

Guidelines for contributors

The Water Wheel is a bi-monthly publication aimed at promoting public understanding of South African water and sanitation issues. Targeted readership is wide, incorporating scientists, researchers, water professionals, farmers and teachers.

The Water Wheel covers the entire spectrum of the water and sanitation sector, including (but not limited to):

- Water resource management (including climate, hydrology, surface- and groundwater)
- Water use in agriculture
- Water and the environment (both surface and groundwater)
- Water and society
- Water and health (including water pollution)
- Water supply and wastewater treatment (both domestic and industrial/mining)

Preference is given to articles focusing on new or ongoing research and development, such as new science/technological achievements, implementation of research or new engineering projects, new policies/regulation and water sector trends. Articles must be written with a general, non-technical audience in mind. Please avoid overly technical jargon or language that is too casual. *The Water Wheel* does not peer-review articles and scientific papers will not be accepted. Authors are accountable for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of their content.

Article **length** must be between 800 and 2000 words, and provided in Word. Longer articles may be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

Articles must preferably be accompanied by **high-resolution photographs** or other visuals/graphics. Photographs **must not** be pasted in the Word file but provided separately as attachments, via wettransfer or Google link. Photographs must be original sized and sent in jpg or pdf format (minimum 300 dpi, no less than A5 size, no smaller than 500 kb). As far as possible the source of visuals (i.e. photographer name or source) must be provided. Gaining copyright of photographs or images obtained from other sources other than the author/contributor will rest with the author/contributor.

Articles must be submitted at least **one month** prior to publication date.

Final approval of articles rests with the Editor and all articles will be subject to editing for style, length and grammar. Kindly note, *the Water Wheel* retains final decision rights over headlines [Note: once approved and published, copyright of the article and accompanying visuals will rest with the Water Research Commission]

We understand that AI can be useful, however, all content published by *the Water Wheel* must be original. Use of AI for grammar or editing purposes (e.g. Grammarly), is, however, permissible. Authors/contributors are asked to share whether and how they've used these tools with the Editor.

Aspects to consider when writing for non-technical audiences:

- **Start with why it matters.** Lead with real-world impact. Why should someone care? Link the science to everyday life, community issues or big challenges (e.g. water security, climate change).
- **Avoid jargon** (or explain it simply). Replace technical terms with plain language. If you must use a term, explain it in one short, clear sentence.
- **Tell a story.** Frame the science as a narrative: Problem → Research → Solution → Impact
- **Keep sentences short and clear.** Avoid long, dense explanations. One idea per sentence works best.
- **Focus on people.** Include researchers, communities or beneficiaries. Human elements make science more engaging.
- **Highlight key findings,** not all details. You don't need every method or statistic, only the most important takeaways.
- **Use an active, engaging tone.** Write as if you're explaining something interesting, not submitting a report.

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