



MEDIA RELEASE

GREEN BUILDINGS ARE HEALTHIER, HAPPIER PLACES

Immediate Release

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The Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) wants to encourage South Africans to pay more attention to 'green buildings', or erecting structures with both the environment, and the occupants of the building in mind.

Our urban areas are growing at a steady pace and our skylines ever-changing. The IWMSA is calling for more mindfulness in the building arena. Whether for office accommodation, sports arenas, shopping malls, or dwellings, the principles of building green can be applied to any built environment. Popular opinion is that not only does the environment benefit from such carefully considered construction, but that people are generally happier and more contented working or living in such buildings. Dr Suzan Oelofse, IWMSA Central Branch Chairman adds, "The environmental benefits derived from green buildings can further be enhanced by including waste minimisation and recycling principles in this type of environment."

What defines a green building? It is primarily an energy and resource efficient construction which is also environmentally responsible in terms of its design, construction and subsequent day-to-day operations.

As one may imagine, there are many facets to be taken into account: building materials and other products should, wherever possible, be made from recycled materials and manufactured from renewable resources. The use of products with 'low embodied' energy is called for, meaning products in which less energy is consumed during the manufacturing process. Water conservation constitutes a vital element in the whole plan, and grey water systems, as well as low flow taps should be installations of choice. Then there is the use of non-toxic finishing materials (such as paint) and applying solar technology for heating. Not least, a building should be orientated correctly in order to reduce the heat load and to optimise shade and screening thereby enabling the use of more energy efficient lighting systems and air conditioning.

These protocols, amongst a myriad other considerations, if used effectively, can substantially minimise environmental impact.

Another benefit of great significance is that green buildings are usually specifically designed to provide healthier and more productive environments for those who live and work in them, which in turn, may lead to a happier, healthier population.

Oelofse, continued “While there is not yet any particular legislation in place in South Africa in respect of green building requirements, as responsible custodians of the earth, we must become increasingly aware of our use of its resources.” Oelofse added, “The IWMSA is supportive of green building initiatives, and we believe that in the foreseeable future there will be specific requirements regarding the built environment, especially in view of other recent legislation, such as the New Waste Act. We also have increasing electricity costs to be implemented shortly, for example, and it makes sound economic and environmental sense to use renewable resources and to become as energy efficient as possible.”

As IWMSA members, both organisations and individuals have access to a wealth of information and resources, not only in the management of waste but in a number of related fields. The IWMSA provides education and training for its members, you can network and exchange information with like-minded individuals, and even have your voice heard in the formulation of legislation. The IWMSA also provides their members with the latest industry news.

The IWMSA supports professional waste management practices and best environmental practices and are pleased about conferences such as the upcoming Green Building Conference and Exhibition that will be taking place in Sandton from 13 – 14 July 2011, where a powerful mix of international and local content for built-environment professionals and stakeholders are anticipated.

The IWMSA is a professional, multi-disciplinary organisation with voluntary membership established to promote the science and practice of waste management and is a non-profit organisation. For more information contact the IWMSA visit: www.iwmsa.co.za or call Tel: 011 675 3462

For more information on the Green Building Conference and Exhibition visit www.greenbuilding.co.za or e-mail: info@greenbuilding.co.za / Tel: 021 447 4733

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Media contact:

Regine le Roux

Mobile: 083 302 1528

e-Mail: regine@reputationmatters.co.za