

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Businesses turn to new technology for crucial energy savings

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*SA manufactured and installed LEDs lead energy cuts*

KEY POINTS:

- Energy-efficient technologies cut spiralling energy costs
- New-generation LEDs dealing effectively with “dirty power”
- Cheap foreign imports damaging LED lighting’s credibility in the market

DESPITE a promise by parastatal Eskom of no load-shedding for the foreseeable future, soaring energy prices have forced businesses continue to cut energy consumption.

The issue has become particularly crucial for companies bearing the ISO 50001 energy management standard certification, which requires an energy-saving plan which targets a reduction of 10 to 15% per year.

Conducting energy audits and embracing energy-efficient technologies has become the starting point for most industrial and commercial enterprises, with a popular solution being the replacement of conventional lighting with new technology light emitting diodes (LEDs).

According to energy specialists Rhino Lighting, replacing compact fluorescent lighting (CFL) with new-generation LED luminaires, or light fittings, has been shown to result in an up to 50% reduction in lighting energy costs, with halogen replacement savings as high as 90%.

The company’s recent installation of SA-manufactured new technology LED lighting at the popular Newton Park Swimming Pool in Port Elizabeth has resulted in a 50% reduction in the centre’s monthly lighting bill.

For industrial settings, LED lamps have also been proven to have a longer lifespan – an average of 30 000 hours compared to 1 000 hours for incandescent and 8 000 hours for CFL bulbs.

Additional benefits such lower maintenance, improved longevity, mercury-free components and reduced greenhouse gas emissions mitigate any initial higher outlay LED lighting.

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However, Rhino Lighting managing director Heather McEwan cautioned that consumers should be wary, saying not all LED lighting options are created equal.

“Cheap, foreign imports, especially those from China, have flooded the local market and damaged the reputation of LED,” said McEwan. “Fortunately, South African manufacturers are rising to the challenge and producing good quality, locally made luminaires.”

She said the added benefit of buying locally manufactured lighting was that after-sales support was available, unlike foreign imports.

To protect South African consumers and combat the proliferation of sub-standard products, the electrical industry has established the SAFEhouse Association, a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing consumers with accurate information about product quality and safety.

Aside from quality issues, consumers also ran the gauntlet of old-school technologies, McEwan said.

“New generation LEDs make old-school versions look outdated and consumers need to make informed choices when selecting their lighting.”

She said lighting fixtures were particularly vulnerable to voltage fluctuations as a result of Eskom’s “dirty power” supply and that new-generation LEDs featured built-in integrated constant current regulation, or so-called “driverless” technology to manage this.

Rhino Lighting sources South African-manufactured LED luminaires, providing driverless technology.

According to local lighting expert Hennie Bester, who works with Rhino Lighting, Chinese-made options are currently available in the market but have no built-in protection.

“The built-in protection unit protects the luminaire against premature failure due to voltage spikes and lightning strikes. Our protection unit has a replaceable fuse for added protection against damaging voltage spikes,” said Bester.

“Driverless technology is also far more forgiving in terms of exposure to high temperatures. The old chip-on-board drivers cope with temperatures up to 70 degrees Celsius, while the new driverless ones are fit for high operating temperatures up to 140 degrees, which is especially useful in factory environments.”

He advised end users, especially those in commercial or factory settings, to have their service provider analyse their environment to find the correct solution for the application involved.



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Images:

**SHINING EXAMPLE:** Rhino Lighting's Jonathan Scheepers shows off the company's recent installation of SA-manufactured new technology LED lighting at the popular Newton Park Swimming Pool in Port Elizabeth. The new lighting has resulted in a 50% reduction in the centre's monthly lighting bill.

(Image: Supplied)

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