

*Press release from Jan de Beer, cell 082 456 3677:*

## **Concrete Masonry Housing Is The Sustainable Choice, Says The Concrete Institute**

Concrete masonry housing offers substantial environmental benefits, says Bryan Perrie, managing director of The Concrete Institute.

“The increasing focus on environmentally-friendly practices and energy-efficiency has resulted in the emergence of global ‘green washing’ with its inherent unsubstantiated, or misleading, claims about the environmental benefits of products or materials. As a result, it has become necessary to delve deeper into the manufacturing processes of materials to distinguish the truth from fiction in this regard,” Perrie asserts.

“The ability to incorporate recycled and industrial by-products into the concrete masonry manufacturing process not only reduces the embodied energy of the units significantly, but also has immense environmental benefits. It decreases the demand for non-renewable resources by reducing the amount of virgin aggregates to be sourced.

“Secondary energy consumption generated by long-distance transport of aggregates from quarries to manufacturing plants can be reduced by using locally available building rubble. At the same time, it eases the pressure on landfill sites by decreasing the amount of rubble and waste material to be transported to, and dumped at, landfill sites. Concrete masonry manufacturing plants also have the unique ability to become zero-waste manufacturing sites by recycling their own manufacturing waste back into the process.

“Further to that, any so-called ‘green’ material should be evaluated against its ability to contribute towards the overall sustainable future of South Africa. In order to do that, one needs to consider that true sustainability is the result of a balance between environmental, economic and social factors.

“The inherent cost-effective, durable and low-maintenance qualities of concrete masonry have for long made it the material of choice for the South African context. The labour-intensive nature of concrete block-laying provides the opportunity to create numerous jobs in the unskilled labour market – all of which contribute immensely towards social and economic sustainability.

“Furthermore, the thermal mass quality of concrete provides it with the ability to improve environmental sustainability by aiding passive climate control design. From this perspective, it is clear that concrete masonry is an inherently ‘green’ material ideally suited to improve sustainability in South Africa,” Perrie adds.

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**Caption 'ci - CONCRET BLOCK LAYING:**

**Concrete masonry housing offers a wide variety of benefits including job creation for block layers, says The Concrete Institute.**

**Ends**

*Issued for The Concrete Institute, Midrand / Further info: Bryan Perrie, tel 011 315 0300 / [www.theconcreteinstitute.org.za](http://www.theconcreteinstitute.org.za)*