



# HAPPY

## Holidays



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### CLOSING DATE

ENTRIES CLOSE AT END OF BUSINESS ON 10 JANUARY 2025

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\*T's & C's Apply. First 150 purchases receive a free solar panel. Competition valid from 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024.



As 2024 comes to its end, *Sparks Electrical News* offers our readers the opportunity to start the new year on a positive note. We have teamed up with South Africa's leading electrical companies who have donated great prizes.

## HOW TO ENTER

Entering the competition is simple. You have three options:

1. Scan the QR code on this page to go straight to the competition entry form.
2. Log onto the Sparks website - [www.sparkselectricalnewsmagazine.co.za](http://www.sparkselectricalnewsmagazine.co.za) - and click on the competition banner at the top of the page.
3. Email your name, company, postal address and contact number to [sparks@crowm.co.za](mailto:sparks@crowm.co.za).



## DRAW

All entries received will go into the draw that will take place in January 2025. Winners will be notified by email and the names of the winners will be published in the February 2025 issue of *Sparks Electrical News*.

## CLOSING DATE

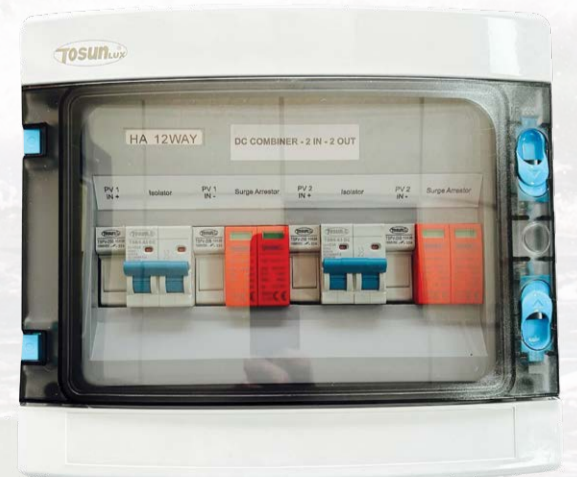
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- Insulated screwdriver kit
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- FOSPRO HellermannTyton multipurpose lubricant
- Red HellermannTyton electrical insulation tape, 20 m
- Helacon Releasable: 3 and 5 connectors
- Blue A5 hardcover HellermannTyton Made For Real notebook
- HellermannTyton gaming mouse pad, cable tie chart
- Ottawa wireless charger and desk lamp

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- Toolbox and cordless drill.

### Eurolux

- Eurolux model F82 rechargeable portable mist fan with LED emergency light

### Synerji

- Industrial floor fan (SYF24F)

### Three D

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- Smart Home automation kit consisting of a central controller, 2 x 1-lever switches, 1 x 2-lever switch and 1 x 3-lever switch



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## Power up for a greener tomorrow: Voltex's WATTS for Africa solar solutions

Voltex is helping South Africans reduce their energy costs and make a positive environmental impact with its WATTS for Africa solar campaign.

As electricity prices continue to rise, more households and businesses are looking for ways to control their energy

bills while contributing to a greener, more sustainable future. Through affordable and high-quality solar products, Voltex enables customers to generate their own clean energy, reducing their reliance on the grid and saving money in the long run.

### Why choose solar with Voltex?

Switching to solar energy offers numerous benefits. First and foremost, it's an effective way to lower electricity bills. With solar power, you can generate your own electricity and decrease your dependence on the national grid, helping you avoid rising electricity prices. Whether for a homeowner or a business, solar energy provides a cost-effective solution to rising power costs.

Beyond cost savings, solar energy is also a powerful way to reduce your environmental

footprint. By adopting solar, you're helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promoting a cleaner, renewable energy future. Solar power is a key part of the global effort to combat climate change, and every solar installation contributes to building a more sustainable planet.

### The benefits of solar energy

1. **Save on energy bills:** By generating your own solar power, you can significantly reduce your reliance on grid electricity. This leads to lower monthly energy bills, even as traditional electricity prices continue to rise.
2. **Environmental impact:** Solar power is clean, renewable, and helps reduce carbon emissions. By switching to solar, you're actively contributing to the global effort to tackle climate change.
3. **Energy independence:** Solar systems provide you with greater energy independence. You no longer have to rely on the national grid, which can be unreliable, especially during loadshedding. Solar power offers resilience and peace of mind, even when the grid is down.

### Building your solar system with Voltex

Voltex offers flexible, modular solar solutions that are tailored to your needs. Whether you're powering a small home or a large commercial operation, it has the inverters, batteries, and solar panels to meet your requirements.

- **Inverters:** Voltex offers a range of inverters that convert solar power into usable electricity for your home or business.
- **Batteries:** Battery energy storage systems store excess energy generated during the day so that you can use it at night or in case of outages.
- **Solar Panels:** Voltex's high-efficiency panels come in various sizes to suit different energy needs.

### How to get started

Switching to solar is easy with Voltex. Here's how:

1. **Assess your energy needs:** Start by reviewing your monthly energy bills to understand your consumption and peak demand.
2. **Choose the right inverter and battery:** Based on your energy needs, select an inverter and battery that match your peak demand and storage requirements.
3. **Monitor your energy usage:** Use our energy meters to track consumption and optimise your solar system.

### Why WATTS for Africa matters

"At Voltex, we understand the pressure that rising electricity costs put on South African homes and businesses." That's why the company launched its WATTS for Africa campaign, bringing affordable, high-quality solar solutions that can help customers take control of energy consumption while contributing to a greener, more sustainable future.

"Whether you're a homeowner looking to cut back on monthly energy bills, a small business seeking to reduce operating costs, or part of a larger operation wanting to make the switch to renewable energy, Voltex is here to support your journey into solar power."

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T's and C's Apply. Valid until January 2025 while promo stocks last.





## ABB supports women in STEM



Jacky Mbanga, Human Resources at ABB Electrification, South Africa.

Through its continued commitment to STEM, ABB has positioned itself as a leader in innovation, championing the advancement of communities by empowering individuals with the skills and opportunities to make a lasting impact. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education plays a significant role in driving global innovation, community empowerment, and sustainable development. Harnessing STEM skills is important to address complex challenges, from climate change to sustainable energy solutions, while creating pathways for future generations to contribute meaningfully to society.

At ABB, female engineers and scientists contribute significantly to R&D projects, developing new technologies and solutions. Their expertise in various technical

fields helps ABB stay at the forefront of innovation in sectors like electrification, robotics, and automation. The company showcases women's expertise in STEM fields across its operations through a variety of initiatives and practices. These efforts highlight women and promote a more inclusive and diverse work environment.

ABB supports and promotes internal networks and programmes specifically designed for women in engineering and technical roles. These initiatives provide mentorship, career development opportunities, and networking for female employees, empowering them to thrive in their careers and break new ground in traditionally male-dominated fields. The company also offers targeted training and development programmes, including leadership training and technical skill enhancement, aimed at advancing women's careers in STEM fields and

fostering a culture of innovation.

Recognising the importance of early STEM exposure, ABB engages in partnerships with educational institutions to promote STEM education among young women. This includes sponsoring scholarships, internships, and educational programs that encourage female students to pursue STEM careers, helping to close the gender gap in technology and engineering.

In addition, ABB participates in and organises events that focus on women in STEM, providing a platform for female experts to share their knowledge and experiences. These events reinforce the message that a diverse STEM workforce is crucial for a well-rounded approach to global challenges and innovative community development.

"We believe that fostering STEM skills among young women is essential for building empowered communities and preparing the next generation of leaders. By supporting STEM education and development, we're investing in the future of our industry and the advancement of society," concludes Jacky Mbanga, who heads up human resources at ABB Electrification.

Enquiries: [www.abb.com](http://www.abb.com)

## SAPVIA: Debunking solar PV myths

As South Africa finds itself well on the way towards a stable and reliable energy supply, it is helpful to look back at solar PV's role. The South African Photovoltaic Industry Association (SAPVIA) investigates common misconceptions about this technology.

The country has enjoyed well over 200 days with no need for loadshedding, which industry association body SAPVIA believes highlights the value of an effective symphony of power options.

"Our industry is proud to have worked alongside our partners in the public sector to support efforts to stabilise our country's power picture. With the growing demand for renewable energy and the global push towards sustainable living, solar energy has become a key player in the transition towards a low-carbon energy system," says Dr Rethabile Melamu, CEO of SAPVIA.

"However, many misconceptions about solar energy persist, leading to hesitancy and reluctance among the public to invest in solar solutions. Addressing these misconceptions is critical to ensuring the public understands the true value, cost-effectiveness, and reliability of solar energy, ultimately accelerating South Africa's renewable energy adoption and reducing our carbon footprint," Melamu continues.

She unpacks some of the most common misconceptions and myths.

### Myth: Solar is not efficient

A common misconception is that solar panels are inefficient and can't generate enough electricity to justify their use. However, solar panel efficiency has improved significantly over the years, with most residential panels now converting 18% to 23% of sunlight into usable electricity. While this may sound low, it's highly efficient given the sun's vast energy. Even though solar panels capture only a fraction of this energy, it's enough to meet a significant portion

of a household's electricity needs, reducing reliance on the grid and offsetting carbon-intensive energy generation. And best of all, the input energy is free.

Technological advances have driven both the efficiency and reliability of solar panels. New materials and improved design features allow panels to perform well even in less-than-ideal conditions, making solar a practical and effective energy solution for homeowners.

### Myth: Solar panels don't work when it is cloudy and/ or cold

While it's true that solar panels generate less electricity on overcast days compared to sunny days, they still produce power if there is light. This is because solar panels rely on the photovoltaic effect – the process of converting sunlight into electrical energy.

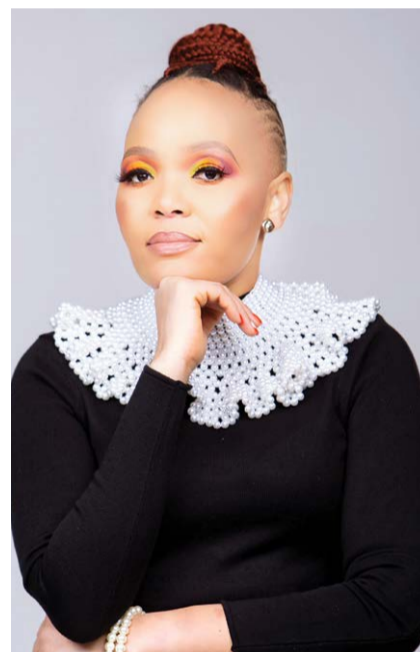
Cold temperatures can boost solar panel performance as they work more efficiently in cooler temperatures.

### Myth: Solar is unaffordable

While the initial investment may seem high, the cost of solar panels has dramatically decreased over the past decade. For example, in 2014, a 250 W residential solar panel cost approximately R5,500 per panel. Today, in 2024, a similar-sized panel costs around R2,000 – a price drop of more than 60%. This steep reduction in price is due to advancements in technology, economies of scale, and increased global demand.

In addition to lower prices, there are flexible financing options that make solar systems more accessible to homeowners, like leasing options that allow homeowners to install solar systems with little to no upfront cost. This model lets customers pay a monthly fee instead of making a large initial investment, providing immediate savings on electricity bills while spreading the cost over time.

Furthermore, the payback period



Dr Rethabile Melamu, CEO of SAPVIA.

for solar installations is shrinking rapidly due to the escalating cost of electricity from Eskom and municipalities.

Thus, while the upfront costs can still be substantial, the long-term savings from reduced electricity bills often allow a solar system to pay for itself within five to seven years, depending on the size of the installation and the electricity tariff. The savings can be substantial over the system's lifetime (typically 15-20 years), making solar affordable and a smart financial investment.

### Myth: Adding solar means you are off the grid

Many assume that adding solar panels automatically means living off the grid, which isn't true for most residential setups. Most homeowners opt for grid-tied systems, which allow them to remain connected to the national grid. This way, they can still draw electricity from the grid when the solar system isn't generating enough power. However, the benefit of solar is that it significantly reduces reliance on grid power, lowering electricity bills.

### Myth: It is complicated to install a solar panel

If your roof is in a good state, the

whole process should not take that long if you are using a reputable service provider – such as someone registered as a member of SAPVIA.

One of the key tools to ensure a smooth and safe installation process is the PV GreenCard programme. This initiative, developed by SAPVIA, is designed to promote quality installations by offering a standardised set of guidelines and certifications for solar installers.

### Myth: Solar panels have short life spans

Another common myth is that solar panels don't last long. The truth is that most high-quality panels come with warranties of up to 25-30 years and are built to withstand extreme weather conditions. Since solar panels have no moving parts, they require very little maintenance over their lifetime so you can expect your panels to be a reliable energy source for decades.

"There are many other myths and misconceptions which make it important to deal with a service provider you can trust. Look for a PV Greencard accredited installer to guide you," concludes Melamu.

Enquiries: [www.sapvia.co.za](http://www.sapvia.co.za)

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## Electrobase crowns suppliers and wholesalers of the year

By Ilana Koegelenberg

The annual Electrobase Supplier of the Year awards took place in November, drawing suppliers and wholesalers to Cape Town for the much-anticipated event. The itinerary included a golf day, suppliers expo, and awards evening, where the charity donation handover moved everyone with its incredible generosity.

The Electrobase event took place between 7-9 November and saw members and customers attend from as far as the United Kingdom. A large contingent from Zimbabwe was also in attendance, along with members from all over the country and other neighbouring countries. In fact, this year's event had the best turnout in history, according to the event organisers.

### A full programme

On Thursday, 7 November, things kicked off with a golf day at the beautiful De Zalze Golf Club in Stellenbosch. It was a lovely, wind-free day, warm and perfect for golfing, according to those on the field. This didn't prevent some interesting shots that were later rewarded with fines during the evening's golf awards.

The next day, attendees visited the supplier's expo and listened to various

presentations from the suppliers who shared new and future product lines under development. Notably, the number of locally manufactured products tailored to the South African market is increasing as Electrobase members push to drive this.

The following suppliers had exhibits on-site: Crabtree, WACO Industries, Eurolux and Radiant, HellermannTyton, Major-Tech and Vetri, Three-D, Stone-Stamcor, Kwikot, and Enerji. Schneider Electric and Siemens also joined the expo and are in negotiations to join the Electrobase group.

The supplier's expo was followed by the gala dinner, and this year's black-tie theme ensured everyone was dressed to impress. The prestigious evening took place at the Lagoon Beach Hotel in Cape Town, the same as the supplier's expo.

During the event, Electrobase chairman Glenn Gold discussed the year that was and the impact local politics and the ceasing of loadshedding had on the economy and the sector. Gold was positive about 2025's prospects but cited a need for a stable government, proper National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) implementation, and finding a way to eliminate the

construction mafia plaguing the sector.

During his speech, Gold highlighted and congratulated Lite-Glo Electrical Wholesalers for opening two new branches, Northside Electrical for moving their head office to new premises, and Herholdts for opening a new branch in Bracken Gate. He also congratulated Electroparts on reaching the milestone of 50 years in business.

Members who passed during the year, Rudi Stoltz from VEC and Brian Nieuwstad from Electroparts, were also remembered in Gold's speech.

### And the winners are...

During the handover of the supplier awards, Crabtree was crowned the overall winner as Supplier of the Year. The top five positions were very close, with only seven points difference between the winners.

Other gold awards went to HellermannTyton, Major Tech, Stone-Stamcor, Eurolux/ Radiant, Enerji, and Brightstar. Three-D was recognised as the most improved supplier of the year. Silver went to WACO, and bronze to Kwikot.

The wholesalers of the year awards followed. Northside Electrical took

first place, with Plumstead Electrical in second, and a third place for Lite-Glo Electrical Wholesalers.

### For a good cause

During the gala dinner, Anthony Lloyd, CEO of Electrobase and Enerji, took to the podium to hand over the money members had collected for the SA Children's Home charity in Cape Town. Initially, the raised amount stood at around R180,000, but thanks to the generosity of those in attendance, the final value handed over exceeded R700,000. This includes cash and services, including solar for the home, supported by all suppliers and driven by Werner Havenga of WACO.

It was a tearful moment for the charity who accepted the donation gratefully, sharing with attendees the critical work the Children's Home does to give their children a chance at a normal future.

### Coming in 2025...

Next year, the Electrobase Supplier of the Year event will take place in George, following the annual general meeting planned for the Seychelles.

Enquiries: [www.synerji.co.za](http://www.synerji.co.za)

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The Electrobase Supplier of the Year award went to Crabtree.



HellermannTyton receiving their gold award.



Major Tech was also awarded gold during the event.



Three-D won the Most Improved Supplier award.



Team Eurolux accepting their gold supplier award.



The Electrobase chair, Glenn Goldman, handing over Stone-Stamcor's gold award.



The event kicked off with a golf day at De Zalze Golf Club in Stellenbosch.



Brightstar showing off their gold award.



Enerji received a gold award as well.



Northside Electrical received the Wholesaler of the Year award.



Getting ready to tee off on the first hole.



## Unprecedented technological transformation requires skills

The world is poised on the cusp of a major technological revolution, with new applications for existing technologies and advancements in multiple areas, from quantum computing to extended reality (XR) to clean energy. In South Africa, this offers a significant opportunity to foster innovation, drive economic growth, and create new job sectors.

However, with this wave of change comes the urgent need for upskilling and reskilling, as emerging technologies will reshape the job landscape in ways many people are unprepared for, explains Viren Sookhun, MD at Oxyon People Solutions. In this

future, mastering new skills will be a critical factor in determining South Africa's ability to harness these opportunities and compete globally.

### Opportunities in transformation

Advancements in fields like quantum computing, XR, and clean energy present opportunities for countries like South Africa to make significant progress in transformation and global competitiveness. However, the country's success will hinge on developing the necessary skills to harness these innovations.

Meanwhile, the transition to clean energy is an environmental

imperative and an economic opportunity. SA's natural resources position it to lead the green energy revolution, but this requires skills development in green steel manufacturing, energy storage, and renewable infrastructure. By building a workforce equipped to drive these innovations, South Africa can create a thriving green economy while tackling climate change.

### Emerging technologies and future job creation

On an energy front, space-based solar cells could revolutionise the green energy landscape. We are also seeing the emergence of autonomous systems in multiple areas. In mining, there are hazard-monitoring robots, autonomous robotic haulage

trucks, automated drilling machines, and self-driving trucks. There are autonomous devices for space and sea exploration, and even sea rescue.

These advancements and cutting-edge developments require specialised skills to drive innovation, and keeping pace with global change will require significant investment in skills development.

### Tackling the human element

While there is an underlying fear that technology will displace jobs, the reality is that it will create new opportunities in ways we have not yet fully understood. However, without proper reskilling and upskilling initiatives, South Africa's unemployment rate could worsen.

The key to preventing this lies in smart, targeted investments in education, particularly in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). These efforts should be coupled with vocational training and professional development programmes to ensure that workers are equipped for the jobs of tomorrow.

"To ensure South Africa's future prosperity, collaboration between government, the private sector, and educational institutions will be essential," concludes Sookhun. "Together, they can provide the training, resources, and infrastructure needed to equip South Africans with the skills necessary to thrive in a technology-driven future."

Enquiries: [www.oxyon.co.za](http://www.oxyon.co.za)

## Teraco adds 40 MW data centre expansion in Johannesburg

Teraco has begun constructing a 40 MW hyper-scale data centre at its Isando Campus in Johannesburg. The project, funded by a new R8 billion syndicated loan, will further strengthen the company's position as Africa's leading data centre operator.

Teraco is a digital realty company and provider of interconnection platforms and vendor-neutral colocation data centres. Its new facility, known as JB7, is currently scheduled for completion in 2026 and will incorporate the latest environmentally sustainable cooling and water management designs.

The new data centre supports the growing demand by enterprises and cloud service providers for data centre capacity. JB7 will offer highly resilient and secure colocation facilities in line with Teraco's long-term vision of enabling digital transformation across Africa. The expansion will increase the Isando Campus' capacity up to 110 MW of critical power load.

Jan Hnizdo, CEO at Teraco, says enterprise and hyper-scale deployments continue apace due to growing hybrid cloud deployments and the adoption of cloud services in Africa.

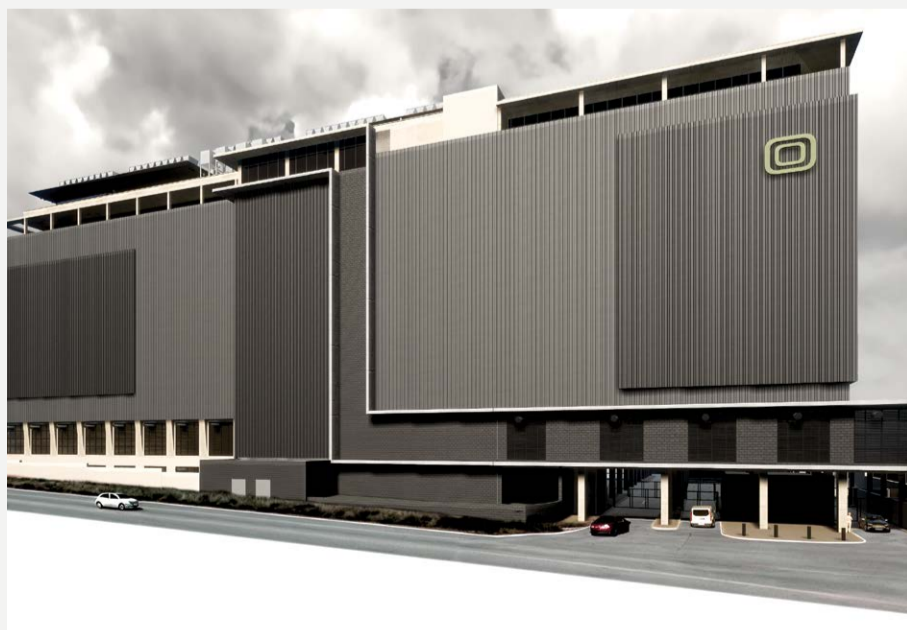
"South Africa is a springboard for cloud provision into Africa and, as a result, has become the technology and data centre

hub for sub-Saharan Africa. Massive global investments into undersea cables, like Equiano and 2Africa, further strengthen this position. This will enable global cloud providers to service not only the South African market but also the rest of the sub-Saharan African region."

The JB7 facility is Teraco's ninth data centre development and further expands its Isando Campus. It is here that Teraco's data centres provide enterprises with direct access to Platform Teraco, a rich ecosystem of over 250 network providers, content delivery networks, global cloud on-ramps, subsea cable systems, access to over 100 managed service providers, and direct peering at regional IXP's including NAPAfrica, Africa's largest internet exchange point.

JB7 has been designed to put sustainability first and minimise its environmental footprint. It will incorporate the latest state-of-the-art cooling designs with a closed-loop chilled water system and direct free-air cooling into the data halls. This design will bring about industry-leading PUEs and WUEs, reducing the energy consumed and limiting water used in the ongoing cooling process to zero.

Enquiries: [www.teraco.co.za](http://www.teraco.co.za)



## Transform your business with AI (no tech skills needed)

Artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics are no longer reserved for large companies or IT wizards. They are becoming easier to use, offering powerful ways to improve your business without requiring advanced technical skills.

From automating everyday tasks to making more intelligent decisions based on real-time data, AI and data analytics can greatly impact your company's success. Warren Bonheim, managing director of Zinia, a leading IT technology group, shares how you can use these technologies to transform your business – without needing to be a tech genius.

### Make better decisions

Imagine being able to predict what your customers want before they even tell you. Data analytics tools can analyse sales and customer behaviour patterns, giving you insights that let your business stay ahead of trends.

Tools like Google Analytics or Power BI make this process easy, offering visual reports and dashboards that help you see what's working – and what isn't.

### Automate routine tasks with AI

One of the best things about AI is its ability to automate repetitive tasks, freeing up time for you and your team to focus on more important things.

Take customer service, for example. AI chatbots can handle common questions, such as order tracking or appointment scheduling, instantly. This means your team can focus on resolving more complex issues.

Another big benefit of AI is how it can streamline your operations. From automating data entry to handling inventory management, AI tools can handle the day-to-day tasks that often slow you down. With platforms like Zapier or Automate.io, you can easily set up these automations without writing a single line of code.

### Personalise your customer experience

We all know how important it is to deliver a personalised experience to customers. AI makes this not only possible but easy. By analysing customer data, AI can help

you tailor marketing messages, product recommendations, and promotions to fit each person's preferences.

For example, tools like HubSpot can track customer interactions and deliver personalised content at the right time, improving engagement and sales. Whether you're running a small business or a larger operation, this level of personalisation can help you build stronger relationships with your customers, keeping them loyal to your brand.

### Save time and money

One of the greatest advantages of AI and data analytics is how much time and money they can save your business. With AI automating tasks and data analytics providing insights that help you make better decisions, you'll reduce inefficiencies and cut unnecessary costs.

Data analytics can show you where you can optimise costs, whether that's reducing energy consumption or cutting down on waste in your supply chain.

### Scale as you grow

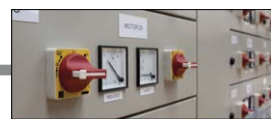
Another great thing about AI and data analytics is how they can grow with your business. Whether you're expanding your team, opening new locations, or entering new markets, these tools can easily scale up to meet your needs. AI-powered tools are often cloud-based, meaning you can adjust them as your business changes.

### Getting started is easier than you think

Start by identifying one or two areas in your business where you could use some extra help. Maybe you want to improve your customer service, or maybe you're looking to make more informed decisions based on data. Once you've identified the areas to focus on, explore platforms that align with your needs.

AI and data analytics aren't just for tech-savvy people. These tools have become user-friendly and accessible to businesses of all sizes, providing practical ways to improve efficiency, make smarter decisions, and deliver a better customer experience.

Enquiries: <http://www.zinia.co.za/>



## SIRIUS Control redefines the future of industrial control

In today's rapidly advancing industrial landscape, control systems need to be powerful, adaptable, and future-proofed for the demands of digitalisation. Enter SIRIUS Control from Siemens, the largest and most versatile portfolio of switching devices on the market, offering a comprehensive suite of circuit breakers, contactors, overload relays, and load feeders across seven sizes.

Engineered for flexibility, power, and digital intelligence, the SIRIUS modular system extends its capacity up to 250 kW, setting a new standard in industrial control.

One of the standout benefits of the SIRIUS Control modular system is its intelligent, modular design. This modularity offers a consistent setup of components across all sizes, meaning that every device – from the compact 45 mm to the more powerful 160 mm – integrates seamlessly, allowing businesses to tailor configurations based on their specific needs.

By standardising the layout, SIRIUS Control minimises complexity and maximises compatibility across a variety of motor applications. With more than 50,000 tested and approved device combinations, SIRIUS offers a robust solution that can confidently meet the demands of industrial operations worldwide.

Among the SIRIUS Control offerings are pre-assembled load feeders such as the SIRIUS 3RA21 and 3RA22, which come in three sizes and support power ratings up to 37 kW. These load feeders combine the 3RV2 motor starter protector with the 3RT2 contactor, providing direct-on-line and reversing starters that simplify installation, reduce wiring complexity, and support straightforward scalability. The load feeders' modularity and pre-assembly highlight SIRIUS Control's commitment to simplifying setup while enhancing operational flexibility and reliability.

### A vision for digital integration

The rise of Industry 4.0 has brought digital integration to the forefront, and SIRIUS Control is ready to meet this challenge with its "simply digital" approach. At the heart of this digital transformation is the SIRIUS 3RC7 Intelligent Link Module. Designed to streamline communication between the field and cloud-based systems, this plug-and-play module makes it easy to integrate load feeders directly into automation systems. This opens up a world of possibilities, enabling real-time data exchange, reducing downtime, and enhancing maintenance efficiency.

By bridging the gap between traditional devices and automation environments, the 3RC7 Intelligent Link Module helps industrial facilities achieve unprecedented transparency down to the field level. By integrating into the SIMATIC ET 200SP system, the SIRIUS module offers real-time monitoring of status, diagnostics, and essential operational metrics. This link makes proactive maintenance possible by detecting overloads and deviations, providing businesses with the insights needed to prevent potential breakdowns before they escalate.

### Ease of use and proactive protection

SIRIUS Control's 3RC7 module also sets a new bar for ease of installation and operational efficiency. Designed with a reduced wiring footprint and easy parameterisation in the TIA Portal, the module saves considerable time in installation and commissioning. Integrating

seamlessly with SIMATIC automation environments, it offers a holistic view of production in real-time, allowing operators to make informed decisions based on up-to-date field-level data.

Notably, SIRIUS Control doesn't just focus on convenience – it also prioritises proactive protection. The intelligent module includes built-

in overload functions and advanced diagnostic features, empowering operators with timely alerts to address maintenance needs before interrupting operations. By incorporating data transparency into the workflow, SIRIUS Control promotes a safer, more resilient industrial environment that's primed for the future.

### Shaping the future

SIRIUS Control's modular system is more than just an industrial tool; it's a forward-looking solution for smart, integrated,

and resilient industrial operations. With comprehensive control, enhanced digital connectivity, and a user-focused design, SIRIUS Control is an invaluable ally in advancing the digital transformation of industrial environments. As industry demands continue to evolve, SIRIUS Control offers the versatility and intelligence needed to help companies stay competitive, productive, and prepared for tomorrow's challenges.

Enquiries: [www.lvswitchgear.za@siemens.com](mailto:www.lvswitchgear.za@siemens.com)

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## Trend watch: how is the local market changing?

By Ilana Koegelenberg

The electrical supply industry is experiencing significant market shifts, reshaping how contractors and end-users make purchasing decisions. With its 75-year industry presence, leading electrical supplier WACO Industries provides insights into these changing dynamics and their implications for the sector.

### Solar slowdown signals market shift

The first notable trend is the solar market's slowdown. As loadshedding incidents have reduced, consumers are increasingly putting the brakes on solar installations. This shift is further amplified by the return to office work, which has decreased home electricity usage and made solar installations seem less viable than during peak demand periods.

However, WACO suggests this presents an educational opportunity for the industry. "We need to help end-users understand that electricity costs will continue to rise, making solar investment worthwhile despite the higher initial expense," explains Ravinash Naidoo, marketing manager at WACO Industries.

While the market isn't dead, it's certainly evolving, requiring a new approach to customer education and solar's value proposition.

### Cost-cutting trend raises safety concerns

The second and more concerning trend is the increasing shift toward lower-cost

alternatives across the electrical supply chain. As economic pressures mount, customers increasingly seek cheaper options, particularly in tools and equipment. While professionals recognise the value of established brands, many are opting for less expensive alternatives due to financial constraints.

This cost-conscious approach becomes particularly problematic when it extends to critical electrical components. "When it comes to switches, sockets, distribution boards, and anything electrical, buying cheap, uncertified products is very risky and outright dangerous," Naidoo says. "Lives and property are at stake. All electrical products, even electrical wire, needs to be certified."

### Quality assurance in challenging times

WACO's response to these market pressures has been to maintain its commitment to quality while emphasising the importance of certification. The company subscribes to both European and local standards, working with Safe House certification and the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) for local regulation compliance. This comprehensive testing and certification process explains the higher

cost of quality products and ensures safety and reliability.

The company's position as part of the Bidvest group reinforces its quality commitment, requiring adherence to strict standards across its 7,300-product range. Despite ongoing supply chain challenges, including port congestion, unpredictable delivery times, and fluctuating prices from foreign suppliers, WACO maintains a 97% stock availability rate.

"People would be surprised to find out just how many products WACO stocks," explains Naidoo. "Between our in-house brand and partner products, we offer the full range of electrical products."

### Looking ahead

As the industry continues to evolve, WACO is investing in growth while maintaining its focus on quality and service. In the short term, the company is expanding its product

categories and strengthening its presence in the retail space, all while keeping an ear to the ground for market needs.

"We're on a growth trajectory and will be investing accordingly, expanding our national footprint," notes Naidoo.

For electrical contractors navigating these market shifts, the message is clear: understanding and responding to changing customer needs while maintaining an unwavering commitment to safety and quality standards will be key to long-term success in the industry.

"WACO Industries remains committed to always providing excellent customer service and will always provide quality products," Naidoo concludes. "We would also like to take this opportunity to wish all our customers and users of our products a safe and happy festive season."

Enquiries: [www.wacoelec.co.za](http://www.wacoelec.co.za)



## Protect yourself against the risk of uncertified appliances

Following reports of uncertified electrical products being sold on international online marketplaces, concerns are mounting over the potential risks these items pose to South African consumers.

"When it comes to electrical products, the difference between safety and disaster often hinges on a simple certification label. Understanding its importance can

be a matter of life and death," warns Khensani Ndobe, international export sales executive at CBI-electric: low voltage.

Ndobe explains that certified items undergo stringent testing and audits by regulatory and certification bodies to confirm their safety and suitability for market distribution. "In contrast, non-compliant products bypass safety checks and can lead to severe consequences, including property damage, electrocution, and even death.

"Certain electrical products imported and sold on some online platforms fail to comply with the safety, environmental and performance standards required by the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS)," Ndobe says. "Merchants selling to these e-tailers have circumvented the proper channels and protocols to launch their products into the market, skipping crucial steps such as testing, obtaining certifications, and acquiring Letters of Authority.

"The deliberate flouting of these safeguards is unfortunately being driven by consumers' willingness to buy non-compliant products just to save a buck. However, this short-sighted approach can result in severe repercussions when these products fail to perform as intended," she warns.

For greater safety and quality assurance, Ndobe advises buying and using products certified by reputable local and/or international third-party certification bodies affiliated with the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). This guarantees product reliability and alignment with global standard requirements, since the items undergo rigorous quality control and independent verification.

These goods are usually recognisable by the symbols on their labels, including:

**UL:** The abbreviation for Underwriters Laboratories indicates that the item has been tested against applicable UL standard requirements. This mark, which is highly respected throughout North America, indicates that the item has been found to be physically and environmentally safe.

**VDE:** Awarded by the *Verband der Elektrotechnik* (VDE)

Institute, this globally recognised certification mark signifies safety, quality and performance and is trusted by the European market.

**CE:** The letters 'CE', which stand for *Conformité Européenne*, must appear on electrical products traded on the extended Single Market in the European Economic Area (EEA). This mark signifies that products sold in the EEA have been assessed to meet strict safety, health, and environmental protection requirements in accordance with International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standards. The IEC is a global organisation, the mandate of which is to develop standards for quality infrastructure and international trade in electrical and electronic goods.

**SABS:** The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) bestows this mark following meticulous product testing to verify compliance with South African National Standards (SANS) and/or IEC standards. Additionally, the manufacturing facility must meet International Organization of Standardization (ISO) requirements.

**CCC:** Also known as 3C, this is the acronym for China Compulsory Certificate. For products to bear this mark, they must pass strict tests to ensure compliance with the country's recommended national standards, which are referred to as GB/T.

**RoHS:** Refers to the restriction of hazardous substances such as lead, cadmium, and mercury in Electronic and Electrical Equipment (EEE).

"Under the Consumer Protection Act, suppliers are obliged to refund, repair or replace unsafe and defective goods," explains Ndobe. Additionally, the Electrical Installation Regulations prohibit the use of non-compliant components in electrical installations, and installers found guilty of contravening these regulations may face fines of up to 12 months' imprisonment.

"While certified products may have a higher initial cost, they are an investment in safety and reliability. After all, peace of mind is priceless," concludes Ndobe.

Enquiries: <https://cbi-lowvoltage.co.za>

**LUMINAIRES**

**LAMPS & ELECTRICAL**

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3200 Lumens 6300 Lumens

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Website: [www.krelum.co.za](http://www.krelum.co.za)  
Unit 12a, 70 Fifth Street, Acreage Gardens, Wynberg, Johannesburg



## Growatt introduces hybrid inverter

Growatt's WIT 4-15K-HU is built to maximise solar energy usage. It stores excess energy generated during the day to use when needed, reducing reliance on the grid and lowering electricity bills – all while ensuring proper protection.

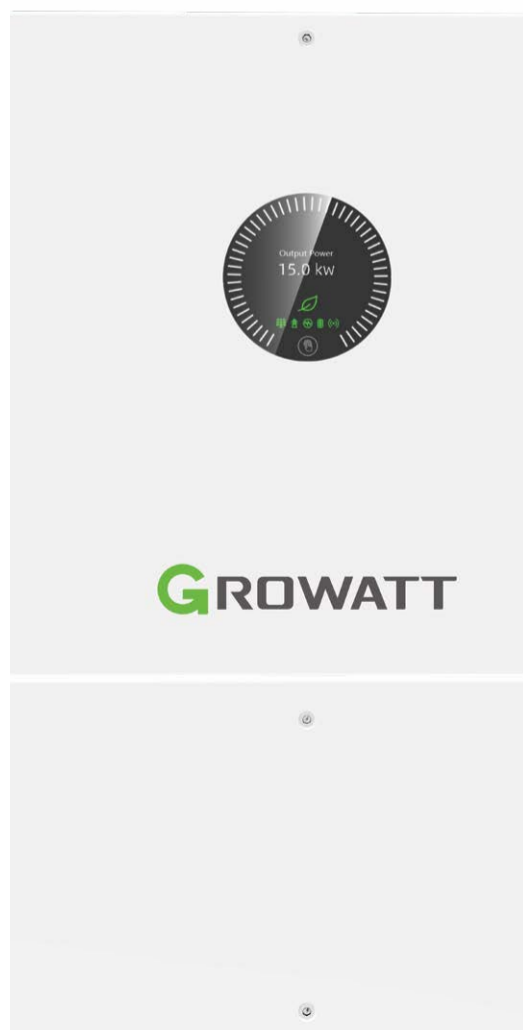
In case of grid outages, the system automatically switches to backup power, ensuring uninterrupted energy for your critical needs. With features like time-of-use optimisation and export limit control, users can further enhance efficiency by managing when and how much power is used or fed back into the grid.

Designed for high efficiency and performance, the WIT 4-15K-HU supports a wide range of power outputs and dual battery inputs for greater energy storage flexibility. Its robust design ensures it can operate in extreme conditions, providing consistent, reliable energy even in harsh environments. With an efficiency rate of up to 97.6%, the system guarantees that users get the most out of their energy investment.

Safety is at the forefront of the WIT 4-15K-HU design. It includes safety features like surge protection and active arc fault detection, ensuring secure and stable operation. The system's intelligent monitoring capabilities allow users to track performance and receive real-time diagnostics, all of which can be managed remotely. This reduces maintenance costs and ensures that the system operates at peak efficiency with minimal intervention.

In addition to its powerful features, the WIT 4-15K-HU is easy to integrate and manage. With a user-friendly app for remote control and monitoring, it's a hassle-free solution for both residential and commercial installations. Growatt's WIT 4-15K-HU hybrid inverter brings the future of energy management to your fingertips, offering a smarter, cleaner, and more efficient way.

Enquiries: <https://en.growatt.com/>



## Crabtree expands range, exciting new products to come

By Ilana Koegelenberg

In 2024, Crabtree introduced a range of new products, with even more in development for the coming years. So, what's new?

Among the 2024 releases are the Classic and Topaz 249 graphite ranges, designed to add a more decorative look and feel. Other new items include polycarbonate yokes on the Classic double and combination switch sockets, redesigned to provide additional versatility for coastal regions.

Regarding their grid systems, Crabtree noted that their new USB A+C and C models are gaining strong traction in the local market, reflecting clear demand.

In 2024, Crabtree successfully launched USB-A+C models, available in the Classic product range. These models feature a unique on-off switch, which has been very well-received in the market.

The company continues to expand its local manufacturing capabilities and has redesigned its plug tops with insulated, solid pins for enhanced safety. The redesigned plug tops come with a wiring guide on the back of the packaging, making installation easier.

Another popular product in 2024 is Crabtree's Classic grid yoke and cover plate, specifically launched to be customisable. The Classic grid cover plate,

designed, engineered, and manufactured locally, allows for user-defined configurations without restriction.

### What's Coming?

Crabtree has an exciting lineup of products under development, including smart, Internet of Things (IoT)-compatible switches. They're taking a measured approach to this market, investing time in Research and Development (R&D) to ensure high-quality, reliable offerings from the start.

Additionally, Crabtree is working on USB C+C solutions (to phase out A+A) with higher power options. While the current selection includes 15 W and 20 W options, they are exploring an increase to 45 W.

Future plans also include a locally manufactured 16 A rubber plug top with a redesigned cover and base, and introducing a new type of nylon fish tape for the local market to complement the

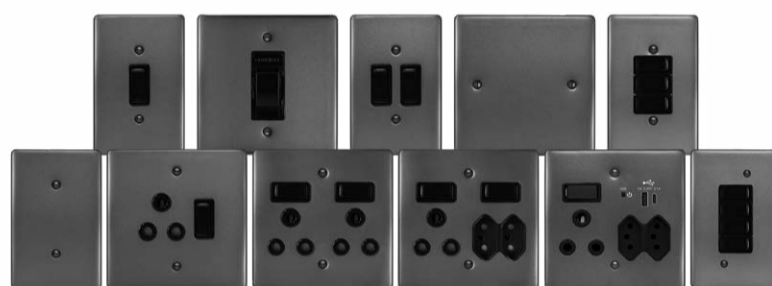
current solution rather than replace it.

The company remains committed to expanding its local manufacturing capabilities in the coming years.

"As we look towards 2025, the future for electrical manufacturing in South Africa appears bright. Companies like Crabtree are not only expanding product lines and pushing for innovative solutions but also increasing local manufacturing capacity, which strengthens the economy," the company says.

"With continuous focus on quality, versatility, and smart technology integration, there is every reason to be optimistic about the sector's growth and resilience. As long as the emphasis remains on research, local production, and meeting the demands of a dynamic market, South Africa's electrical manufacturing industry is well-positioned to thrive."

Enquiries: <https://crabtree.co.za/>



## CIV ratings for electric motors need closer monitoring

As most technical industries increasingly rely on advanced motor control technologies, understanding and selecting motors with appropriate Corona Inception Voltage (CIV) ratings is vital to prevent costly failures and downtime over time. Adrian van Wyk, Referro Systems managing director, delves further into this topic.

Corona is a luminous discharge phenomenon induced by the partial ionisation of air around the conductor when the surface electric field strength exceeds a critical value. This must be monitored more closely to ensure the reliability and longevity of electric motors with variable speed drive (VSD) control devices.

Electric motors connected to VSDs are susceptible to voltage transients that can exceed their insulation limits, particularly where long cable runs are involved between the VSD and motor. The high switching frequencies of modern VSDs, particularly those using Insulated Gate Bipolar Transistors (IGBT), can generate voltage spikes that exceed the insulation limits of standard motors.

These voltage transients, characterised by rapid rise times, can lead to elevated voltage gradients within the motor windings, increasing the likelihood of insulation breakdown. Understanding how VSDs create these voltage spikes is crucial for selecting a motor that can withstand such stresses.

Therefore, a CIV rating on a motor is not just a number; it represents the maximum voltage that a motor's insulation can safely withstand. Standard motors may not be adequately rated to withstand the elevated voltage conditions generated by VSDs, while

inverter-duty motors are specifically designed with enhanced insulation systems to manage these challenges.

Reactor devices, or line chokes, are also often employed to reduce peak voltages transmitted from the VSD to the motor. By limiting the rise time of voltage spikes, these devices can help protect motor insulation from damage caused by excessive transients.

However, while reactors can enhance system reliability, they also introduce limitations in terms of cost and overall system efficiency. The initial investment for reactors must be balanced against potential savings from reduced motor failures and maintenance costs.

Motor terminators are another effective solution for reducing transient peak voltages at the motor terminals. These devices work by absorbing voltage spikes and reducing reflections caused by impedance mismatches in long cable runs.

However, their effectiveness is contingent upon cable length; as distances increase, the ability of motor terminators to mitigate transients diminishes. Implementing motor terminators is advisable for cable lengths not exceeding 182 m.

### Risks of insufficient CIV ratings

When the voltage overshoot constantly surpasses the motor's CIV rating, it can trigger the corona discharge, damaging insulation and leading to short circuits within the motor windings to ground and even interphase.

Generally, the CIV tends to decrease with increasing carrier frequency of the alternating voltage under the influence of which the corona takes place.

This risk is exacerbated by factors such as cable length, cable type, and

impedance mismatches between the motor and cable. According to industry standards, including NEMA MG1 Part 31, IEC 60034-25 and IEC 60034-18-41; motors should be rated to handle approximately 3.1 times phase to ground and 5.9 times phase to phase to their rated voltage to accommodate these transients effectively.

### Using simulations to select the right motor

Several variations of corona test apparatus and circuits are available and can be used to generate typical corona environments for specific power system components and their operating conditions. Simulation tools can predict how different configurations will perform under operational conditions, showcasing system voltages and identifying maximum voltage levels. These simulations provide valuable insights, enabling system performance optimisation and ensuring the apparatus is designed to handle the stress of real-world scenarios.

By leveraging advanced simulation techniques, informed decisions can be made regarding motor choices and mitigating risk. Simulations also enable the analysis of various scenarios involving cable lengths and types, ensuring that motors that meet specific application requirements are selected. These simulations should be considered for power systems operating at 300 V and greater.

This proactive approach enhances system reliability and ensures that electrical motors have adequate CIV ratings.

Enquiries: <https://referro.co.za/>

## RS Pro expands automation range

As automation continues to revolutionise production facilities, RS PRO, a brand of RS, is expanding its product range to meet the growing demand for smarter, more efficient processes. With a portfolio boost of over 1,300 new products across more than 15 technologies, RS PRO aims to become the go-to partner for automation solutions.

Adding to its existing range of over 45,000 products, this new launch ensures that customers have access to an even broader selection of components at competitive prices, helping them streamline their automated operations with ease.

The RS PRO range includes everything from control systems to mechanical components, as well as essential test and measurement tools to ensure optimal performance on production lines. The newly expanded portfolio features PLCs, relays, HMI

displays, DIN rails, structural systems, pneumatic hoses, fasteners and fixings, bearings, and much more, providing a one-stop solution for a wide variety of automation and maintenance needs.

The expanded automation range is designed to cater to a diverse array of industries, including discrete and process manufacturing, energy and utilities, and facilities and intralogistics. RS PRO is committed to delivering products that address specific customer needs, tailored to their unique sector requirements.

"In an ever-evolving industrial environment, RS PRO's commitment to quality, reliability, and choice ensures that customers can meet their design, performance, and compliance goals throughout the product lifecycle," the company says.

Enquiries: <https://za.rs-online.com/web/>



## WearCheck team celebrates diagnostic milestone

Condition monitoring specialist company WearCheck, celebrated a noteworthy milestone recently when diagnostic manager John Evans diagnosed his 3-millionth used oil sample at the company's Durban laboratory.

WearCheck's scientists analyse used samples of oil and other machinery fluids, like coolants, greases, fuel and more, using high-tech laboratory equipment and techniques to assess the condition of the engine or component being tested, and predict whether mechanical problems are imminent.

Evans joined WearCheck in 1989 in Durban, after starting his career in the oil analysis world in 1983 with Caterpillar in Botswana. He has worked in the tribology sector for more than 40 years, and holds a BSc in chemistry from Southampton University in the United Kingdom.

At WearCheck, Evans is involved in diagnostics, customer support, training and managing remote diagnostic facilities for companies running their own oil analysis laboratories, and co-authored a book entitled The Oil Analysis Handbook. He heads up a highly experienced, professional team, which includes nine diagnosticians, who have collectively analysed 12.5 million samples. Four of the diagnosticians in this team have diagnosed over one million samples each.

Together, the diagnosticians hold many degrees and diplomas in a variety of engineering and scientific disciplines, and hail from various engineering and scientific backgrounds. This presents a vast amount of experience on which to draw when diagnosing oil samples. This extensive level of experience leaves very few areas that aren't covered in their combined diagnostic experience of over 200 years.

Says Evans, "I have learned a tremendous amount from a variety of truly great mentors. Probably the best part about oil analysis diagnostics is that never a week goes by where you don't learn something new. Interestingly, diagnosing 3-million samples is like checking the health of everyone in a city which has a population of 3-million people!"

In addition to used oil analysis, WearCheck is a hub for many alternative condition-monitoring services, including water analysis, transformer oil analysis, asset reliability care (ARC), lubricant-enabled reliability and advanced field services (non-destructive testing, rope testing and technical compliance).

The company's services assist clients across a wide range of sectors, including mining, earthmoving, power generation, aviation, maritime, transport, construction and others.

Enquiries: [www.wearcheck.co.za](http://www.wearcheck.co.za)



## Smart metering redefines utility management and sustainability

How can smart metering revolutionise how utilities and consumers interact with energy resources locally? Francois Conradie, technology sales engineer at Remote Metering Solutions (RMS), explores the opportunity.

### The evolution of the smart meter

In 1972, Theodore Paraskevakos, a Greek-American inventor and businessman, developed the first smart meters while collaborating with Boeing in Huntsville, Alabama. He adapted technology from his patented caller ID system to monitor sensors and relay data.

Since then, smart meters have evolved significantly. They now facilitate two-way communication and record data such as electric energy consumption, voltage levels, current, and power factor between the meter and electricity suppliers. This capability provides real-time or near real-time data, improving effectiveness and accuracy in energy consumption monitoring, system management, and customer billing for residential and commercial properties.

These digital devices continue to replace traditional meters in response to growing concerns over energy consumption and efficiency. Unlike analogue meters, which require manual readings by meter readers, smart meters deliver precise and up-to-date consumption information, enabling utilities and consumers to monitor and manage energy usage more efficiently.

By the end of 2023, smart device installations surpassed 1.06 billion, a significant milestone in advancing digitalised and efficient utility services around the globe.

As Governments increasingly recognise the need to update ageing grid infrastructure and actively engage smart grid stakeholders, we have seen the development of regulatory policies and other manifestos driving the adoption of smart meters.

### Resistance locally

Implementing smart meters as part of the smart grid system offers many benefits to consumers and service providers (utility companies). Yet, it's faced wide resistance in many countries, including South Africa.

A South African study identified several consumer-centric factors relevant to local consumers' resistance. These include trust in technology, cost, and ease of use, which could influence how consumers perceive and adopt smart meter technology in our country.

Efforts are being made to improve the local grid infrastructure and enhance energy efficiency through smart metering systems. South Africa's Smart Grid Vision 2030 propels the nation towards a future where smart utility readiness is a tangible

reality.

Despite the varied pace of adoption across the globe, the collective movement towards smart meters signifies a global shift towards building a modernised electrical grid system, using digital technology to enhance the reliability, efficiency, and sustainability of electricity usage distribution.



### Benefits of going smart

Smart metering revolutionises how utilities and consumers interact with energy resources. Compared to traditional metering, smart meters are integral to modern utility infrastructure, offering:

- Accurate consumer billing based on actual, real-time usage data.
- The implementation of demand response programmes for understanding usage patterns, and balancing supply and demand.
- Real-time data collection and analysis for informed energy-related decisions and cost savings on actual usage.
- Remote data transmission that eliminates the need for physical meter readings, enabling remote monitoring.
- Enhanced grid management capabilities and shorter or reduced outage times.
- The promotion of sustainability through energy conservation and efficiency practices.

From a commercial perspective, businesses and industries benefit from significant cost savings and reduced carbon footprints by optimising energy consumption using real-time data feedback.

As sustainability gains prominence, smart metering not only emerges as a technological advancement but also as a vital tool for efficient utility management, sustainable practices, and proactive maintenance.

### A smart future

With the rise of the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Big Data, we're in a new era for residential and commercial energy management. Smart metering paves the way toward considerate and responsible energy use, optimal infrastructure maintenance, and minimised environmental impact, heralding a future of smarter, greener, and more resilient communities worldwide.

Enquiries: [www.remotemetering.net](http://www.remotemetering.net)



## LEDVANCE Renewables: advancing solar energy

LEDVANCE has introduced a range of renewable energy solutions, including solar panels, inverters, and battery storage. Now a one-stop shop for the entire photovoltaic system, LEDVANCE is committed to driving positive change and contributing to a brighter, greener future.

### Expanding beyond light

LEDVANCE stands for advancing light. Now, it also stands for advancing solar energy. Why? "We are lighting enthusiasts. Sunlight is our inspiration. We bring light into people's lives and are driven by the goal of increasing our impact on Net Zero," the company explains.

By harnessing the power of the sun, LEDVANCE now enables private and business customers to generate their own clean energy, reduce their dependence on traditional energy sources and minimise their impact on the environment. "LEDVANCE offers a unique vertically integrated solution for the building sector covering energy supply, energy storage, energy use and integration with power systems."

### Comprehensive PV solution

LEDVANCE Renewables is the one-stop shop for photovoltaic systems, offering a comprehensive range of products and services. Its solutions seamlessly integrate photovoltaic (PV) panels, inverters and batteries, all specifically designed for both residential and commercial applications.

To enhance user experience and convenience, it has developed the LEDVANCE Renewable App, which allows users to monitor their PV system effortlessly, anytime, anywhere. This smart tool lets users stay connected to their energy production and ensure optimal performance and efficiency.

With a strong commitment to reliability and excellence, LEDVANCE also offers technical support to help with any questions. Its comprehensive and integrated approach covers all aspects, from consulting and PV system supply to performance and energy monitoring, as well as technical support.

### Solar panels

LEDVANCE's solar panels are available in a variety of configurations, with power ratings ranging from 405 W to 660 W, and three different colours. Depending on whether the panels are installed on the roof or in areas with a highly reflective surface, users can choose between panels that can produce electricity from the top only (mono-facial) or from both the top and bottom (bi-facial).

It is also possible to purchase panels with up to 16 busbars – reducing resistance and making the panels more efficient. LEDVANCE Renewables offers various colours, sizes, capacities and functionalities to suit any need.

### Inverters

An inverter is the heart of a PV system, reducing its carbon footprint and allowing users to consume or sell the electricity they generate.

LEDVANCE offers high-efficiency string and hybrid inverters – both part of an open system and, therefore, compatible with various commercially available PV system components such as batteries. Its inverters meet all regulatory and safety requirements and are easy to use.

The integrated displays are of outstanding quality and allow easy monitoring. This makes LEDVANCE inverters the perfect complement to any solar panel, as the company offers well-thought-out solutions



and understands how users want to design and build.

### Battery storage

When more electricity is generated than what is consumed, it's possible to use the batteries to store the electricity and use it when the sun is not shining. This allows users to increase their autonomy and self-consumption, which is profitable for residential and commercial customers alike.

With capacities ranging from 5 to 24 kWh and a modular design, LEDVANCE's battery storage is flexible enough to adapt to a variety of needs, and its custom app gives users an intelligent at-a-glance view of their battery status.

\*Note that LEDVANCE only has the Bi Facial 580 W solar panels in stock in South Africa, while the rest of the systems and panels will be brought in on request.

Enquiries: [www.ledvance.com](http://www.ledvance.com)

## Custom LED lighting solution for TASEZ

BEKA Schröder is proud to have manufactured and supplied the decorative custom LED lighting solution for a traffic circle at the Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone (TASEZ) in Gauteng, South Africa.

TASEZ is Africa's first automotive city, an industrial hub that provides investors with a wide range of offerings to help their businesses flourish. They are a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) that is focused on growing South Africa's automotive manufacturing industry.

### Custom-made lighting solution

Insite Landscape Architects approached BEKA Schröder to assist with a unique luminaire for their beautification landscape project for TASEZ. The luminaire needed to be unique and stand out as a feature on the traffic circle.

Incorporating the architect's vision, BEKA Schröder's Research and Development team designed beautiful luminaire columns that deliver a striking lighting effect with a natural, organic aesthetic.

### Designed for longevity

These luminaire columns have been manufactured at BEKA Schröder's factory in Olifantsfontein in South Africa, thus

taking the continent's harsh environmental conditions into account. They have been constructed using high-quality materials to ensure longevity.

The column and luminaire housings are made of e-coated (electro-coated) and powder-coated mild steel, offering several benefits, particularly in terms of durability, corrosion resistance, and aesthetics. Both coatings enhance the lifespan of mild steel by providing robust protection against wear, corrosion, and environmental exposure.

The IP66-rated LED compartment is highly resistant to both dust and water ingress. This makes it suitable for environments where it may be exposed to harsh conditions such as heavy rain, dust, or dirt.

State-of-the-art high-power LEDs using the LensoFlex 2 platform are incorporated into the columns. LensoFlex 2 is an advanced optical technology used in LED luminaires, developed by Schröder. This technology involves the use of high-performance lenses designed to optimise light distribution, improve energy efficiency, and enhance visual comfort. Overall, LensoFlex 2 enhances the performance of LED luminaires by combining energy efficiency with superior light quality.



### Other installations

BEKA Schröder is proud to have supplied many other luminaires in other parts of TASEZ recently, such as LEDLUME XP streetlights, BEKA VAPOURLINE linear industrial LED luminaires, FOCUS LED floodlights, and TERRA MIDI LED uplighters.

Two years ago, BEKA Schröder supplied the interior and exterior lighting to various warehouses at TASEZ.

### Locally manufactured

BEKA Schröder develops and manufactures sustainable LED lighting products in South Africa, designed and suitable for local conditions. They are very proud to be associated with the following partners:

- Coega Development Corporation, on behalf of Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone (TASEZ);
- Insite Landscape Architects;
- iX Engineers; and
- MES Major Projects.

Enquiries: [northern@beka-schreder.co.za](mailto:northern@beka-schreder.co.za).



## Aurora Lighting Africa's Cosmos+ LED highbay: A bright future for industrial spaces

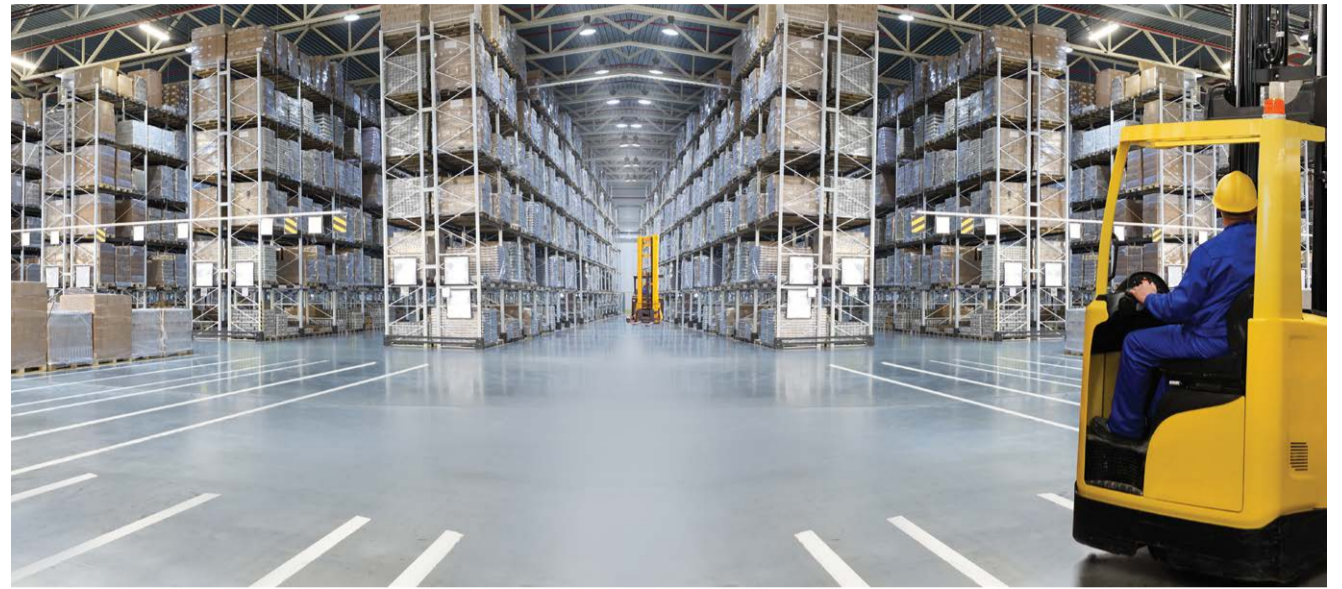
In the world of industrial lighting, where efficiency, durability, and cost-effectiveness are everything, Aurora Lighting Africa's Cosmos+ high-efficiency IP65 LED highbay stands out.

Designed with warehouses and manufacturing facilities in mind, the Cosmos+ combines robust performance with a 100,000-hour lifespan, an impressive 180lm/W, and a five-year warranty. This isn't just a lighting fixture; it's a game-changer for businesses aiming to improve productivity, cut energy costs, and create safer, brighter work environments.

With a focus on lumens, not watts, the Cosmos+ highbay is all about delivering brightness at reduced energy consumption. With an efficacy of 180lm/W, this luminaire lights up large, high installation spaces. For industries that operate 24/7, this efficiency translates into real, long-term savings on energy consumption. Facility managers looking to reduce operational costs without sacrificing performance will find Cosmos+ an ideal choice.

Built to handle the tough conditions found in industrial spaces, the Cosmos+ boasts an IP65 rating, making it both dust-tight and water-resistant. This level of durability is crucial in warehouses and manufacturing facilities, where dust, humidity, and cleaning are all part of the environment. The IP65 rating ensures Cosmos+ can withstand it all, reducing the need for maintenance and keeping operations running smoothly.

One of Cosmos+'s most impressive features is its lifespan. With a 100,000-hour operating life and backed by a five-year warranty, this fixture will keep going for over a decade in a round-the-clock facility. This long lifespan and warranty reduce the need for frequent replacements, saving time and money on maintenance. It's also safer for workers, who won't need to access high fixtures for



replacements as often. In industrial settings where safety and efficiency are critical, this durability is invaluable.

But the Cosmos+ doesn't just shine brightly; it shines smartly. Its consistent, shadow-free light improves visibility, which boosts productivity and safety. In warehouses, better lighting means faster, more accurate inventory picking. In manufacturing, it means higher quality control and fewer accidents. Workers also benefit, experiencing reduced eye strain and increased alertness, which translates to a more positive and productive work environment.

Aurora Lighting Africa's commitment to sustainability is evident in the Cosmos+ as well. With its extended lifespan, low energy use, and dependable five-year warranty, Cosmos+ helps reduce a facility's carbon footprint, making

it a responsible choice for companies aiming to meet sustainability goals.

All in all, the Cosmos+ high-efficiency IP65 LED highbay isn't just another luminaire; it's an investment in a brighter, more efficient, and more sustainable future for industrial spaces. If you're managing a warehouse, manufacturing plant, or any facility with demanding lighting needs, the Cosmos+ is a high-performing, reliable choice that leads the way in today's industrial lighting landscape.

"The launch of these high-efficiency LED highbays aligns with global efforts to reduce energy consumption and to provide a best-in-class lighting solution for industrial spaces," said Scylagh Clunnie, MD of Aurora Africa.

Enquiries: [info@aurora-africa.com](mailto:info@aurora-africa.com)

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## George Russell praises NatureConnect by Signify

NatureConnect by Signify has made a great impression at the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 team's headquarters in Brackley, UK, and it's even caught the attention of star driver George Russell.

Team members spend hours in the windowless control room of the simulator in Brackley, analysing data from the car. Alertness, teamwork, and high performance are essential. In a recent interview, George Russell expressed the impact NatureConnect has made on the space.

"I genuinely thought it was natural light. I just couldn't believe it. It felt so realistic," he said.

The partnership between Signify and the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team supports the team's ambition to become one of the most sustainable in the world. Our innovative and energy-efficient lighting solutions not only enhance performance but also align with the team's journey toward net-zero emissions. In Formula 1, every detail matters, and ensuring that every team member is able to perform to their full potential is essential for success.

NatureConnect is designed to mimic natural daylight. The skylights are indistinguishable from a real window and give a feeling of spaciousness. NatureConnect brings

high melanopic levels, elevating people's performance while at the same time providing functional lighting.

Its impact is already felt across office spaces, healthcare facilities, and hospitality venues. Now, it has made its mark in a unique new environment, where high performance is essential.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of our UK Sales, NatureConnect and Design teams, who worked together to integrate NatureConnect in the space, we were able to bring the benefits of natural daylight indoors to the MF1 team. These products will help boost the team's energy levels, increase alertness and vitality, and transform the space into a more productive, inspiring, and relaxing environment.

Impressed by its impact, George Russell expressed interest in expanding the use of NatureConnect within the team.

"The NatureConnect Skylight is definitely something I want to try and implement more often in my workspace." – George Russell

There's more to come for our partnership as we continue to drive responsible innovation on and off track with our partners at Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1.

Enquiries: [www.signify.com](http://www.signify.com)



## Lighting in the age of artificial intelligence

How would artificial intelligence (AI) be used or be useful in lighting design? Philip Hammond from the BHA School of Lighting in Cape Town investigates.

Quite simply, AI is being embraced by lighting design software developers to recognise patterns and complete repetitive tasks automatically. Using this technology means the lighting design process can be completed in less time and with less effort. It makes it possible for lighting designers to be more productive and thus more profitable.

### Replacing humans?

The question should be asked whether AI in lighting design will make lighting designers redundant. The answer is simple and logical: AI will not replace lighting designers. Instead, AI is expected to be used skillfully by competent lighting designers.

This highlights the growing need for

qualified lighting designers with a thorough technical background and knowledge; which can be gained by enrolling in courses such as the Advanced Diploma in Illumination Engineering Course offered by the BHA School of Lighting, for example.

In practical ways, AI can be used to generate images. Typically, suitable images from Microsoft Copilot or AI models can be used in concept lighting designs. This adds realism and contributes to a high-quality concept lighting design.

### So, what is AI in lighting?

It represents a paradigm where lighting systems are responsive and intelligently adaptive to their environment and user needs. AI-driven, smart lighting can analyse data such as natural light, room occupancy and personal preferences to dynamically provide the most efficient and comfortable



lighting conditions.

Call me boring, but I urge you to be curious. Do your own research into AI in lighting and lighting design. None of us can afford to ignore AI or AI in lighting and lighting design. It is only a matter of time before it becomes a standard feature

in all software.

None of us want to be left behind technologically. We must keep up with developments and continue researching all facets of the lighting design profession.

Enquiries: [www.bhaschooloflighting.co.za](http://www.bhaschooloflighting.co.za)

## IESSA: Latest trends in street lighting in South Africa

Street lighting is the single largest source of carbon emissions from local government, typically accounting for 30-60% of their total emissions, according to Green Building Africa. Accelerating the update of LED streetlights by the public sector with 'smart controls' improves road safety and security while significantly reducing a city's energy bill plus carbon emissions.

Street lighting plays a crucial role in enhancing safety, security, and aesthetics in urban and rural environments. As technology continues to advance, street lighting is evolving to become more energy-efficient, smart, and adaptable to the needs of South African cities and communities.

This article by the Illumination Engineering Society of South Africa (IESSA) explores the most recent trends shaping the future of street lighting in South Africa.

### Current state of street lighting in South Africa

Loss of lighting in critical areas reduces visibility on our roads and endangers the lives of both drivers and pedestrians. Well-lit areas are also a proven deterrent to criminal activities. Current factors leading to loss of lighting include disconnection of power due to unpaid bills but far more common is downtime due to copper cable theft.

Another trend on the rise is the sabotage of the timers on streetlights that switch the lights off during the day and turn them on when it becomes dark. The timers have been a target of deliberate damage, which has led to the lights illuminating throughout the day and night; this apparently enables criminal syndicates to use these circuits for illegal connections. Solar streetlights require absolutely no interaction with South Africa's national power grid – you could call them "wireless" – so they cannot be affected by vandalism of the power supply or be switched off due to non-payment.

### Evolution of local street lighting

The evolution of street lighting in South Africa is being driven by the need for sustainability, cost-efficiency, and adaptability. As smart technologies, solar power, and human-centric designs become more prevalent, street lighting is set to play a pivotal role in the development of safer,

smarter, and more attractive cities.

Let's now look at some of the trends at the forefront of street lighting:

### LED lighting dominance

- **Energy efficiency:** LED lighting has become the preferred choice due to its low energy consumption, durability, and long lifespan.
- **Cost savings:** Municipalities are saving significantly on electricity bills and maintenance costs by switching to LED streetlights.
- **Enhanced light quality:** LEDs provide better illumination with improved colour rendering, which enhances visibility and safety.

### Smart street lighting systems

- **Adaptive lighting:** These systems adjust brightness based on traffic, weather, or time of day, reducing energy usage during low-traffic hours.
- **Remote monitoring and control:** Streetlights can be monitored and managed remotely, allowing for quick responses to maintenance issues or malfunctions.
- **Integration with IoT:** Smart street lighting systems can communicate with other smart city infrastructure, enabling data collection for traffic management, air quality monitoring, and more.

### Solar-powered street lighting

- **Sustainability:** Solar-powered lights are gaining popularity due to South Africa's abundant sunlight, offering a sustainable solution to power streetlights, especially in off-grid areas.
- **Cost-effective:** While the initial investment can be high, the long-term savings on electricity and minimal maintenance make solar lighting an attractive option.
- **Hybrid systems:** Combining solar with grid power ensures uninterrupted lighting, even during cloudy days or extended periods of bad weather.

### Human-centric lighting design

- **Adaptive lighting for pedestrians and cyclists:** Prioritising the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists by using warmer, more focused lighting in areas where people gather.



- **Reduced light pollution:** Efforts to minimise glare and light spillover ensure that lighting is directed where it's needed most, reducing energy waste and light pollution.

### Integration of motion sensors

- **Dynamic lighting:** Lights can dim when no movement is detected and brighten when activity is sensed, optimising energy use while ensuring safety.
- **Crime deterrence:** Sudden brightening can act as a deterrent for potential criminal activities, enhancing public safety in urban areas.
- **Use of environmentally friendly materials**
- **Recyclable components:** Streetlights made from recyclable materials are becoming more prevalent, reflecting a broader commitment to sustainability.
- **Reduced carbon footprint:** The adoption of materials with a lower environmental impact supports eco-friendly city initiatives.

### Aesthetic and architectural lighting

- **Enhancing urban identity:** Streetlights are no longer just functional; they are designed to enhance the aesthetic appeal and identity of urban spaces.
- **Customisation:** Cities are opting for designs that complement their architecture, using streetlights as a means of adding character and beauty to public spaces.

### Lighting as a Service (Laas)

- **Outsourcing street lighting management:** Municipalities are increasingly partnering with service providers who handle the installation, maintenance, and management of street lighting, reducing the need for upfront capital investment.
- **Performance-based models:** Payment is often based on energy savings, or the level of service provided, making this a cost-effective and flexible option.

By staying abreast of these trends, lighting professionals can ensure they contribute to the growth of modern, energy-efficient urban environments in South Africa.

### Stay ahead of the trends with IESSA

The Illumination Engineering Society of South Africa (IESSA) represents the interests of lighting professionals and businesses in South Africa. While not a regulatory body, IESSA often collaborates with regulatory agencies, promotes best practices, and provides guidance to its members on compliance with local and international standards. It serves as an industry voice, advocating for policies that benefit the lighting sector and supporting members in navigating regulatory requirements.

IESSA provides opportunities for its members to improve their knowledge to practice their profession with knowledge and confidence, they also represent members at an international level to ensure that knowledge on the latest trends and developments is transferred to their members locally.

IESSA represents South Africa internationally and thereby acts as the National Committee of the CIE (*Commission Internationale De L'Eclairage*). South African Experts on various topics in the lighting technology field serve on the CIE international committees responsible for the development of standards for the different aspects of illumination.

Membership of IESSA is open to both individuals and organisations active in the lighting industry of South Africa. You need to be a Lighting Professional to join IESSA. Group membership is open to any educational, scientific, technical, professional, institution, public, commercial, or municipal entity that is actively involved in the lighting industry.

Enquiries: [info@iessa.org.za](mailto:info@iessa.org.za)



## ACTOM opens new training centre for apprentices

ACTOM, the largest manufacturer and supplier of electro-mechanical equipment in Sub-Saharan Africa, has opened a new training centre facility that offers a variety of apprenticeship programmes at its premises in Germiston, east of Johannesburg.

Kobus Swanepoel, technical training manager at Actom Training Centre, explains that relocating the 30-year-old training centre to its new and bigger premises will enable the training centre to leverage new state-of-the-art equipment and training facilities for more apprentices per

intake. "The training centre is accredited for training apprentices in eight different trades, namely mechanical fitter, fitter and turner, metal machinist, tool, jig and die maker, millwright, electrician, boilermaker and welder," he says.

Swanepoel adds that the new centre is currently in the process of obtaining its new accreditation from the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

### International recognition

"The apprentice programmes we offer are

completed over three years and consist of theoretical, practical and work-based training components. At the end of the training, apprentices must pass a trade test to obtain a Red Seal certificate allowing them to be recognised internationally as artisans," states Swanepoel.

He notes that while Actom Training Centre was never a trade test centre historically, the new venue and additional space will enable the training centre to now do trade testing internally and it is currently applying for accreditation for this function. "Currently, we take in 150 candidates per year. While we could accommodate more, we instead want to focus on delivering quality training to those enrolled," he says.

When ACTOM initially established the training centre, Swanepoel says that the idea behind it was to train artisans specifically for the company. However, about three years ago, ACTOM expanded this mandate to extend training to apprentices from other companies.

### New intake of apprentices

This year, he says, Actom Training Centre received a grant from a SETA for 50 apprentices and they are also training 38 apprentices from other companies. These apprentices start

"By training apprentices for the wider industry, we are looking at the bigger picture. By using the training centre to develop skills for the industry, we are looking to make a difference in the unemployment crisis, which will ultimately benefit the broader economy. We are planning to position our training centre as one of the best in the country," says Swanepoel.

"ACTOM has invested a considerable amount of money to ensure that we can produce quality apprentices that will ultimately help the industry. There are so many unemployed people in South Africa, so there is a tremendous need for people to be trained especially in trade skills. I believe that we can make a huge difference in the industry and people's lives by giving them greater opportunities."

Enquiries: [www.actomtraining.co.za](http://www.actomtraining.co.za)

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