

Press release

GROWING LIGHTLY

POLYSTYRENE ASSOCIATION OF SA HOSTS LIGHTWEIGHT CONCRETE FACTORY TOUR



FLTR: Sedick Samsodien explains to the guests attending the factory tour how the mountains of post-consumer and post-recycled polystyrene visible in the background are collected and recycled into the Greenlite lightweight concrete bricks and screed used to build shopping malls, architectural homes and low-cost housing.

Cape Town, 10 October 2018. The Polystyrene Association of SA recently invited officials representing the City of Cape Town, Drakenstein Municipality, JG Afrika and GreenCape on a factory tour to experience first-hand how post-consumer polystyrene collected from local metros, is recycled into lightweight concrete bricks and screed.

According to Adri Spangenberg, CEO of the Polystyrene Association of SA, more than 2 000 tons of expanded polystyrene gets recycled annually in South Africa for use in building and construction applications such as the lightweight concrete bricks.

“We began supporting lightweight concrete projects in 2012. Over the past six years, the market for this application has seen a tremendous amount of growth and has helped us to grow our recycling efforts exponentially,” Adri says.

Owing to the fact that building with lightweight concrete bricks results in considerable savings when it comes to manpower, labour, material and time, municipalities are recognizing this as a good option to help solve both the housing and waste crises in their areas.

Whilst initially the cost for a lightweight concrete brick made from recycled polystyrene initially works out the same as for a normal cement brick, developers are able to enjoy significant savings in that it weighs less than half of a conventional brick, has an SABS fire rating and offers excellent insulation against sound and temperature. Furthermore, it takes one day to build a 42 m² home, compared to 3 days when building with conventional bricks. Lightweight bricks also don't absorb water, meaning that there is no mould and therefore make it a healthier option.

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According to Adri, they are currently in talks with various municipalities in the Western and Southern Cape about the possibility of building the first Municipal Polystyrene Recycling Hubs. These hubs will be strategically placed in areas to collect post-consumer and post-industrial polystyrene from surrounding areas, with the object of recycling this material for supply to the various end-markets, such as lightweight concrete bricks, picture frames, cornices, seedling trays etc.

“The role-players and decisionmakers who attended the factory tour showed a great deal of enthusiasm and agreed that this application shows a great deal of potential. Polystyrene recycling is able to become an important solution for job creation, housing and waste management and recycling in South Africa, but is going to require teamwork and industry support to raise awareness about polystyrene recycling and ensuring access to this valuable resource from our country’s waste streams,” Adri concluded.

For more information, visit www.polystyrenesa.co.za or email Paul@polystyrenesa.co.za

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