Energy efficiency puts cash back in your pocket

Energy efficiency is often seen as a 'nice to have' or only for 'big corporations' but not applicable at home or to small to medium businesses because it is expensive or not necessary.

"It is this kind of thinking that delays the implementation of efficient energy solutions across the board – from home to skyscraper to factory," explains Barry Bredenkamp, General Manager Energy Efficiency for the South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI).

"Load-shedding focussed South Africans on the need to monitor their electricity consumption and plan efficient usage and it appears that some people have gone back to the idea of 'I'll just pay'. Recently however, load-shedding threats have resurfaced and rolling blackouts are an ever-increasing possibility, whilst the price of electricity is likely going to continue to be increased at double-digit figures for at least the next five years, as Eskom struggles to recoup its losses.

"South Africa relies on coal for about 90% of its energy input, resulting in a large amount of carbon dioxide emissions. This pollution, concentrated around the power stations mainly in the Mpumalanga area, is not caused by the power stations alone but by all South Africans, as they are generating the pollution through their excessive use of coal-based energy. These emissions contribute to the changing climate patterns we are now seeing develop in South Africa – climate change is a reality today, not some time in the distant future. Every kilogram of coal burnt releases approximately one kilogram of carbon dioxide.

"Most appliances and machinery come with an energy rating, from A (the most efficient) to G (least efficient). There is a corresponding price difference but what both consumers and procurement departments fail to take into account, is that the energy saved over the life of the item will outweigh the higher initial cost – it is about life cycle costs and not just the initial purchase price.

"Now is the time for everyone to consider mixed energy resources, at home and work, energy efficiency and what these mean in terms of savings on the monthly budget and saving the planet," concludes Bredenkamp.

Ends 356 words

About SANEDI

The South African government established SANEDI to direct, monitor and conduct applied energy R&D, demonstration and deployment, as well as to undertake specific measures to promote the uptake of green energy and energy efficiency in South Africa. Its mission is to use applied and energy research and resource efficiency to develop innovative, integrated solutions that will catalyse growth and prosperity to meet its vision of sustainable living for growth and prosperity in Africa. For more information, go to www.sacccs.org.za.