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Eco-friendly

The Braamhoek Consultants joint venture won Consulting Engineers SA's category of Engineering Excellence for its work on the Bedford Dam. The dam forms part of the Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme. The joint venture is between GIBB Engineering & Science, Knight Piésold and SSI Engineers & Environmental Consultants.

Colin Logan, divisional manager for dams, hydropower and tunnelling at GIBB and project manager for the Ingula Pumped Storage scheme, says the dam project is a concrete-face rock-fill dam located just outside Ladysmith on the Wilge River.

He says the project is effectively a giant battery. Coal-fired power stations do not raise or lower their output depending on demand, but instead op-



Jeremy Gilpin

erate constantly at their most efficient level. This means that in off-peak times there is too much power in the national grid and in peak times there is too little.

During the peak times water is released from the dam and it is used to generate hydroelectric power to feed into the national grid and help make up for the shortfall. The reverse occurs during off-peak consumption periods when surplus power in the grid is used to pump water back into the dam, storing power for later use. ■

