

## **GREENING THE HOME – “THE ISSUE OF ENERGY”**

Since load-shedding and black-outs and the rise and rise of electricity bills much has been written about specific things one can do, in the home, to reduce the amount of energy used as well as cutting costs. So, the question is how to approach this subject from a different angle without regurgitating the same information as, by this time, most households are doing their bit.

A concerted effort needs to be made to move away from coal-fired electricity to more sustainable options of renewable energy. This means harnessing energy from the sun. The technology is advanced and the costs are coming down rapidly. All we need to do is to commit to using it. The pay-back time for energy-efficiency measures are short as over time you save money.

Our homes are places in which we indirectly generate much of our carbon footprint and this is the area over which we have the most control over the choices we make. This can trigger a chain of events upstream and downstream of our homes, through the economy and the environment.

A study conducted by Eskom reveals that geysers gobble up about 30% of the electricity we use and space heating and lighting 19% each. For every 1,000 kWh of electricity saved we prevent 540kg of coal being burnt, 1,300 litres of water being used, the release of 970 kg carbon dioxide and 9 kg of acid rain-causing sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere.

We need to aspire to attain energy that has very few environmental impacts. For the climate this would mean a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. This is the time to become a zero-carbon household and change our technology and behaviour to each do our bit to tackle climate change effectively.

The core goal of a sustainable lifestyle is to leave the world for future generations in the same way we found it – if not better. The best gift we can give our children is the habit of a value system that comes from a sustainable lifestyle.

There are two highly recommended books which are easy to understand on this and other matters of reducing carbon emissions. They are:

- ◆ Zipplies, R. 2008. “Bending the Curve”. Published by Africa Geographic (Pty) Ltd. Cape Town.
- ◆ The “Smart Living Handbook” 2008. Cape Town. More information can be obtained from the Environmental Resource Management Department on 021 487 2284 or [smartliving@capetown.gov.za](mailto:smartliving@capetown.gov.za)

This article has been compiled by Jeanette Stewart. 033 330 5980 or 079 184 5011 or [enviro.education@telkomsa.net](mailto:enviro.education@telkomsa.net)