

Support ecomobility during Transport Month

The South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI) urges all South Africans to embrace the possibilities of ecomobility during Transport Month and beyond, making it a conscious choice to reduce global warming.

“Ecomobility means traveling by using integrated, socially inclusive and environmentally friendly transport options, giving priority to walking and cycling, public transport and shared mobility. It is an essential element of sustainable and low carbon urban transportation, offering a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits,” explains Dr Thembakazi Mali, interim CEO at SANEDI.

“In South Africa, transport is the fourth highest, and fastest growing, carbon emitting sector. Of the 11% of South Africa’s greenhouse gases (GHG) associated with transport in general, 98% is directly linked to road transport. It is imperative then that we reduce the country’s reliance on private vehicles and begin to embrace new ideas and technologies.

“In 2015, Johannesburg hosted the EcoMobility World Festival, which targeted Sandton as an area where the introduction of cycle lanes, ‘tuk-tuks’ (motorised rickshaws), increased use of the Gautrain and even shared riding, demonstrated that it was possible to reduce private vehicle traffic. The city’s vision of the future of transport is a seamless transport system, where people can switch easily between rapid rail – the Gautrain – passenger rail, Metrobus, the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit Network, minibus taxis, cycling and walking. This would significantly reduce the volume of private transport usage in the city and enable Johannesburg to move closer towards its environmental targets.

“We urge those living in urban areas that offer Rea Vaya to embrace it; the busses are dual fuel green buses, running on low-sulphur diesel, which emits less greenhouse gases than other types of fuel.

“Electric cars are not a futuristic dream but an increasing reality. Upmarket eco-estates in South Africa are designing electric vehicle charging stations into garages, to enable owners to charge cars overnight. Electric cars can now go further and maintain practical traffic speeds, making it very possible to commute in the major South African cities. Private companies are ready to install electric car charging points in the cities, making this achievable within a couple of years.

“In Europe, research has shown that one Uber vehicle can potentially reduce car ownership by four, despite the political and social difficulties encountered. This solution is being embraced within the urban areas in South Africa, particularly for business meetings and has economic benefits as well. Today ride-hailing accounts for 4% of all kilometres driven globally. By 2030 it will be 25%.

“Carpooling is also a viable option. This year, the WWF encouraged its Johannesburg-based staff to embrace ecomobility and they found that there were more than just cost-savings involved in sharing a Pretoria to Johannesburg daily commute. By taking turns, the stress of driving was reduced, conversations were shared and even work could be caught up. It was

more a matter of changing behaviour to plan a week's worth of activities in advance, to take advantage of a shared carpool.

"By enabling people and organisations to access goods, services and information in a sustainable manner, ecomobility supports citizens' quality of life, increases travel choices and promotes social cohesion," concludes Mali

Ends 525 words

The South African government established SANEDI to direct, monitor and conduct applied energy R&D, demonstration and deployment, as well as to undertake specific measures to promote the uptake of green energy and energy efficiency in South Africa. Its mission is to use applied and energy research and resource efficiency to develop innovative, integrated solutions that will catalyse growth and prosperity to meet its vision of sustainable living for growth and prosperity in Africa.