

Solar investments pay off for Camps Bay High School

Camps Bay High School has implemented a solar energy system that not only ensures uninterrupted operation during load shedding periods but also generates surplus electricity for the broader community.



"In 2020, Camps Bay High School took its first step towards energy resilience by installing 80 solar panels, a forward-thinking move to curtail electricity costs and uphold our commitment to responsible energy consumption. However, the increasing frequency and impact of load shedding prompted the School Governing Body to take decisive further action," explains school principal Louis Mostert.

This year, with a strategic allocation of R1.8m from its financial reserves, the school governing body (SGB) spearheaded the installation of a further 120 advanced solar panels, generating 100kW of electricity. The upgrade includes the integration of two 50kW inverters and two 40kWh batteries, securing the school's operation during extended load shedding periods.

The inverter, batteries, and solar panels in the new system come with guarantees of five, 10, and 25 years respectively, providing a secure and enduring power solution.

"With the sun now serving as our steadfast power source, we wave goodbye to the unsettling presence of load shedding. Camps Bay High School is now one of only a handful of schools in South Africa who can say that learning and school activities can carry on uninterrupted during load shedding," said Mostert.

"Our ability to ensure uninterrupted learning for our students, irrespective of external energy challenges, reaffirms our commitment to their education and well-being. We have not only empowered our school but our community as well."

Rigorous process

Following a rigorous tender process, NHD Solar was awarded the contract for providing the upgrading of the solar power system. The company is headed up by a school parent, Dean Tait, with installation services handled by Cinch Energy, and the panels themselves supplied by another school parent, Simon Campbell-Young and his company, CydTechsolar.com.

"The infrastructure empowers Camps Bay High School to generate an average of 450kWh of electricity daily, resulting in a noteworthy monthly saving of R49,140 under the current Eskom tariff structure. Through harnessing this surplus power, the school actively contributes to the electricity grid, generating revenue from excess energy and illuminating neighbouring residences and businesses," Tait explained.



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"Our system is seamlessly integrated with a user-friendly app, providing real-time insights into energy production, consumption, and storage. This app issues alerts and notifications for issue resolution and enables the school to optimise energy usage for maximum savings," he continues.

"It offers a comprehensive view of the power dynamics, including solar generation, grid utilisation, and total energy consumption. Additionally, it provides valuable insights into available stored power reserves during Eskom downtimes."

A catalyst for positive change

"This transformative action aligns with the school's vision of being a catalyst for positive change beyond its campus. Our comprehensive solar initiative is an investment that transcends immediate financial benefits. By generating surplus electricity that can be shared with our community, we are fostering resilience and collaboration," said Brian Williams, SGB business development manager and project leader.

"Through this commitment, we are not only energising our classrooms but also exemplifying our dedication to environmental responsibility. Furthermore, with the assurance of uninterrupted power, we ensure that learning never succumbs to the disruptions of load shedding, fortifying the education journey for our students and embodying the spirit of progress for all our community."

This system not only marks an end to Camps Bay High School's vulnerability to load shedding, but also underscores its role as a dynamic force for progress. Beyond financial savings, the school's solar venture has unlocked a new era of energy autonomy, echoing the school's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and community enrichment.

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