

# Energy intensive users prepared to reduce demand

Mining Weekly Online reports that power utility Eskom's biggest industrial customers, mainly mining and manufacturing companies, indicated that they would scale down demand to prevent rolling blackouts if the country's electricity situation deteriorated.

Earlier this week Eskom cautioned that it was operating at an extremely low reserve margin. Eskom spokesperson Hilary Joffe told Mining Weekly Online that the reduced operational margin was the result of up to 13% of the utility's capacity being out of service, due to planned maintenance.

"We are undertaking a 'deliver strategy' resulting in increased planned maintenance being undertaken to mitigate the existing backlog. This, coupled with unforeseen system failures, had put the system under significant pressure," Joffe said. Energy Intensive User Group (EIUG) chairperson Mike Rossouw pointed out to Mining Weekly Online that Eskom had not yet requested industry to reduce electricity demand, but merely cautioned that it was operating at low reserve margins. Chamber of Mines spokesperson Jabu Maphalala said that the mining industry was aware of the tight power situation. He emphasised since the 2008 electricity crisis, the mining industry had made significant reductions in its electricity demand and is currently optimising its energy usage.

Since 2008, the world's largest miner BHP Billiton, with significant aluminium smelting operations in Southern Africa, has voluntarily reduced its base load power consumption at the smelters by 10% to assist Eskom's supply position. Diversified miner Anglo American indicated that it is positive about the fact that there had been early notification of potential load shedding, and as a result the company have prepared for the eventuality. "Anglo American will make the required adjustments when necessary," spokesperson Hulisani Rasivhaga said in a statement.

Read the [full article](https://www.miningweekly.com) on [www.miningweekly.com](https://www.miningweekly.com).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>