

Old Mutual installs largest corporate solar carport in SA

Old Mutual was recently awarded a five-star Green Star SA Existing Building Performance rating for its Mutualpark offices in Pinelands, Cape Town. This rating by the Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA) is said to make it the largest existing building to achieve this rating in the southern hemisphere.



Old Mutual Galleria, Mutual Park, Pinelands, Cape Town. Image source: www.louisperryanderson.com

Old Mutual also unveiled its Mutualpark solar installation, which is claimed the largest corporate solar carport in South Africa. It consists of 3,600 solar panels over about 14,500m². With output just over 1MWp (mega watt peak) and covering 565 carports, the solar photovoltaic system will produce enough electricity to cut up to 8% of Mutualpark's consumption. This equates to one free month of Mutualpark's electricity per year or about R4.5m per year.

Finding solutions to the challenges of our time

Speaking at the handover of the Green Star SA certification and the official opening of the Mutualpark solar project, Rose Keanly, COO of Old Mutual Emerging Markets, said that the certification and solar installation underscore Old Mutual's commitment to making a positive impact on broader socio-economic and environmental issues in the country. It proves that big corporates are able to make a meaningful difference by being resourceful and thinking creatively to find solutions for the challenges of our time.

"Given rising electricity tariffs and the current constraints on South Africa's electricity supply, energy efficiency is critical to economic growth and stability. Responsible environmental management is one of the five pillars that define our responsible business approach. As Mutualpark is home to 7,000 employees, the building is one of the largest consumers of electricity in the Western Cape and this project now enables us to free up a significant amount of electricity on the City of Cape Town grid."

True green building

Brian Wilkinson, CEO of the GBCSA, said that Mutualpark represents what a true green building should aspire to be – energy efficient, resource efficient and environmentally responsible. "A five-star Green Star SA performance certification in a complex of this size is truly remarkable. What is even more remarkable is that some of the buildings at Mutualpark date back to 1954, debunking the myth that green building performance is only possible in new buildings. This is, by far, the

largest green building in South Africa and it is fitting that Old Mutual, who we all know as ‘the big green’, has demonstrated its leadership by achieving this certification.”

The GBCSA’s Green Star SA certification system regards five stars as “South African Excellence” and for Old Mutual to demonstrate its commitment to environmental responsibility in such a significant way shows true leadership, he said. “Old Mutual now joins the league of what we like to call Planet Shapers, demonstrating to all stakeholders that operating premises in an environmentally responsible way is both achievable and makes business sense – doing well by doing good,” said Wilkinson.

Group Climate Change Strategy

In addition to its Green Star SA rating achievement, Mutualpark was also commended by the City of Cape Town at the recent 2016 Energy Efficiency Forum Awards for its efforts to reduce energy consumption.

Keanly said Old Mutual will continue to monitor, manage and reduce its direct and indirect environmental impact. “This is in line with our Group Climate Change Strategy, which aims to improve the completeness and accuracy of our emissions data.”

She added that in Johannesburg construction is on track to complete Old Mutual’s new 12-storey 30,000m² head office in Sandton by end 2017. The new building will also target a five-star Green Star SA rating from the GBCSA for office design.

Keanly concluded that Old Mutual will continue to seek ways to become progressively more resource efficient while supporting a healthier local environment for people to live and work in.

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