

How greener buildings impact our environment

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Have you ever considered the benefits of a house with reduced energy demands? A house that has walls, roofs and floors, especially designed to make the smallest possible impact on the environment? Perhaps not all of us are aware of the harm our 'normal buildings' have on the environment, and the price that we will pay. Opting for greener and more sustainable house designs cuts maintenance costs and improves conditions for both us and the planet.

According to the Green Building Council of South Africa, buildings account for a large amount of land and they consume 40% of the world's energy. Green buildings can reduce this consumption by 30-70%. South Africa has already made notable progress towards converting to more sustainable buildings, with a number of big corporate brands converting their corporate buildings to greener buildings.

Green building practices have expanded, and complement the classical building design concerns of economy, utility, durability and comfort. The common objective is that green building practices aim to cut the overall effect of industrialisation on the environment, and in extension, human health.

The topics of green buildings and sustainable living will form part of the Smart Cities Summit discussions. It's estimated that in 20 years from now, 60% of people will move to urban areas. It is said that in 2020, South Africa will experience a water crisis and energy prices are expected to increase by more than 53% by the end 2012, raising the issue of load shedding, water shortages and sanitation problems at households. Converting to greener buildings will improve this situation, as environmentally friendly buildings synchronises with the natural features and resources like solar power for energy and automatic underground waste collection, and the collection and filtration of runoff water.

At the Smart Cities Summit speakers will address these and other issues, related to converting to smarter cities. The Summit's speakers and delegates will focus on discussing options for long term sustainable city smartness. Attend the Smart Cities Summit on 30 & 31 October 2012 in Johannesburg and join in the discussions. For more information please visit www.smartcities-africa.co.za or contact Haley Fletcher on haley.fletcher@topco.co.za or 086 000 9590.

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