

PRESS RELEASE

Swartland and sustainability

23 October 2015, Johannesburg: Going green is no longer just a fad, it's a reality that individuals and companies alike need to work towards in order to attain long-term sustainability for our future. Leading timber and aluminium window and door manufacturer, Swartland, is one such company – committed to developing wooden and aluminum products and practices that reflect their vision to make a positive difference to people and planet. Swartland's Cobus Lourens shares his insight into how this forward thinking company is making headway when it comes the sustainability of our natural resources.

GRI report

Swartland incorporates some of the world's best standards and practices in operations. In line with this vision, the company has embarked on a GRI Sustainability Reporting Process with the aim of increasing communication with stakeholders around transparency and accountability. Says Cobus: "Our sustainability reports contain key information in an easy to read format so as to provides all stakeholders with the information that they require, whilst driving us towards improvement in all key areas of the business."

Amongst other things, the report demonstrates Swartland's vision to become a shining example of sustainability stewardship. "At Swartland we aim to grow the company, whilst reducing relative consumption of natural resources – advocating and activating sustainable business practices in everything that we do. We are aware that our own business sustainability is directly linked to the sustainability of our planet and its people, it is just a matter of time until all organisations come to the same realisation," nods Cobus.

Fresh from the oven

Over a year ago, Swartland invested in four new high-tech computer-controlled kilns that have allowed them to dramatically increase the amount of timber that can be kiln-dried during any single drying cycle without compromising on the woods optimal moisture content. This process reduces the chances of the wood contracting after production, which in turn improves the quality, stability, durability, and performance of the end product.

Every aspect of these kilns has been designed to be as energy efficient as possible. "What makes these kilns so unique is their ability to achieve best-in-market energy efficiency through a built-in intelligent energy management system. For example, the system can make small fan adjustments in order to reduce power usage during peak periods, and it considers the energy available from on-site heating plants," explains Cobus.

The kilns also boast eco vents that recycle the heat that is generated during the drying process, reducing the amount of fuel burned and CO2 emissions given off. Up to 50% of the water utilised is also recovered and reused, making the entire process much more water efficient. In addition, the motors and electronics have been positioned on the

outside of each unit so they aren't exposed to excessive humidity and heat, which serves to increase the kiln's lifespan and, in so doing, decrease the overall carbon footprint. Says Cobus: "Swartland's new kilns are a prime example of the company's commitment to be as environmentally responsible as possible, making a positive difference to the planet."

Coming full cycle

Swartland is committed to reducing waste and one of the ways they achieve this is through their recycling program. Says Cobus: "There are many green benefits when using wood as a construction material. One of the main factors is the fact that timber is easily reused, recycled or broken down into compost after use."

As a start, Swartland uses the best woodcuts from trees to create the finest quality windows and doors. Other grade cuts are used in wood laminate products, and that which does not get used in production, such as excess wood chips, is used to fuel boilers that kiln-dry the wood. In addition, shavings and sawdust are sold on to local farmers for chicken bedding. "Virtually nothing is wasted," nods Cobus, adding, "our 'think long term' philosophy guides us at Swartland in everything we do, not just with the materials we choose to use, but also the manufacturing process, and the way the company is run. Our commitment to increased energy efficiency and environmental sustainability is deeply ingrained. It may cost Swartland more to produce a green product, but if it means giving back to the environment, then it's a cost we encourage."

Green building regulations

The current state of the urban environments we inhabit is cause to be more environmentally conscious – from the food we eat, the cars we drive, right down to the windows and doors we choose for our homes. And Swartland is leading the pack when it comes to going green. "All the products in Swartland's KENZO range of aluminium windows and doors, as well as its range of Ready-2-Fit timber wooden windows and doors are SANS 613- and SANS 204-compliant, which means that, not only do they comply with all the necessary local building regulations, but they are also an environmentally responsible choice," concludes Cobus.

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Released on behalf of Swartland Wooden Windows and Doors (www.swartland.co.za) by The Line Communications (www.theline.co.za, ant@theline.co.za).