been electrified with the exception of one school.

*“As leadership, we are thankful of NamPower’s social responsibility gestures which continue to lighten the lives of our people in the region. There are however, some rural areas in some regions that are not connected to electricity,” Ueitele related.*

Councillor of the Otjombinde Constituency, Katjanaa Kaurivi, said his community received NamPower’s gesture with open arms, as they are now becoming part of the modern world through the rural electrification drive.

Kaurivi said, visible differences can be detected among Eiseb 10 residents and those of the outlying areas which are not connected to electricity.

“Electricity brought relief to our residents. People now can watch television, own fridges

and electric stoves and are not entirely dependent on firewood anymore and can even store their perishable goods for longer,” the councillor said.

Upon commissioning of the project, 75 households benefited from the project of which eight were businesses, while government infrastructure that were electrified are the Eiseb Primary School, the clinic, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry sub-office and the police station.

The project was constructed in two phases, the first phase started in July 2015 until November 2016, while the second phase commenced in December 2016 and was completed in September 2018 and officially handed over by the contractor to NamPower and the Omaheke Regional Council in February 2019.

The Ministry of Mines and Energy says, carrying out this noble gesture is not easy, as the realisation thereof is challenging, due to insufficient funds, budgetary constraints and lengthy tender processes. In addition, there is a shortage of qualified electrical contracting companies, as most of the electrical companies are SMEs that struggle to complete the rural electrification projects within the planned time frames.

Most of the required material and equipment are sourced from South Africa and takes between three to four months to acquire, while grid electrification cannot reach communities living in remote areas. However, off-grid electricity such as solar technologies can be used.

The rural electrification policy, stipulates that only households living within a 500m radius from the transformers point can be supplied with electricity.

Despite all these challenges, both the Government of the Republic of Namibia and NamPower will continue and will make sure that development reaches all corners of the country.





# Progress on Omburu Power Plant



*NamPower is well into the implementation of its new five-year Corporate Strategy and Business Plan (2019-2023). The strategy is geared towards ensuring reliable power supply, whilst improving local generation. It is NamPower's intention to deliver a sustainable power supply supported by a least-cost tariff path that will facilitate economic growth.*

Therefore, as part of the Strategy and Business Plan and in line with the National Integrated Resource Plan (NIRP), the Minister of Mines and Energy approved the development of 220MW of generation capacity with the emphasis of the generation mix being least cost, of which 150MW has been allocated to NamPower and 70 MW allocated to Independent Power Producers.

As part of NamPower's allocation, a 20MW photovoltaic (PV) plant, known as the Omburu 20 MW PV Power Plant will be developed, owned and operated by NamPower. The Plant will be situated approximately 12 km south-east of Omaruru and will be equipped with a tracking system that follows the sun during the day in order to maximise the energy production.

With the project completion date envisaged for the first quarter of 2021, NamPower's Project Team is well on track in ensuring that the Power Plant is completed and commissioned by the said date.

The procurement of the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor is being administered by the Central Procurement Board of Namibia (CPBN) on behalf of NamPower. The Bid submission deadline was on 28 February 2020 and a total of 11 Bids were received. The evaluation of the Bids received is currently underway. The EPC Contractor will provide a turn-key solution to NamPower and

will require a minimum local content spend of 10% of the total EPC contract value.

Apart from supporting the renewable commitments as prescribed in the Renewable Energy Policy and National Energy Policy, NamPower's renewable energy generation projects will mean a reduction in the overall NamPower tariff to the customer through the introduction of affordable "new-build" renewable energy to the national grid.

In addition, to the Omburu 20MW PV Power Project, NamPower is also in the process of developing the 40 MW Otjikoto Biomass power station, the 50 MW Firm (Anixas II) power station and the 40 MW Luderitz wind power plant.



# Abuid Kaura

## Downs Tools



**Abuid Kaura**

Abuid Kaura, the first black engineer at the then SWAWEK, downs tools at the end of February, after 24 years of continuous service at NamPower. Abuid joined the corporation at a time when previously disadvantaged Namibian engineers were a scarce commodity. He was among the privileged few who went through the SWAWEK-NamPower transition, shortly after independence.

Abuid's first encounter with SWAWEK was at the end of 1994 when he applied for vacation work while he was a student, and managed to get the opportunity. After completing his degree in electrical engineering at the University of Natal in Durban, South Africa in 1995, he joined the then-SWAWEK in 1996.

The jovial Abuid's journey in NamPower kicked off as an Assistant Engineer at PTM&C in the Transmission division at Brakwater, in 1996. In 1997, he became the Resident Engineer at the Ruacana Power Station until 1999. Abuid's steady rise in the company continued when in the year 2000, he became Senior Engineer at the Technical Support Services of Generations at the Van Eck Power Station in Windhoek. He held the position until July 2006. The hardworking engineer became the Senior Manager for Network Operations in the Transmission Technical Business Unit in 2006, the position he held until his retirement.

His fondest memories of his stay at NamPower are of his many travels all over the world.

*"In Namibia I have been everywhere, almost everywhere. I have been following the lines since I started with network operations, 13 and a half years ago. And I have been everywhere and then NamPower allowed me to see the world. I was in the States, Europe, Asia, Russia, China and South Korea. NamPower took me to the world, "Abuid reminisced.*

Throughout the years a lot changed at NamPower from the experiences Abuid was used to when he first started. Significant among the changes is the procurement process which Abuid is not so fond of. "With the previous procurement process even before SAPP, if you had a flat tyre you called the transport colleague in Windhoek and immediately the tyre was already on the way. Nowadays your car will be parked in garages for weeks, months

waiting for orders to be sent from this side to that side," he related.

Abuid fondly remembers the previous car scheme.

"Things changed a lot, since the olden days especially the change of car schemes. With the old car scheme you felt like you worked for a very nice company, because when we had the car scheme, where we had the scheme not the allowance, the cars that we were driving belonged to NamPower, although it was registered in your name. NamPower maintained the cars. When you had a breakdown, they would organise someone to tow or fix or the company would come and bring you another car. It felt good but it had its disadvantages too, you only had that one car. With the allowance, you can keep the funds or buy a small car and use the rest of the funds for something else," Abuid added.

After his retirement, for Abuid, business will continue as usual at his 2 000 hectare farm in the Outjo area, as he has been a part time farmer for the past 20 years. The only difference, will be the fact that he will be on the farm every day and not only on weekends and holidays. He predominantly farms with cattle, goats and sheep.

Abuid's advice to his former colleagues is to continue "burning the NamPower light".

"We have been able to keep the lights on. We had problems here and there but we could manage to get the system back online. My advice would be keep on what we've been doing and just to make it better,".

# Jurgen Van Biljon

says Goodbye



Jurgen Van Biljon

Jurgen Van Biljon still remembers the first day he reported for duty at SWAWEK on 1 February 1981 at 07:15, as if it were yesterday. Thirty-nine years later, on 28 February 2020, Jurgen gracefully retired from the company that he grew to love and diligently help build, through the different capacities and roles he has played throughout his 39 year career at NamPower.

Prior to joining SWAWEK, Jurgen completed his apprenticeship in Pretoria, South Africa, and subsequently found employment at TCL (Kombat Mine) where he worked for two years. When he joined NamPower in 1981, he never looked back.

"I stayed at NamPower for all these years because the company took good care of me. The benefits that come with being a NamPower employee have sustained me throughout the years", he says.

Jurgen began his journey as an Electrician at Brakwater Workshop, now known as Asset Maintenance Department. Twenty-six years old at the time, his responsibilities as a new NamPower recruit included wiring meter boards and panels, and conducting maintenance on breakers and transformers. During this period, Jurgen received his authorisation as an Appointed Operator.

In 1985, he was promoted to the position of District Supervisor, based in Windhoek. A position he held for seven years before moving to Okahandja in the same capacity. He returned to Windhoek three years later and was promoted

to Superintendent: Windhoek Area, responsible for Gobabis, Okahandja, Omaruru, Swakopmund and Rehoboth areas. Finally in 2002, Jurgen was appointed as a Technical Advisor: Transmission. The position he retires in.

*When asked what advise he would leave for the rest of his colleagues, Jurgen has the following to say: "Be on time! Because being late is a great indicator of indiscipline. Respect one another and take ownership of your responsibilities. Always look at what you can do for NamPower and not just what NamPower can do for you".*

With the many delightful memories that he has created in his journey, Jurgen still fondly reminisces on the times of SWAWEK, and hopes that yesteryears camaraderie among employees, hard work and discipline, would come back.

*"We all have the responsibility to ensure that NamPower continues to remain a self-sufficient and contributing company".*

Jurgen worked his last day at NamPower on 28 February 2020. He is excited to spend his retirement travelling Namibia with his wife.



# Willem Van Vuuren

## looks forward to Retirement



Willem van Vuuren

Willem van Vuuren's journey started 27 years and two months ago, on 1 January 1993, at the then SWAW EK. With just a few more days until his journey (with NamPower) ends, Willem is a man who is very excited about his retirement.

*"I will no longer be on standby. The only standby I will be on is for my wife, and I don't need to be at work at seven-thirty. My responsibilities would now have changed. I will be between Windhoek and Henties Bay, fishing and hunting, and just enjoying life," a very excited Willem said.*

Willem started as an electrician at Brakwater, and later on advanced from an Electrician to a Senior Engineering Assistant. He is currently a Principal Engineering Assistant, the position he will be retiring in. "During our time, we had to go through all the ranks, there was no jumping stages, there was no promotions left, right and centre like now," Willem related.

He says, the 27 years at NamPower had a lot of memories, both good and bad, however

when he looks back he can only relate that NamPower was very good to him, as it gave him opportunities that other companies might not have been able to give him. What Willem knows is hard work, and reaping fruits thereof.

"The Bible tells you through hard work will you earn your bread. We were on standby day and night, for 24 hours. As I am sitting here, I am 27 years and two months on standby, everyday whether I am on holiday, Easter or during Christmas, doesn't matter, I stay on standby, you always stay in control," he added.

Willem remembers how they used to be called out nights in and out, where they would immediately rush to the call of duty - even with the clothes that they had on. He recalls a specific day when they were called out, and he only came back four days later - wearing the same clothes.

"I remember the day when there was a big outage in Omaruru, where the town's people were so angry with us that they did not even want to sell us hamburgers and Johan Hough had to bring hamburgers from Windhoek. There was no budging when you were called out. Those days there was nothing of 'I cannot go now' when you were called out. Many times I had to buy myself underwear on the road, you stay with the same clothes and just change into your new underwear," he laughed.

While working in Tsumeb, Willem related how he would be redirected to Ruacana and the NamPower plane would come and take them to Ruacana and while in Ruacana, another outage would be reported in Luderitz and then they would fly straight from Ruacana to Luderitz.

*"That's how we used to work... we were married to our work and if you didn't have a good supporting wife you would suffer a lot. You are*

*working with electricity and you can't afford to make mistakes, otherwise you would die. You know you always think sober," Willem reminisced.*

The veteran electrician said, during the earlier days people at NamPower were more cautious. According to Willem, that time there was no SHEW office but everyone knew the risks associated with the job, and there were not a lot of accidents as compared to today. He says NamPower workers back then were responsible unlike today, where workers just want to sit on a desk, behind a computer with no other responsibility.

"That's how people became bad, especially the youth of today who think they have studied and their studies give them experience. With us, experience was gained through hard work but today people are just job-hopping, what experience do they gain? Nothing. And that's why our old guys have a lot of service and experience, because they believed that they start at one place and gain experience so that they can plough back that experience in NamPower," Willem stated.

Willem wants to remind his fellow NamPower employees that work should always come first. "We made sure that the lights are on, so those staying behind should make sure to keep them on. It is only when every employee plays their part, that enable's NamPower to power the nation. But unfortunately, some employees do not want to do their small part," he said. Willem believes that NamPower looks after its employees but that its employees do not look after the company, as they do not want to walk the extra mile for the company.

"People should look after NamPower," was the retiring electrician's message.

NamPower wishes Willem a restful and joyous retirement.



# NamPower in Pictures

