

Skom Emergency Shows Urgent Need For Solar Pv

The current Eskom emergency in which large users are asked to cut demand and consumers suffer from load shedding is “completely unacceptable” according to solar PV industry association SAPVIA chairperson Davin Chown.

Conditions are absolutely ideal for solar PV power generation in South Africa, says Chown, and he believes this is “a wake-up call to the government” to accelerate and grow the implementation of solar PV as a means of diversifying the power supply and reducing reliance on Eskom.

The current Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) for 2030 sets aside 45% for coal, 13% for nuclear, 13% for gas turbines, 8.5% for solar PV and 8.5% for wind power (with hydro, imports and pumped storage making up the balance) but Chown believes the renewable components should be increased and fast-tracked.

Solar PV currently is the fastest growing power generation technology in the world, with a huge uptake in Europe in particular, and is getting cheaper to deliver each year (capital costs are declining 8-10% per annum).

Chown points out that a recent Frost & Sullivan report states that solar PV is projected to achieve true cost parity with coal power (currently the cheapest per kWh) in terms of the levelised cost of energy (LCOE) in 2018 and will be the cheapest generating technology in SA by 2020 (R1.36 kWh as against R1.69 kWh for coal) while carrying none of the massive broader costs of coal and nuclear in terms of carbon emissions or water consumption.