



MEDIA RELEASE

For publishing from 22 May 2014

THE NGEWANA FAMILY SHEDS LIGHT ON SAVINGS AT 'MY GREEN HOME'

The latest high-tech globes and old-fashioned common sense slash lighting energy consumption

The family that is changing their home to help change the world has found that arguably the easiest place to trim utility bills is through lighting. Now they are sharing their 'light-bulb moment' with others online.

Zwelethu and Bulelwa Ngewana had already made a partial switch to compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) in some of their rooms a few years ago, but they've learned that they could save much more. Lighting was still one of their top four electricity consumers in the house, about 15 percent of total use.

As a first step, in April they decided to really follow the common advice that lights should be switched off when leaving a room. Without spending a cent, they cut their lighting consumption by 20 percent. (In their quest to cut all electricity consumption by 40 percent in just a few months, every aspect of energy use is continuously monitored in the Ngewana household and displayed live online at www.mygreenhome.org.za.)

Turning off lights has become such a habit that the Ngewana's daughter, Thulisa, now finds it strange walking into a friend's home and finding lights on in empty rooms. "It's become like an itch you have to scratch if some of the lights are on in a room when nobody is using it," she says.

But the big impact will be from this month, as the entire home – inside and out – was fitted with LED fixtures and replacement globes sponsored by Eurolux. LEDs or light-emitting diodes, are the lighting of the future that has become affordable today. Prices for these ultra-long-lasting globes have recently come down to the point that quality-brand bulbs are now in the R100 to R250 range -and as low as R50 on sale. So a purchase can pay for itself in just a year or two. Compared with old-style incandescent bulbs, using ultra-efficient LEDs costs only one-sixth to one-tenth as much in electricity for lighting.

The family haven't missed out on the sun either. It's invited inside through a tubular skylight from Solatube over a dark stairwell which is far from windows. This is part of maximizing natural light.

This coming week's theme at My Green Home is lighting. The website, www.mygreenhome.org.za, shows how to follow in the path that the Ngewana family have lit. In a video 'webisode', viewers can watch the Ngewana family cutting watts, while web pages offer lighting advice including a shoppers' Guide to Globes. It even explains how a R250 bulb can be cheaper than a R15 one.

My Green Home is led by the Green Building Council South Africa, with main co-funding from the German government through the South African-German Energy Programme (SAGEN). It's also supported by the 49M campaign, the South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI) and a range of product sponsors and partner organisations.

Those who participate in the My Green Home journey stand a chance to win green prizes, including the grand prize: their own 'green home makeover'. Anyone who submits a 'selfie' photo with their energy-saving bulb/s to the website or via Twitter (@mygreenhomesa) by 12h00 on Monday 2nd June is eligible for this week's prizes in a random draw, as well as the grand prize in early August.

How many South Africans does it take to change a light bulb? That's an old joke. The Ngewana family says that the better question is: "How many light bulbs does it take to change South Africa?"

Lighting solutions have been sponsored by Eurolux (<http://www.eurolux.co.za/>) and Solatube (<http://www.solatube.com>)

The winners of the first lucky draw competition are Anja Thompson from Sandton and Jenny Wyeth from Cape Town. They each win a Wonderbag insulation cooker from Natural Balance.

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