

## **Public Works technical staff on route to Gough Island**

Eleven (11) Public Works artisans are on route to the Gough Island, in the South Atlantic Ocean to do maintenance of the weather data collection centre in the southern hemisphere.

Speaking during the send-off ceremony in Cape Town, team leader Mr Kim Gierdien said the team will do piling at the upper air area under the storage tank, piling at the brown store and at the refuge area (e-base); the servicing of the crane; securing of the base areas (rusted areas), fixing of roof leaks; repair work to shower cubicles and cat walks (lift where possible), and the fixing of generators.

Mr Gierdien said the Department is solely responsible for infrastructure; to ensure that the people who are working there have accommodation.

Speaking on behalf of the Department of Environmental Affairs, which is responsible for the Gough Island on behalf of Government, Mr Adrian Dreyer said their responsibility was to ensure that scientists do their work effectively. Mr Dreyer said the Island was very important to South Africa as it provides important data for weather services in terms of shipping and weather forecasting.

“As we are managing and administrating the Island on behalf of the government of South Africa, we need to ensure that the South African Weather Service’s scientists are getting enough support and that is why the Department of Public Works is playing an important role,” said Dreyer.

Gough Island has been maintained as one of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS), GSN and GUAN stations.

The base on Gough Island is the only global reference weather research centre in the southern hemisphere. The data collected from the Island proved to have made a huge impact on the accuracy of the surface synoptic charts and therefore the forecasts that were provided for the South Atlantic region, benefitting weather predictions over these areas as well as over southern Africa. The island remains the one sub-Antarctic reference position within the vast data sparse area of the Atlantic Ocean. Data is communicated directly to the South African Weather Service in South Africa, following which the data is transmitted internationally for use in global weather predictions, as well as climate models.