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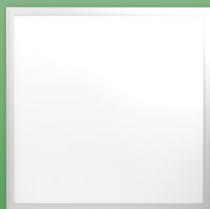
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## Cheers to 2025



It's difficult to avoid the clichéd opening of 'where has the time gone?' when this year truly feels like it has flown by in the

blink of an eye. I still have so many goals on my 2025 list that aren't even close to done. How's your list looking?

As we enter the final month of the year, I've noticed a mix of sentiments. Many people seem exhausted, near burnout, and ready for a break. Others have their eyes on the prize, pushing through to the final hurdle, but also unmistakably counting down to some time off. The lucky ones only have to make it halfway through December, but many others will only find rest in the new year. Then it's rinse and repeat for another busy 2026.

We seem to be getting busier every year. The to-do list never gets any shorter, yet the time available to complete tasks keeps reducing. We work longer days, we switch off less, and before you know it, you're eating lunch at your desk, checking emails on one screen and listening to a podcast on another. Where is the balance?

Realistically, I doubt the pace of the world will slow down. That means it's up to us to find little moments of joy, of rest, of fulfilment to keep us going. It's so easy to get caught up in the busyness, but what are you NOT making time for when you're glued to

your screens? And I'm not just talking about work-related screentime; 'doomscrolling' on social media has so many of us hooked – me included.

Don't worry, I'm not about to launch into some 'Eat, Pray, Love' lecture on how to improve your life with time management and discipline. But this is a good time of the year to reflect on the year that was and what we want for 2026.

Who knows, maybe you had the best year of your life and want 2026 to be exactly the same. In my experience, you are in the minority. For the rest of us, a little bit of reflection goes a long way. What's that Lewis Carroll quote? "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there." So where are you going in 2026?

To bring a bit of holiday cheer to the final month of 2025, *Sparks* has teamed up with some advertisers to bring you our popular annual Happy Holidays competition. Check out the cool prizes you could win to start your year off right. (More on pages 2–3.)

Our feature themes this month include Tools of the Trade; Distribution Boards, Switches, Sockets, and Protection; and our usual Lighting section. From new products

to case studies and thought leadership, this edition features a mix of informative reads curated for your reading (and educational) pleasure.

Be sure to read more about the 25th anniversary edition of the ElectroBase Supplier of the Year awards that took place last month (pages 6–7). Don't miss our personality profile on page 16 either. Have you met Fiona Reid, the managing director of Liquid Lighting, who built her empire from the ground up with hard work and dedication? You should.

There is something for everyone in this edition. (Well, maybe not for your bored teenager or non-industry professionals, but you know what I mean.)

Wishing everyone a great end to 2025 and a productive 2026 ahead.

May you achieve all your goals next year. And if you don't, may you be kind to yourself and try again.

*Ilana Koegeleberg*

sparks@crown.co.za

## Beyond backup, the power of the three-phase UPS

The South African economy continues to grapple with the realities of unpredictable power supply, including voltage dips, spikes, and brownouts, which are often more disruptive than loadshedding itself.

In fact, according to a KCS Group Intelligence report, voltage dips and brownouts are increasingly cited (by manufacturers and SMEs) as more damaging than scheduled loadshedding. These fluctuations cause equipment failures, data losses, and production halts, often without warning.

In critical sectors, particularly, power quality is just as important as supply. As mentioned, poor-quality electricity not only leads to costly downtime but also damages sensitive equipment, shortens asset lifespans, and increases maintenance costs.

This is where three-phase Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) systems become indispensable. More than just backup devices, these solutions stabilise power, condition supply, and act as a first line of defence against irregularities.

Three-phase UPSs ensure the smooth flow of electricity to heavy machinery, IT infrastructure, and data centre equipment whilst also safeguarding operations, enhancing resilience, and protecting investments.

### Power quality is non-negotiable

"Loadshedding is no longer the only challenge," explains Sashen Govender from

Schneider Electric. "Fluctuations such as undervoltage, overvoltage, and spikes are increasingly common, and they can have a devastating effect on industrial operations. We've seen cases where manufacturers had to scrap hundreds of thousands of rands worth of goods because voltage dips damaged production equipment. With the right UPS in place, these risks are significantly reduced."

A three-phase UPS bridges the gap between unstable power and business continuity. It not only prevents equipment damage but also reduces operational costs by cutting down on downtime and extending the life of critical assets.

### Tailored solutions

While the technology is vital, implementation is equally critical. Wendy Robberts, senior account manager, TechAccess, stresses that every business has unique requirements. "UPS systems, like the business in which they operate, aren't one-size-fits-all. This is why we work closely with Schneider Electric to design bespoke solutions for specific loads and applications. Our role is to ask the right questions, evaluate requirements, and deliver solutions that are not only effective but also scalable for future growth."

As a perfect example, a leading engineering manufacturer was plagued by production losses due to voltage dips. After TechAccess installed a Schneider Electric three-phase UPS, the facility eliminated

unplanned downtime and avoided costly equipment replacements.

### The power of partnership

But technology alone cannot overcome an unstable power supply. Govender says: "Schneider Electric relies on its channel ecosystem to extend expertise and support across Africa. Partners like TechAccess are trusted integrators who bring decades of experience, industry knowledge, and customer relationships. Together, we ensure that solutions are implemented correctly, maintained properly, and supported throughout their lifecycle."

The partnership between Schneider Electric and TechAccess is built on more than 15 years of collaboration, earning TechAccess the status of Elite Partner. This trusted relationship means customers benefit from:

- **Expert integration and support:** ensuring UPS systems are installed, commissioned, and maintained to international standards.
- **Local presence with global backing:**

TechAccess provides on-the-ground support while leveraging Schneider Electric's global innovation and roadmap.

- **Long-term reliability:** from proactive maintenance to modernisation of older systems, customers enjoy end-to-end lifecycle assurance.

### The future

New-generation three-phase UPS solutions offer higher efficiency, smarter monitoring, and integration into broader digital infrastructures. A report by MRA echoes this sentiment, stating that modern UPS systems are no longer just backup; they're part of a broader energy strategy, especially in digital and automated environments.

Robberts concludes: "Our goal is to keep customers informed, supported, and prepared. By working closely with Schneider Electric, we help businesses adapt to evolving challenges, modernise their power protection, and safeguard their operations well into the future."

Enquiries: <https://techaccess.co.za/>



Our goal is to keep customers informed, supported, and prepared.

-TechAccess





## ElectroBase celebrates 25 years of excellence

By Ilana Koegelenberg

ElectroBase's annual Supplier of the Year (SOY) event honoured outstanding partners and suppliers who have played an integral role in the group's success story. This year marked ElectroBase's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a milestone that reflects a journey of innovation, collaboration, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

"The ElectroBase annual SOY event is the premier gathering for leading professionals and key decision makers in the electrical industry. This highly anticipated occasion is a cornerstone of the ElectroBase calendar, bringing our valued members and suppliers together to celebrate excellence, build meaningful connections, and explore the future of our industry," said Anthony Lloyd, CEO of ElectroBase. This year's SOY event took place from 6–7 November at the Oubaai Hotel and Golf Course, near George, with a full itinerary that included a golf day, a suppliers' expo, and an awards gala evening. ElectroBase members representing all regions in South Africa and the Southern African border countries were in attendance.

### Leading up to the awards

The programme kicked off with a golf day on the 6th. Despite the wet weather,

players remained in high spirits and pushed through with the American Scramble format to complete the course.

Congratulations to the winning team, which comprised Leonie Breedt, Stephen Grobler, Conrad Bothma, and Brendan Le Grange.

After the day of golf, everyone reconvened in the evening to enjoy a braai.

The next day, the focus shifted to the suppliers' exhibition and their presentations about new products and industry developments.

The following suppliers had exhibits on-site and also shared their expertise during the presentation slots: WACO, Crabtree, Enerji Electrical, MajorTech, Siemens, Radiant, Eurolux, HellermannTyton, Stone Stamcor, Vet, Smart-Homes driven by Herholdts, and Three-D Agencies.

After the informative and engaging presentations, there was a short break before the evening's awards dinner commenced.

### Crowning the winners

The evening's formalities were kept to a minimum with no long speeches. ElectroBase's new chairman of the

board, Gary Nieuwstad, said a few words, welcoming everyone and thanking them for their hard work and support over the years.

"We have never walked this road alone, so a massive thank you to all our suppliers," Nieuwstad said.

For the first time, there were no silver or bronze awards for the SOY – only gold. MajorTech was awarded the top honours of 'Supplier of the Year', with Stone Stamcor achieving 'Most Improved Supplier'.

The other suppliers who won gold were:

- Bright Star
- Crabtree
- Eurolux
- HellermannTyton
- Enerji Electrical
- Three-D Agencies
- WACO

Afterwards, the Suppliers' Choice awards followed. Congratulations to the following winners:

- Plumstead Electrical – Gold
- Herholdts Group – Silver
- Lite-Glo – Bronze

### For a good cause

During the SOY gala dinner, ElectroBase

announced that its suppliers and members will once again initiate a fundraising drive for the SA Children's Home. This initiative will take the form of a friendly challenge between suppliers and members: a participant may donate an amount and then challenge another supplier or member to match or exceed their contribution.

The competition was officially launched by Heine Herholdt of the Herholdts Group, who generously donated the R36,500 prize money he received for his Suppliers' Choice award and doubled it, encouraging others to follow his example.

This challenge will run from 20 November 2025 to 20 December 2025.

"Any contribution, no matter how small or large, will be sincerely appreciated. Let us give where it is needed most. Every cent makes a meaningful difference in the lives of these children," said Lloyd.

### Coming in 2026

Next year's SOY event will take place around the same time of year, in Gauteng. Further details will be announced in due course.

Enquiries: [www.electrobase.co.za](http://www.electrobase.co.za)

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MajorTech was crowned Supplier of the Year.



SOY gold winner: Crabtree.



SOY gold winner: HellermannTyton



Stone Stamcor was voted the Most Improved Supplier.



SOY gold winner: Synerji Electrical.



SOY gold winner: Three-D Agencies.



SOY gold winner: Bright Star.



SOY gold winner: WACO.



SOY gold winner: Eurolux.



Congratulations to all the winners!



Plumstead Electrical won gold in the Suppliers' Choice awards.



Herholdts Group received silver in the Suppliers' Choice awards.



Bronze in the Suppliers' Choice awards went to Liteglo.



## ABB and Compu-Power's high-efficiency UPS innovation

ABB participated in the 31st annual IS³ X-Change 2025 event, held in Cape Town in October, alongside its long-standing channel partner, Compu-Power. The two companies highlighted their collaborative approach to high-efficiency Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) solutions for data centres and AI applications; technologies that are fast becoming the backbone of Africa's digital future.

ABB's Mehdi Rajehi, sales service and project execution leader – Power Protection, MEA, was scheduled to deliver a presentation entitled 'LV/MV High-Efficiency UPS Solution for Data Centres & AI Applications'. The session explored ABB's latest advancements in UPS design and energy efficiency, including its unique single-conversion medium-voltage UPS system, the only one of its kind currently on the market.

"Our relationship with Compu-Power stretches back many years and has evolved into a powerful

partnership," highlighted Ivor Becks, UPS sales specialist at ABB. "ABB's acquisition of the original Swiss UPS manufacturer that formed the basis of this collaboration laid the foundation for the strong synergy we have today. Together, we offer complete end-to-end solutions, from power protection to data monitoring, that meet the complex needs of data-driven industries."

The event provided an ideal platform for ABB and Compu-Power to demonstrate how integrated power solutions can enhance operational efficiency and resilience in various sectors, including IT infrastructure and retail. A subsidiary of iOCO Ltd., Compu-Power is a Level 1 B-BBEE-certified company with more than 4,600 employees and partnerships with over 90 OEMs, including ABB as its exclusive UPS partner.

"We are proud to represent ABB's world-class UPS technology," explained Nicky de Clerk, business development and

marketing manager at Compu-Power. "We do not simply sell products; we deliver solutions tailored to customer needs.

From large-scale data centres to retail outlets, our collaboration with ABB enables us to provide a full complement of reliable, energy-efficient power systems. Events like X-Change allow us to demonstrate that we are more than a box mover. We are solution architects who understand the customer's operational pain points," said de Clerk.

Ryan Chetty, business unit manager at Compu-Power, added: "We aim to bring ABB's UPS expertise to our extensive African footprint. From our head office in Johannesburg, we support customers across the SADC region, East Africa and West Africa, reaching markets such as Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana. With over two decades of experience, we design resilient power backup systems that keep critical infrastructure running. X-Change gives us the perfect platform to engage directly with industry leaders and decision-makers."



Ryan Chetty,  
business unit  
manager at  
Compu-Power

Hosted annually by IS³ (Industrial Software Solutions), X-Change is Africa's leading industrial software and innovation event. Now in its 31st year, the conference brought together senior professionals from across sectors. This year's edition debuted a fresh format in Cape Town, with interactive sessions, live technology showcases, and in-depth discussions on digital transformation, AI, and sustainable automation.

Sade Eaton, representing the iOCO Ltd. marketing team and event co-organiser, commented: "X-Change 2025 is about helping African industries overcome

'technical debt', those legacy systems that hold back innovation. With support from global leaders like ABB, we are showcasing how digital transformation and power resilience can go hand-in-hand to drive productivity, efficiency, and cost savings."

Becks concluded: "ABB and Compu-Power share a vision of reliability, sustainability and partnership. Events like X-Change strengthen that connection and reaffirm our joint commitment to powering Africa's data-driven future."

Enquiries: [www.abb.com](http://www.abb.com)

## Power Process Systems showcases local innovation driving South Africa's energy future

As South Africa's energy landscape evolves, one local company is proving that home-grown innovation can lead the way. Power Process Systems (PPS), a South African original equipment manufacturer (OEM) established in 1993, has become a national benchmark for infrastructure protection, developing electrical enclosure solutions that keep the lights on, safeguard infrastructure, and strengthen revenue collection for utilities.

With over 30 years of continuous innovation, PPS has built a reputation for transforming everyday engineering challenges into globally recognised solutions. Its facilities, located in Johannesburg and Cape Town, serve as a hub of local ingenuity, combining design, precision manufacturing, and advanced material engineering to produce robust, secure, and intelligent enclosures that meet the complex needs of municipalities and utilities.

### Innovation born from necessity

The PPS story began amid a safety crisis in Alexandra, Johannesburg, when Eskom faced widespread risks from unsafe street-level kiosks. Replacing them entirely was financially unfeasible, so PPS was tasked with finding a creative, cost-effective alternative.

"We were approached to offer a solution and developed a shroud which could be placed over the entire kiosk and locked to the existing structure. Eskom then used these to cover all unsafe street boxes," explains Nhlanhla Zondo, director at PPS.

That practical innovation laid the foundation for what would later evolve into PPS's flagship product, the smart I-Kiosk, a fully fitted meter and distribution kiosk that has since become a world-

first solution in anti-vandal, intelligent infrastructure protection.

### Evolving alongside South Africa's utilities

From its early fibreglass enclosures to today's advanced steel and composite solutions, PPS has consistently aligned its products with the needs of the industry. "As the industry matured, we recognised the need to produce safer, stronger, and more cost-effective products. We have adapted accordingly, while never compromising on quality," says Zondo.

The company's defining moment came with the rise of electricity theft and vandalism, a growing national concern. "This culture has not only had crippling effects on revenue collection and protection, but it has also driven vandalism and theft of infrastructure and bred an environment of corruption and collusion within some municipal structures," notes Zondo.

In response, PPS developed the I-Kiosk, an intelligent, anti-vandal meter and distribution kiosk that integrates structural protection with real-time data and access control. It offers a physical and structural anti-vandal design with coordinated information integration.

It allows for the environment and access control of the I-Kiosk and its surrounds to be managed and monitored, and staff to be audited. "This innovation has transformed how utilities safeguard their assets," highlights Zondo.

### Local manufacturing, national impact

Today, PPS solutions are embedded in municipalities, utilities, and public entities across South Africa and beyond. Its product range, including pole boxes for overhead



reticulation and slam-lock kiosk designs, is redefining how infrastructure safety and operational efficiency are approached.

Every PPS product is manufactured locally, using South African materials and labour. "Being at the forefront of innovative technology manufacturing means that PPS is playing a key role in enhancing key technical skills development and capacity building," says Zondo.

The company's workforce of nearly 200 direct employees and over 300 indirect employees plays a meaningful role in addressing unemployment and inequality through skills development and youth empowerment. "We see ourselves not just as a manufacturer, but as a driver of technical skills and local capacity-building, particularly among youth," says Zondo.

### Engineering the future of energy

With the energy sector in transition, PPS is positioning itself for the next phase of growth. The company is actively exploring diversification in areas such as renewables, decentralised energy generation, and advanced metering infrastructure.

"The electricity distribution industry is undergoing profound change," notes Zondo. "We are excited about the opportunities ahead for new technologies, new markets, and new partnerships." Even as it expands



its horizons, PPS remains grounded in the values that have sustained it for more than three decades, namely innovation, quality, empowerment, and a deep commitment to South Africa's development.

Enquiries: [www.ppspower.co.za](http://www.ppspower.co.za)



## What the local insurance industry gets wrong about surge protection

By: Dr Andrew Dickson, engineering executive at CBI-electric: low voltage

Meeting insurer requirements doesn't necessarily guarantee that South Africans are sufficiently protected against power surges. In a country where lightning strikes, loadshedding, and grid instability are everyday occurrences, this oversight could have costly consequences for both parties.

Insurers are increasingly requiring surge protection devices (SPDs) for property owners. However, do these requirements genuinely safeguard policyholders and their assets, or are they simply fulfilling a compliance obligation without offering meaningful protection against real-world electrical threats?

### Not all surges are the same

Electrical surges vary in origin and intensity. Some are dramatic, like those caused by direct lightning strikes. Others are smaller but equally damaging, such as switching transients triggered when power is lost and restored during loadshedding, or by everyday fluctuations caused by short circuits and other electrical faults.

These surges behave differently and pose unique risks. Yet many insurance policies recommend a one-size-fits-all approach to protection – typically requiring the same type of SPD regardless of a property's location, use

case, or exposure level. This blanket approach may fall short of protecting the very assets these policies are designed to cover.

### What insurers require vs what properties need

While insurers have some alignment with the national wiring code by mandating Class 2 SPDs for low-voltage installations, their insistence on higher kA ratings reflects a misconception that higher peak values are a silver bullet in providing effective protection, which is not necessarily the case.

For reference, there are three classes of SPDs, namely 1, 2, and 3. Class 1 SPDs are designed to handle extreme surges from direct lightning strikes and are typically installed where power enters a premises or building. They act as the first line of defence, intercepting high-energy surges before they can enter the internal electrical distribution system. These devices are also typically used in remote areas, locations at high risk of direct lightning strikes on incoming services, or where there's a threat of explosions or damage to sensitive equipment.

More common in domestic settings, Class 2 devices offer protection from smaller surges associated with indirect lightning strikes or switching transients in urban areas.

Class 3 protectors provide localised protection for sensitive electronics like televisions, routers, or gaming systems and are located at the point of consumption.

Each class serves a different purpose, and the best protection often involves a layered approach. Tailoring the solution to the property's risk profile is essential.

### The truth about 40 kA ratings

While the SPD class defines the type of surges the device is designed to handle, the kA rating is another piece of the protection puzzle. This rating indicates the maximum current the device can divert in a single event.

Insurers often specify a 40 kA rating, based on the belief that higher ratings equate to better protection. But that's not always true. It's like using a 10-pound hammer to drive in a 10 mm nail: it might work, but it's excessive and inefficient.

In practice, what matters more is how the SPD performs under repeated smaller surges – the kind that happen most often and result in cumulative wear. Devices degrade over time, regardless of their kA rating. That's why the joule rating, which indicates how much total energy the SPD can absorb, is an important guide to long-term protection. Both values – the kA rating and the joule rating – should be considered together when specifying SPD requirements for an installation. This ensures a more holistic approach to surge protection and means more effective, practical policy guidelines from insurers.

### Moving beyond compliance to genuine protection

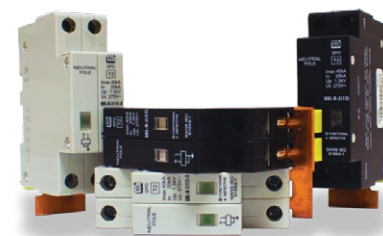
It's encouraging that insurers are starting to mandate SPDs, but these recommendations must go further. Relying

solely on class and kA rating without considering real-world electrical threats can leave gaps in protection or provide a false sense of security.

National standards for protecting people, structures, and devices are well established and clearly outline how protection should be correctly applied. However, a "sledgehammer approach", where protection is applied in a broad or excessive manner, does not guarantee the intended level of safety. As a result, the actual protection may fall short of expectations. This leaves insurers vulnerable to claims, despite having enforced requirements, and questioning why the anticipated risk mitigation hasn't materialised.

By engaging electrical engineers and applying the national standards, insurers can ensure that surge protection is not just a tick-box exercise – but a robust defence against electrical damage. The ultimate objective should be to protect people, property, and productivity with solutions grounded in both science and context, rather than merely fulfilling an underwriting requirement.

Enquiries: <https://cbi-lowvoltage.co.za>



## Circuit breakers for reliable, compliant protection

Legrand's low-voltage power distribution portfolio encompasses the DX<sup>3</sup> range of miniature circuit breakers, designed to deliver dependable protection in residential, commercial, and industrial installations. The range covers ratings from 1 A to 125 A, with breaking capacities up to 50 kA, making this system suitable for installations where performance and safety compliance are essential. The DX<sup>3</sup> range provides a wide selection of tripping curves – from B- and C-types for resistive and general-purpose loads, to D- and Z-types for inductive or sensitive equipment. This flexibility allows installers and designers to match breaker characteristics precisely to system requirements, improving selectivity and operational reliability. These devices combine thermal and magnetic trip mechanisms: the thermal element ensures reliable response to prolonged overloads, while the magnetic element provides instantaneous disconnection in the event of a short-circuit.

According to Legrand specialists, "As electrical installations advance to include more sensitive equipment and higher energy densities, it is increasingly important that protection devices meet stringent standards and are easy to specify and install. DX<sup>3</sup> circuit breakers are engineered to safely handle high fault levels and to perform consistently in both AC and DC systems. This range, with rated operational voltages up to 230/400 V AC and dedicated DC configurations for solar and battery applications, offers safety compliance and long-term reliability."

"Installers value many features of the DX<sup>3</sup> range, including those that enhance safe operation. Wide connection reinforced terminals with compensating clamps reduce the risk of overheating from loose connections and retractable insulating shields are designed

to prevent accidental contact. Clear contact position indicators, secure label holders and full compatibility with auxiliaries allow quick installation and uncomplicated integration into distribution boards and energy management systems. Typical applications are in data centres, commercial buildings and renewable energy systems, the specialist said."

The DX<sup>3</sup> range is also classified for high current-limiting performance. By interrupting fault currents before they reach their peak value, these breakers significantly reduce the thermal and mechanical stresses imposed on conductors and connected equipment. This critical feature not only protects downstream devices but also extends the service life of the overall installation.

DX<sup>3</sup> circuit breakers are compliant with IEC 60898-1 and IEC 60947-2 specifications and are suitable for use in environments from residential distribution boards to industrial panels requiring higher short-circuit capacities. These devices have insulation voltages up to 500 V and are tested to stringent endurance requirements, ensuring reliable performance throughout their service life.

Legrand's DX<sup>3</sup> circuit breakers are available in single-pole to four-pole versions and can be installed in both alternating and direct current systems. The design also facilitates multipole series connection for higher DC voltages, which is an important consideration in photovoltaic and battery storage applications.

By combining robust electrical performance with advanced technology and practical design features, the DX<sup>3</sup> range ensures safer, more efficient power distribution in diverse installations.

Enquiries: [www.legrand.co.za](http://www.legrand.co.za)

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## Pratley celebrates three generations of innovation

A global leader in adhesives, electrical, and mineral solutions, Pratley is celebrating a legacy of innovation and industry leadership spanning three generations. Established in 1948 by George 'Monty' Pratley, the company has remained true to its heritage of research and development (R&D), while continuously adapting to new technologies and market demands.

"The company was built on a foundation of R&D, which remains a cornerstone. We like to think of ourselves as an R&D company first and foremost, and we do plenty of it. We have always liked developing products with unique features and attributes that set them apart from others in the market. These principles continue to remain at the core of what we do," says CEO Andrew Pratley.

This unwavering commitment to R&D has positioned Pratley at the forefront of high-performance adhesives, electrical terminations, and eco-mineral product development. The company operates some of the most advanced laboratories in the Southern Hemisphere, ensuring that its products not only outperform competitors but also comply with strict quality and policy standards.

Active membership in leading industry organisations such as the South African Flame Association (SAFA), the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA), and the Electrical Contractors Association (ECASA) further underscores Pratley's role in shaping best practices and guiding industry development.

Heritage is a central part of Pratley's success story. With 77 years in business, the company continues to draw valuable lessons from its history while remaining agile in a fast-changing world. "Heritage is important, as many lessons can be learned from the company's long history," notes COO Charles Pratley.

"However, one must guard against blindly following tradition. The world is changing faster than ever before, with new technologies constantly emerging. Adaptability and agility in a fast-changing world are paramount. We continue to keep our independence, and we like it. It gives us the ability to respond rapidly to change and seize opportunities and innovation quickly," says Charles Pratley.

Pratley's dedication to its clients and partners is reinforced by its sales team, which maintains strong, face-to-face connections in an era where personal interaction is increasingly rare. The team is known not only for offering expert advice on Pratley's own products but also for providing broader technical solutions when appropriate, strengthening trust and loyalty across its customer base.

As a company deeply rooted in innovation, Pratley fosters a culture that empowers employees to share ideas directly with senior management, ensuring that promising concepts are rapidly developed and implemented. This collaborative approach adds to the company's ability to anticipate and quickly respond to emerging trends.

In its high-performance adhesives division, Pratley is responding to the growing demand for products that add value to sustainability, particularly those that encourage repairing or repurposing old or broken household items rather than discarding them.

In Pratley's eco-minerals division, the company's Perlite and Zeolite-based products are increasingly recognised for their role in addressing energy and resource challenges, particularly relevant in South Africa's resource-constrained environment. These products directly support sustainability goals and include thermally insulating construction products, water filtration products, farm feed



Andrew Pratley, CEO (left), with Charles Pratley, COO.

additives, and more.

Over the decades, Pratley has built a reputation for reliability, sound advice, and pioneering solutions that inspire confidence across industries. "We have built up a very loyal customer base over the years, but loyalty should never be taken for granted. We therefore continue to develop products and services that focus on reliability and can be trusted to get the job done. I also believe that people view Pratley as a pillar of South African innovation, and we aim to keep that legacy for many years to come," adds Andrew Pratley.

For Pratley, the greatest lesson from its 77-year history is clear: people are at the

heart of its success. "A company is gauged by the company it keeps, and in that aspect, we keep very good people. Without people in a company, it ceases to exist," concludes Charles Pratley.

With its unique blend of heritage, adaptability, and forward-thinking innovation, Pratley continues to drive industry standards, inspire confidence, and strengthen its reputation as a leader in high-performance adhesives, electrical termination products, and eco-mineral solutions, both in South Africa and across the globe.

Enquiries: [www.pratley.com](http://www.pratley.com)

## Makita's choice of cordless tools for electrical contractors

Time and productivity are the two things that most of us put a high price on these days. Using a cordless tool gives you the advantage of working in any situation; all you need are your tools and charged batteries.

Makita has highlighted a small selection of the 18 V cordless LXT tools that deliver performance and convenience for electrical contractors, including angle grinders, rotary hammers, reciprocating saws,

multi-tools, and a flashlight.

Makita's DGA456ZJ cordless 18 V lithium-ion 115 mm angle grinder is just as capable as an electric grinder while providing the added advantage of being brushless. It delivers an impressive 8,500 r/min from the brushless DC motor, but generates less heat build-up and greater torque, making it ideal for prolonged use. The DGA456ZJ features a slide-type on-off switch with lock-on capability, plus two

important safety features – the anti-restart function and electronic brake (kick-back user protection) that shuts the grinder down if the rotation speed suddenly slows down.

Makita's DHR242ZJ cordless 18 V lithium-ion rotary hammer features three-mode operation utilising an SDS-plus one-touch slide chuck – rotation only, rotation plus hammering, and hammering only – ensuring easy operation and handling. It measures 328 mm in length, with a 24 mm capacity in concrete, 13 mm in steel and 27 mm in wood. It features a no-load speed of 0–950 r/min and delivers 0–4,700 blows per minute. It is equipped with a brushless DC motor as well as extreme protection technology (XPT).

Makita's DJR187ZK cordless 18 V lithium-ion reciprocating saw has a high cutting efficiency and a cutting capacity in mild steel pipe of 130 mm and 255 mm in wood. The length of stroke is 32 mm and produces a variable speed of 0–3,000 strokes per minute. This model has an adjustable front shoe which maximises blade usage and a brushless DC motor, as well as an LED job light and a retractable joist hook.

Makita's DTM50ZK cordless 18 V lithium-ion multi-tool produces from 6,000–20,000 oscillations per minute. It has a variable

speed control dial and a soft start, which allows for accurate landing of the blade on the surface of the workpiece. It has multi-angle settings (12 in total) from 0 to 360 degrees at 30-degree intervals, which allows for a wide range of applications.

The on-off switch has been positioned so that you can turn it on and off with the finger of the same hand holding the grip. There are a host of accessories available (sold separately) for different applications and they are compatible with certain other brands of accessories.

The DML801 cordless 18 V lithium-ion flashlight (240 lumens): when used with a fully charged Makita 18 V 6.0 Ah rechargeable battery, it will provide 20 hours on full brightness and 48 hours on half brightness, providing long and continuous illumination. This model has a rotatable and foldable light head, which enables you to use it as a compact lamp. The convenient metal hook (swivels a full 360 degrees) provides the option to hang the flashlight to illuminate dark areas.

All the above 18 V Makita LXT models are compatible with the Makita 6.0 Ah (55 minutes charge time), 5.0 Ah (45 minutes charge time), 3.0 Ah (22 minutes charge time) and 1.5 Ah (15 minutes charge time) 18 V batteries. The batteries and chargers are sold separately.

Enquiries: [www.makita.co.za](http://www.makita.co.za)







## Youth trade schools to address artisan crisis

By: Kevin Buret, head of campus, NewGen Trade Schools

South Africa has an urgent problem hiding in plain sight. Our economy requires around 30,000 newly qualified artisans each year to keep infrastructure, construction, and industry running, yet the country consistently produces far fewer than that. The Department of Higher Education and Training has acknowledged that this shortfall is one of the biggest barriers to delivering on the goals of the National Development Plan. Employers regularly highlight the lack of skilled artisans as one of their greatest constraints. Without enough artisans, projects stall, infrastructure weakens, and job creation slows.

At the same time, thousands of young South Africans aged 15–19 are leaving or drifting through mainstream schooling with limited prospects. Many are labelled as struggling learners or find themselves in environments that do not suit their talents. For these young people, the existing Technical and Vocational Education and

Training (TVET) system is often difficult to access and not always designed with their needs in mind. The result is a generation at risk of joining the country's already alarming youth unemployment figures.

These two challenges are deeply connected. On one side sits an economy in desperate need of skilled tradespeople. On the other side sits a group of young people searching for a pathway into meaningful work. Bringing them together through a different kind of schooling may be one of the most effective ways of closing the gap.

A trade-focused school designed specifically for this younger age group offers a practical and age-appropriate environment that can change the trajectory of learners and help supply the skills the economy needs.

Instead of following the traditional college route, learners in these schools spend three months in a classroom phase where most of the training is practical rather than theoretical. This is followed by a 33-month apprenticeship with vetted employers, ensuring that what is learned is immediately applied in real workplaces. By the end of

the programme, learners can graduate with an NQF Level 4 qualification and a Red Seal trade certificate, which places them among the country's most employable artisans.

Because these schools cater only to teenagers, the learning environment is safer and more supportive than mixed-age colleges. Young people often find it easier to thrive when surrounded by peers in a similar stage of life. Furthermore, life skills and personal development form part of the training, which means learners leave not only with technical knowledge but with a stronger sense of confidence and responsibility.

A critical feature of this model is the way apprenticeships are managed. Partnerships with industry mean placements are not left to chance. Employers are involved from the beginning, and learners are supported through digital performance monitoring that provides real-time information on progress. This reduces the risk for companies, gives trainers better oversight, and ensures quality is consistent across workplaces.

Beyond the structural benefits, these schools also help to shift how trades are

perceived. For too long, becoming an artisan has been seen as a fallback option, yet the reality is very different. Electricians, plumbers, welders, and mechanics are not only in demand today, but their skills will also remain critical as South Africa expands its infrastructure and moves towards greener technologies. In a world where many jobs face disruption from artificial intelligence and automation, trades remain among the most future-proof careers available. They are also entrepreneurial in nature, giving young people the possibility of running their own businesses in the future.

South Africa stands at a crossroads. Without enough artisans, the economy cannot sufficiently grow. Without alternative pathways for our youth, the risk of unemployment and exclusion deepens. By reimagining how we prepare young people for trades, and by building systems that take them from the classroom into the workplace with the right support, we can strengthen both our communities and our economy.

Enquiries: [www.newgenradeschools.co.za](http://www.newgenradeschools.co.za)

## Why quality tools are the smart investment for cable professionals



The right tools are essential to performing cable accessory work efficiently, safely, and with precision. Whilst cheaper alternatives can be tempting, investing in quality tools pays dividends through durability, reliability, and superior performance. Three-D Agencies has been Southern Africa's trusted supplier of professional-grade tools for over 40 years, providing cable professionals with equipment designed to deliver consistent results job after job.

### Hand tools built to last

Hand tools form the core of any cable professional's toolkit. Cable cutters, screwdrivers, pliers, and tape measures are indispensable for nearly every step in cable installation and maintenance, which is precisely why quality matters.

Three-D Agencies offers a wide variety of hand tools designed to meet the specific demands of cable work. Its cable cutters and pliers allow professionals to cut and manipulate cables with ease, whilst screwdrivers ensure secure connections without damaging components. Crucially, these tools are crafted with durability and ergonomics in mind, ensuring comfort and precision for all users.

Whether it's a basic hammer for securing cable components or specialised tools for tightening and loosening parts, investing in quality hand tools means fewer replacements, reduced fatigue, and consistent performance.

### Power tools that boost precision and productivity

For more demanding tasks requiring speed and precision, power tools become essential. Three-D Agencies provides an extensive selection designed to improve productivity, reduce labour, and ensure precision.

Cordless drills provide the power needed to create precise holes in walls or enclosures for cable installations. Impact drivers offer high torque for securing components quickly and efficiently, enabling professionals to finish jobs faster with improved quality. When integrated into cable accessory tasks, these power tools allow professionals to handle larger projects with ease, ultimately boosting efficiency whilst maintaining the highest standards of accuracy.

### The right tool for every cable task

Quality tools prove their worth in specific applications. Three-D Agencies equips professionals for critical tasks, including:

Applying cable ties and clamps: Specialised pliers provide optimal control and leverage, ensuring cable systems are neat, stable, and protected from unnecessary strain.

Installing glands and bushings: Precision tools designed for accurate cutting and fitting of protective components ensure secure installation and enhance system durability.

Cutting and stripping armoured cable: Specialised cable cutters and stripping tools handle tough armoured cables safely, removing outer sheathing without compromising the

integrity of inner cables.

### Why quality matters

Choosing quality tools from a trusted supplier ensures professionals can complete projects efficiently, safely, and to the highest standard. Three-D Agencies' solutions are designed to meet industry demands with durable, high-performing tools that deliver reliability when it matters most.

From hand tools and power tools to measuring instruments and testing equipment, Three-D Agencies offers comprehensive solutions for cable accessory professionals. By investing in quality, professionals gain access to tools that optimise workflow, minimise errors, and ensure top-notch results on every job.

Enquiries: [www.three-d.co.za](http://www.three-d.co.za)

# QUALITY TOOLS

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THE CABLE ACCESSORY COMPANY





## Back to basics: the unsung heroes of the electrical trade

In a world of rapid innovation, where solar systems, smart homes and energy automation dominate headlines, it's easy to overlook the humble essentials that keep every electrical installation running. But for those on the tools every day, there's no forgetting the importance of quality distribution boards (DBs), switches, sockets, and protection devices. They remain the backbone of any reliable electrical system and, when paired with the right tools of the trade, they make all the difference.

Let's start with the DB – the true control hub. A well-built, properly laid-out DB not only ensures safe and efficient power distribution but also speaks to the installer's workmanship. Clean, spacious layouts and labelled circuits reflect professionalism, but more importantly, they make maintenance and fault-finding faster and safer down the line. It's worth investing in DBs that offer flexibility, scalability and ease of installation, especially as consumer needs evolve.

Then there are the ever-present switches and sockets. These are the touchpoints of any installation, used daily and often overlooked

until they fail. Poor-quality fittings wear quickly, and become loose or discoloured. High-quality components, on the other hand, offer durability, a solid tactile feel, and sleek designs that complement modern interiors. Whether it's a standard 16A plug or a dedicated isolator, the right product reflects care and consideration.

When it comes to protection, it's not negotiable. Circuit breakers and surge protection – these are your first line of defence against electrical faults, overloads and external threats like lightning strikes. Compromising here isn't just bad practice; it's dangerous. Reputable brands and SANS-compliant products should be the norm, not the exception.

And of course, none of this comes together without the right tools. From torque screwdrivers and multimeters to cable strippers and knockout punches, a well-stocked toolbox separates the pros from the rest. The right tool doesn't just make the job easier; it ensures accuracy, safety and pride in the final result.

In the end, while technology continues to reshape



our industry, the basics still matter. High-quality components and reliable tools remain the foundation of every great installation. As any seasoned sparkie will tell you, it's those details that clients remember long after the power's on.

Enquiries: [www.voltex.co.za](http://www.voltex.co.za)

## New multifunction installation tester saves time

Comtest, the local representative of Fluke, has launched the new Fluke 1670 Series multifunction installation tester, which can reduce the time electricians and maintenance technicians spend producing reports by up to 50%.

Designed by Fluke to represent the future of installation testing and become "the most important tool in an electrician's toolbox", the innovative multifunction installation tester also enables tests to be carried out up to 30% faster. Available in three models – ideally suited to the needs of residential, commercial, and industrial applications – the tools boost productivity through a user-programmable AutoTest function that enables electricians to run an entire automatic installation test sequence at the touch of a button.

Measurement data and metadata from the field are quickly stored, managed and shared using Fluke Connect software, while Fluke's TruTest software simplifies the process of generating documentation. A single click enables inspection reports to be previewed in the field and certificates generated while on-site. Even inspection invoices can be created at the same time. This ability to set up, test, upload and report in an easy, single operation is unique to the Fluke 1670 Series.

### Eliminating data double-entry

Whether working in residential, commercial, or industrial installation commissioning, electricians will welcome the ability to eliminate time-consuming data entry. Results will no longer need to be recorded during testing and then entered manually into a computer, a method that is prone to errors and delays. Wireless Bluetooth connectivity on the Fluke 1670 Series solves this problem by automatically linking test results to the circuit or point under test.



Electricians will also save time by not having to return to a site because key measurements have not been taken or results are found to be incorrect. The error-proof Fluke 1670 Series multifunction installation tester shows the operator instantly on-site if any tests have been missed. At the same time, automatic measurement validation compares installation test results to an integrated standards reference, delivering an immediate visual indication of pass or fail on the device's integrated full-colour touchscreen. The clear display includes a full keyboard, eliminating the need for an additional device or laptop to enter notes or edit details.

Jit Patel, Fluke product manager for installation testers, states, "Electricians can spend a minimum of 25% of their time processing data and creating reports, and the Fluke 1670 Series multifunction installation tester simply takes this headache away. As a best-in-class electrical installation inspection solution, this device represents a genuine evolution in documenting. Because it simplifies inspection results and reporting, boosts productivity and increases testing accuracy, we expect the Fluke 1670 Series to become the most important tool in an electrician's toolbox."

Enquiries: [www.comtest.co.za](http://www.comtest.co.za)

## Introducing the MT329: Major Tech's new handheld electrical installation multifunction tester

Major Tech has introduced the MT329 handheld electrical installation multifunction tester, the ultimate solution for electricians looking for versatility, accuracy, and mobility in one compact device. Designed for professional electrical installations, compliance testing, and maintenance, the MT329 packs a wide range of essential test functions into a rugged, easy-to-use handheld instrument.

The MT329 combines insulation resistance, continuity, loop impedance, RCD, voltage, resistance, and phase sequence testing into one tool, eliminating the need to carry multiple devices on site. With CAT IV 300 V safety rating, it's built for the demands of modern electrical environments, offering both safety and peace of mind.

One of the standout features of the MT329 is its loop impedance testing. This includes a high-current test up to 18.3 A and a ZL-PE RCD-safe method, ensuring RCDs rated above 30 mA do not trip during testing, which is critical for safety and accurate loop measurements. The device also provides Prospective Fault Current (PFC) and Prospective Earth Fault Current (PEFC) readings to assist in fault diagnosis.

RCD testing is another area where the MT329 shines. It supports testing for Type-A, Type-AC, and Type-B RCDs, with trip time tests at 0.5x, 1x, 2x, and 5x nominal current. The auto RCD test function simplifies repetitive testing, while the RCD Trip Level Test verifies precise tripping thresholds. A built-in auto-discharge feature ensures safe voltage release after insulation tests, a vital safety component for daily use.

The insulation resistance test operates at 250 V, 500 V, and 1,000 V, and can measure insulation values up to 4,000 MΩ, making it suitable for both low- and high-voltage applications. In addition to insulation and voltage measurements (AC and DC up to 500 V), the MT329 features AC+DC auto-mode, low-ohm resistance, data hold, and auto power off to conserve battery life.

What truly sets the MT329 apart is its Bluetooth connectivity. With built-in memory

and wireless data transfer to iOS and Android devices via the Major Tech app, electricians can easily store, review, and share test results on the go. This functionality is ideal for producing compliance reports and streamlining workflow in both residential and commercial settings.

The large backlit multi-LCD display provides clear, simultaneous readings, even in low-light environments, enhancing user convenience and reducing the chance of error.

Whether you're performing installation checks, preventative maintenance, or troubleshooting, the Major Tech MT329 is the multifunction tester that delivers. Compact, powerful, and built with the electrician in mind – this is the tester you've been waiting for.

Enquiries: [sales@major-tech.com](mailto:sales@major-tech.com)





## Signify raises the bar for road and street lighting

**Signify** has introduced Xceed Pro, the next-generation road lighting solution engineered to deliver maximum energy efficiency, superior light quality, and future-ready connectivity. Building on the success of the Xceed range, Xceed Pro combines cutting-edge technology with sustainable design to meet the evolving needs of modern cities.

Now available in South Africa as well, this is the first street lighting product that carries the Signify brand engraved on the housing.

### Industry-leading performance

At the heart of the Xceed Pro's specification is an industry-leading efficacy of up to 170 lm/W, achieved even with a glass cover fitted. The luminaire maintains more than 90% lumen output after 100,000 hours at an ambient temperature of 50 °C, supported by an advanced thermal design that ensures consistent performance in extreme conditions. This translates directly into lower energy consumption, reduced operational costs, and support for carbon-reduction targets.

The product offers a flux range of up to 56,800 lm (enabling 600 W HPS replacement with a single unit, subject to lighting design), with a system wattage of 360 W. It is rated to IP66 and IK09, providing robust protection for demanding outdoor environments.

### Light quality and environmental sensitivity

The Xceed Pro features a wide correlated colour temperature (CCT) range from 2200 K to 5700 K, enabling specification

across diverse applications. Recognising growing concerns about ecological impact, Signify has incorporated low-blue-light options to protect wildlife, with LEDs available that feature less than 1% blue light content. The professional photometric design delivers uniform illumination to enhance road safety, whilst the product is Dark Sky-compliance-ready, actively reducing light pollution.

### Built for challenging conditions

Durability credentials include typhoon resistance tested up to Category 5 (57 m/s) and 3G vibration testing to ensure performance under heavy traffic and harsh environmental conditions. Sulphuration-tested materials protect LED quality throughout the product's operational life, critical for installations in industrial or coastal environments.

### Smart city integration

The Xceed Pro offers flexible dimming options, including analogue, StepDim, Coded Mains, DALI and D4i control interfaces. Its smart-ready architecture incorporates NEMA and Zhaga sockets for Internet of Things (IoT) integration, whilst compatibility with Interact City enables advanced smart city features such as scheduling, presence detection, and traffic monitoring. This future-proof approach supports adaptive lighting strategies and seamless smart city integration.

### Maintenance and serviceability

Operational efficiency extends to maintenance procedures. Toolless access allows quick gearbox opening for faster

servicing, whilst surge protection devices (10 kV/15 kV) and gear trays are replaceable components. The Philips Service Tag system uses QR codes to provide instant access to luminaire data and simplified spare parts ordering, reducing downtime significantly.

Mounting flexibility includes both side-entry and post-top options with adjustable spigots to suit varied installation requirements.

### Circular design principles

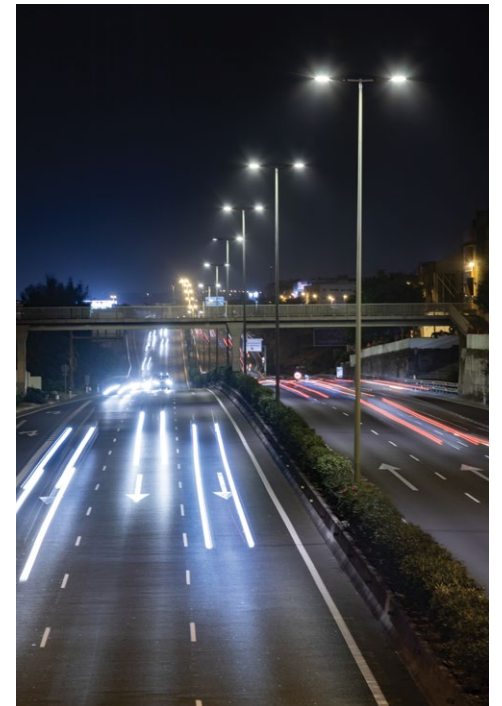
Sustainability considerations are embedded in the Xceed Pro's design philosophy. The modular printed circuit board assembly (PCBA) and optics enable straightforward upgrades, supporting circular economy principles and extending product lifecycle value.

Applications span urban roads and parking facilities, expressways and highways, residential streets and connecting roads, plus suburban pathways and pedestrian zones.

### Broader portfolio expansion

The Xceed Pro launch is accompanied by other significant product introductions under the Signify brand. The Arena X, ActiStar, and SunStay Pro were also recently launched, delivering all-in-one modular, connected solar street lighting solutions suitable for applications from campuses to pedestrian areas.

The new introductions reflect Signify's commitment to high-quality sustainable products, connected systems and services engineered for optimal performance. With more professional lighting products planned under the Signify brand in the coming years, the launches underscore the company's growing role in its portfolio of high-performance, energy-efficient and



circular lighting solutions.

"At Signify, we are proud to build on our leadership in innovation, performance, and sustainability, with a suite of intelligent, connected lighting products, systems and services under a portfolio of trusted brands. The launch of these new premium outdoor lights under the Signify brand is an important step forward, placing the brand at the heart of our professional lighting portfolio," says Harsh Chitale, CEO of the Professional Business, Signify.

Enquiries: [www.signify.com](http://www.signify.com)

## Solar lighting for border post

**BEKA Schröder** has provided the solar street lighting solution for the N11 near the Groblersbrug Border Post in Limpopo Province, South Africa. Groblersbrug, also known as Grobler's Bridge, serves as a key border crossing between South Africa and Botswana.

SOL-ONE MAXI integrated solar luminaires have been installed along the N11, Section 13. A solar lighting solution was selected because the client required an urgent, cost-effective option. Unlike a conventional installation, it eliminated the need for lengthy construction, saving approximately four months.

Furthermore, the location is considered high-risk for lighting infrastructure, as light poles are often damaged or knocked over by trucks waiting to cross the border into Botswana. However, any damage to a single pole does not affect the entire lighting system, as faults are isolated. In an area

prone to theft and vandalism targeting both truckers and pedestrians, the majority of the lighting remains operational even if a pole is damaged. This ensures consistent visibility, enhances security, and promotes a safer environment.

This project stands out for several reasons. The lighting installation has significantly improved operations at the trading port and supported transport organisations using the facility. A 3 km A1c-category compliant lighting system was successfully implemented within just two months. This is an impressive achievement, as solar systems are typically used on roads requiring lower lighting levels.

The project has brought much-needed illumination and enhanced visual security to this key trading port, improving safety for truckers, pedestrians, and the goods being transported. The system delivers

high uniformity (> 0.7) and an average of 10 lux at mf = 0.75, ensuring reliable visibility.

### About the SOL-ONE MAXI

The South African designed and manufactured SOL-ONE MAXI solar luminaire offers a modern design with advanced technology, suitable for urban lighting. It operates independently on solar power, making it ideal for remote locations or areas with unreliable electricity. The lens combinations ensure a versatile lighting solution for most applications.

The luminaire is efficient, reliable, and low-maintenance, made of high-quality materials for durability. Its specific design optimises solar charging without needing to align the panel towards the sun.

The luminaire is built with high-quality materials like ASA and die-cast aluminium for durability and weather resistance. Its design is tailored to maximise solar energy capture for efficient battery storage.

Along with being energy-efficient and durable, the SOL-ONE MAXI luminaire reduces carbon emissions

and supports a greener environment. It is a great choice for environmentally conscious municipalities, businesses, and homeowners looking for effective outdoor lighting while reducing their environmental footprint.

Enquiries: [gauteng@beka-schreder.co.za](mailto:gauteng@beka-schreder.co.za)



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## Lighting the way: how 2026 is redefining the glow of home

As homes evolve in 2026, lighting is stepping into a new role – not just to illuminate, but to express, connect, and enhance how we live. We're all becoming more aware of how light shapes our moods, defines our spaces, and supports overall well-being, and we're seeking out solutions that speak to our personal style. From sculptural pendants that turn illumination into art, to solar lights with intelligent PIR sensors that combine security with energy efficiency, Eurolux caters to design demands with both feeling and function in mind.

This new era of lighting brings together four defining trends:

Wellness lighting harnesses colour temperature to shape mood – energising cool whites by day, and soothing warm tones by night. (Look out for the 3CCT description on pendants and fittings, which indicates you can choose from warm white

to cool white and daylight.)

Sculptural design transforms fixtures into statement pieces that add personality and flair. Pendants that blur the line between illumination and art are the order of the day!

Sustainable innovation leads the way through efficient LED and solar technology – smart, stylish, and economical.

Finally, transitional lighting connects indoors and out, creating flowing spaces such as covered patios, bridging interior warmth and garden ambience.

Lighting truly has become the most dynamic element in design, shaping spaces, moods, and experience. Eurolux continues to embrace this evolution, helping South African homes shine with intention and style.

Enquiries: [www.eurolux.co.za](http://www.eurolux.co.za)



## The power of blue: lighting the way to continuous disinfection

By: Urbain du Plessis of Verdantek\*

For much of the late 20th century, science assumed it understood light and its influence on living systems. In hindsight, that confidence was misplaced. The discovery in 2002 of intrinsically photosensitive retinal ganglion cells (ipRGCs) – non-visual photoreceptors in the human eye that regulate our internal body clock – opened a new chapter in lighting science. Suddenly, illumination was no longer just about visibility or energy efficiency. It became a question of biology.

At the same time, the rapid rise of LEDs made it possible to isolate and control narrow bands of the light spectrum at low cost. Researchers across disciplines began exploring how specific wavelengths could influence everything from mood and metabolism to plant growth and sterilisation. Among these findings, one stood out: the surprising disinfecting power of visible blue light.

### From crop science to clean air

Before the pandemic, I worked with research teams at AgriBio – a leading agricultural biosciences centre in Melbourne – to develop advanced models to optimise crop yields under controlled environmental conditions. The work included studying how plants and microbes respond to the full light spectrum. Meanwhile, scientists in Finland were experimenting with light-based air disinfection systems for cleanrooms.

When COVID-19 reshaped global priorities, these two lines of research converged. The challenge was clear: find safe, sustainable, and continuous ways to disinfect air, water, and surfaces without the collateral damage caused by traditional chemical or UV-based methods.

### Beyond ultraviolet

Ultraviolet light has long been used to purify air and water – ancient Egyptians even used sunlight to clean linen – but its limitations are well known. UV can degrade plastics, coatings, and fabrics, creating ideal conditions for bacterial biofilms to thrive. It also poses health risks to humans, making it unsuitable for continuous use in occupied spaces.

Blue light, on the other hand, offered a gentler yet powerful alternative.

Microbiologists had already observed its antimicrobial effects, but early systems demanded either high energy levels or catalytic coatings that required frequent maintenance.

Then came a breakthrough. Finnish researchers identified an optimal combination of blue wavelengths that achieved the same disinfection performance as UV, at lower energy levels and without catalysts. The result was antimicrobial blue light (aBL), a globally patented technology now used in healthcare, aviation, food production, and defence.

### Proven in the air and on the ground

LINDO, a key partner in this development, was among the first to commercialise aBL systems. In 2021, the Air Ambulance of Victoria adopted LINDO's blue-light disinfection chamber for sanitising patient stretchers. The system delivered exceptional microbiological results and cut turnaround times so dramatically that it paid for itself within a year. By 2024, LINDO had developed roll-on aBL units for aircraft interiors, offering continuous, low-maintenance protection in one of the most demanding operational environments.

Both Boeing and Airbus are now collaborating with LINDO on integrated lighting-disinfection systems for passenger aircraft. The technology is also proving its worth in search-and-rescue helicopters, where aircrew and patients operate in close quarters under high exposure risk. LINDO's multifunctional lighting units combine aBL disinfection with night-vision-compatible deep red and high-quality white task lighting – an elegant, all-in-one solution showcased in the Airbus mock-up at the recent Aeromed conference.

### Safe, efficient, and scientifically verified

Blue light's antimicrobial action is not a new discovery, but its application has evolved. More than 2,000 peer-reviewed studies confirm its ability to kill bacteria, yeast, and mould, including multi-resistant strains like MRSA and VRE, as well as viruses such as SARS-CoV-2 and Influenza A. Unlike UV, aBL works through transparent materials and can even penetrate biofilms – without fostering

microbial resistance.

The mechanism is elegantly biological. When exposed to certain blue wavelengths, naturally occurring light-sensitive compounds inside microbial cells – such as porphyrins and flavins – become excited. This triggers a chain reaction that generates reactive oxygen species (ROS), which in turn destroy DNA, RNA, proteins, and cell membranes from within. Because human and animal cells lack these compounds, they remain unaffected.

The patented multi-wavelength, high-intensity design of LINDO's aBL systems activates multiple absorption pathways simultaneously, achieving faster and broader disinfection than older single-wavelength (405 nm) solutions. It can sanitise air, surfaces, and equipment in minutes rather than days, and operates safely in continuously occupied spaces.

### Tested and certified

LINDO's blue-light systems comply with rigorous international safety standards, including IEC 62471:2006 and IEC TR 62778:2014 (Blue Light Hazard). Classified as Risk Group 1 (Low Risk), these devices pose no hazard to eyes or skin during normal use and require no special labelling or protective measures.

By contrast, conventional disinfection methods – chemical sprays, UV radiation, or hydrogen peroxide misting – cannot be used continuously. They are hazardous to people and materials, require manual application, and their protective effect vanishes as soon as the space is reoccupied.



Airbus H160 rescue helicopter cabin mock-up with LINDO aBL multi-function lights in disinfection mode.

### Continuous protection for a changing world

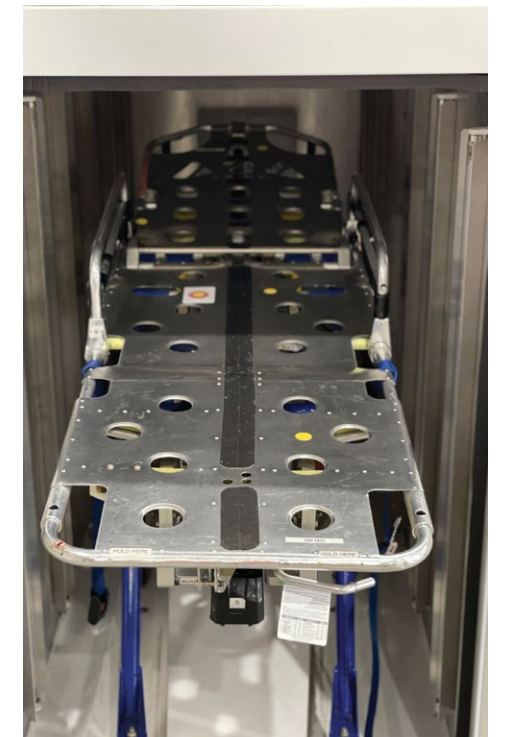
The key advantage of antimicrobial blue light is its safety and constancy. It can operate continuously, even in the presence of people, delivering ongoing disinfection without damage or downtime. While the intense blue hue can be distracting for some, automation systems easily alternate between standard lighting and disinfection mode, ensuring effortless, around-the-clock hygiene.

The most effective disinfection is the one that never stops. I am already working with local manufacturers on aBL availability.

### \*About the author

Urbain du Plessis is a globally experienced lighting and technology leader with over 30 years of living and working abroad across Australia, Europe, and Asia. Beginning his career at Zumtobel in 1988, he went on to design lighting for Olympic stadia, develop the F1 night racing specification, and bring over 1,000 products to market. Having held C-level roles in multinational firms and managed sales across 50 countries, Urbain's expertise spans lighting, IoT, polymers, acoustics, and advanced materials. Returning to South Africa, he brings global insight, 30+ patents, and a record of innovation, leadership, and industry contribution.

Enquiries: [urbaind@verdantek.net](mailto:urbaind@verdantek.net)



A patient stretcher inside the LINDO aBL disinfection chamber.





## Radiant introduces new LED solar street light range

**Radiant's** new LED solar street light range with radar sensor provides a smart, cable-free way to add security lighting to almost any site – with serious tech under the hood.

The range consists of three models:

- RFS101: 1,100 lm, 8 W (60 W traditional equivalent)
- RFS102: 2,200 lm, 16 W (120 W traditional equivalent)
- RFS103: 3,300 lm, 24 W (180 W traditional equivalent)

All three deliver a crisp 6500 K output with a 90° beam angle, ideal for small to large parking areas, suburban secure estates, office parks and B-roads. With IP65 protection, they're built to handle dust, rain and the realities of outdoor installations.

Power comes from high-efficiency monocrystalline solar panels paired with the latest LiFePO<sub>4</sub> batteries:

- RFS101: 3.2 V/6 Ah
- RFS102: 3.2 V/12 Ah
- RFS103: 3.2 V/18 Ah

All charge in around four to six hours and offer up to 12 hours working time, giving clients always-on security without trenching, cabling or electricity costs.

Each unit includes an integrated radar motion sensor and remote control, so light levels and operating modes can be fine-tuned from the ground. With a

rated 50,000-hour lifespan and a five-year warranty across the range, contractors get a reliable, low-maintenance solution that's easy to specify and easy to sell.

For projects where energy savings, security and fast installation matter, Radiant's RFS101, RFS102, and RFS103 solar street lights tick all the boxes.

Enquiries: [www.radiant.co.za](http://www.radiant.co.za)

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For projects where energy savings, security and fast installation matter, Radiant's RFS101, RFS102, and RFS103 solar street lights tick all the boxes.

–Radiant

# RADIANT'S NEW FLOODLIGHT RANGE



IP66



6500K



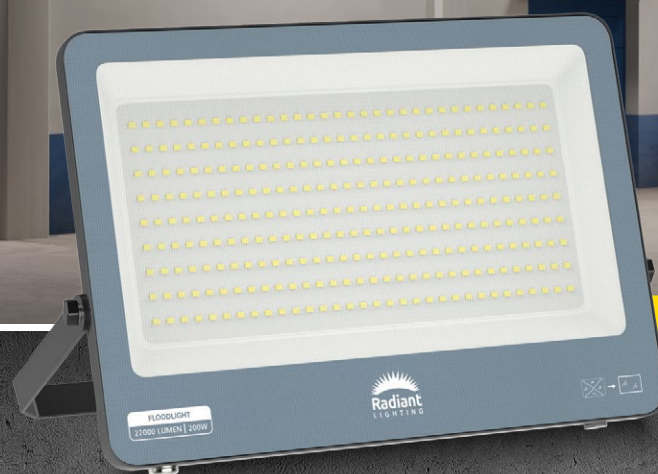
25000 Hrs Lifespan



Up to 6kV Surge Protection



Warranty



RFS64

200W LED FLOODLIGHT



At 110 lumens per watt, this new Radiant floodlight range delivers powerful, energy-efficient illumination from 10W to 200W. All models feature a 120° beam angle, robust aluminium housing, tempered glass lens, and surge protection from 2.5kV to 6kV for reliable, versatile outdoor lighting.



RFS59

RFS60

RFS61

RFS62

RFS63



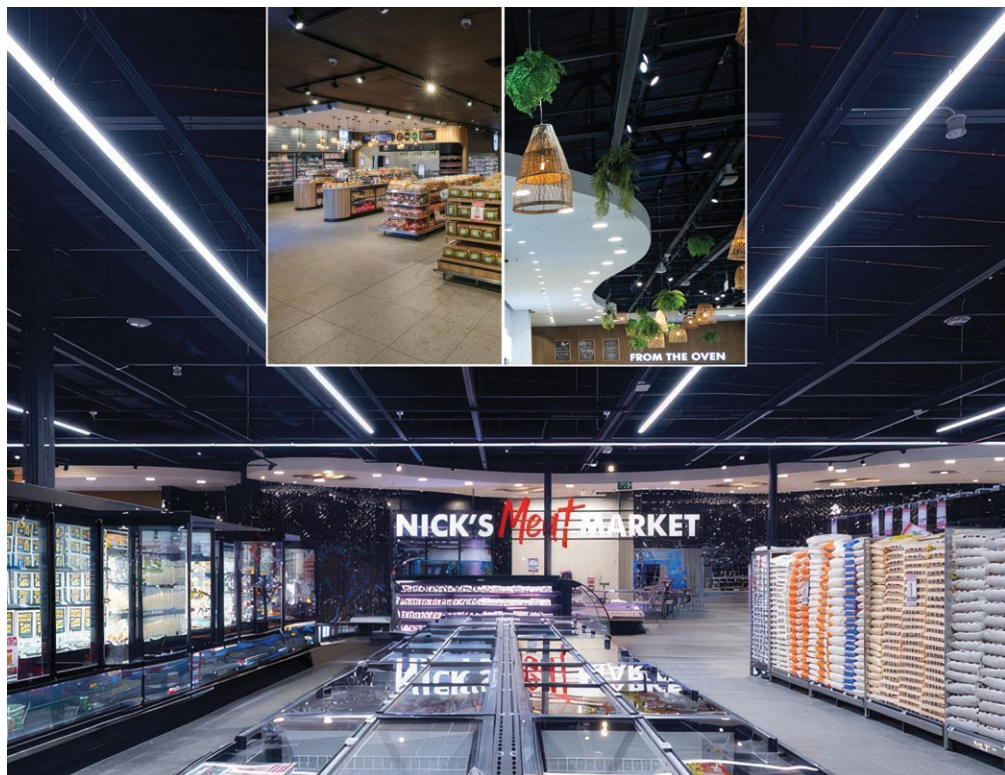
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## Illuminating spaces, inspiring experiences: the power of professional lighting design by Aurora Lighting Africa

In today's world, lighting is more than a functional necessity; it is an art form that shapes emotion, enhances architecture, and transforms the way we experience space. At Aurora Lighting Africa, lighting design is not just about providing illumination; it's

about crafting atmospheres that inspire, perform, and endure. As one of Africa's leading lighting solution providers, Aurora Lighting Africa combines innovation, expertise, and sustainable technology to create environments that are as visually stunning as



they are energy efficient.

### The art and science of lighting design

Lighting design is both a creative and technical discipline. It involves understanding how light interacts with form, texture, and colour, while also ensuring optimal performance, efficiency, and compliance with standards. A well-conceived lighting plan can elevate a building's architecture, improve well-being, and influence mood and productivity. Poor lighting, on the other hand, can diminish even the most beautiful designs.

At Aurora Lighting Africa, every project begins with a deep appreciation for the client's vision. Whether it's a luxury hotel, corporate headquarters, retail space, or residential development, the design team approaches each brief with the goal of achieving harmony between aesthetics, function, and sustainability. Using advanced design software, lighting simulations, and on-site evaluations, the team delivers solutions that balance beauty, performance, and energy efficiency.

### A holistic design approach

Aurora's lighting design service is a collaborative process that integrates architecture, interior design, and engineering. Its lighting design specialists work closely with architects, developers, and consultants to ensure that lighting enhances every dimension of a project. From concept development to final installation, every stage is meticulously planned.

The design team considers factors such

as daylight integration, colour temperature, beam angles, fixture placement, and lighting controls. This attention to detail ensures that each space achieves the desired mood and functionality, be it a warm, inviting ambience for hospitality environments or precise, task-oriented illumination for commercial applications. Moreover, Aurora's expertise in LED technology allows clients to enjoy significant energy savings while maintaining exceptional light quality.

### Why lighting design matters

Lighting design plays a crucial role in the success of any built environment. Beyond visual comfort and aesthetics, it impacts health, sustainability, and even brand perception. Studies have shown that well-designed lighting can enhance concentration, elevate mood, and improve overall well-being. In commercial settings, it can increase productivity and influence customer behaviour. For developers and architects, it enhances property value and ensures compliance with green building standards such as LEED or EDGE.

As Scylagh Clunnie, managing director of Aurora Lighting Africa, explains: "Lighting design is the invisible thread that ties together architecture, emotion, and experience. Our mission is to bring vision to light, literally, by creating solutions that are beautiful, efficient, and deeply human. Every project we undertake is about more than illumination; it's about transformation."

Enquires: [info@aurora-africa.com](mailto:info@aurora-africa.com)

## Fiona Reid: A natural evolution into lighting

By: Ilana Koegelenberg

Fiona Reid never set out to run a lighting company, but when she discovered the field, everything clicked. Today, as managing director of Liquid Lighting SA, she's built a reputation for solving technical problems others can't, earned through hands-on learning and a commitment to mastering every detail from site to specification.

### From operations to illumination

Fiona Reid (46), originally from Gauteng, started her career in operational and administrative roles where, as she puts it, there was no hiding in a corner. These positions were close to the engine room of business, teaching her grit, discipline, and the ability to carry responsibility. Her entry into lighting came without fanfare, but once there, she committed completely. Reid didn't just learn the theory; she attended site meetings, studied installation details, examined fittings and controls, and built relationships with contractors, architects,

engineers, and suppliers.

Reid is clear that nothing about her journey was handed to her. She earned credibility by showing up consistently, doing the difficult work, and building trust with clients and partners. Over time, that immersion led her to start her own business and step into a leadership role at Liquid Lighting SA.

This wasn't about reading brochures from behind a desk. It was about building her path one project at a time.

### The problem-solver

Reid's proudest professional achievement is her reputation for solution-driven integrity. She's often called when a project hits a technical dead end, when the lighting isn't performing as specified, or when no one else can find the answer.

"Becoming 'the person they call when there's a problem' means I have earned trust through delivery, not promises," Reid explains.

On a personal level, she's equally proud of building a thriving career whilst raising her son as a single mother, never compromising her values, independence, or standard of excellence.

### Navigating a male-dominated space

Reid is frank about the challenges of operating in traditionally male spaces such as lighting, construction, and electrical environments. Early in her career, she was frequently questioned and had to prove her technical knowledge, justify her decisions, and fight to be heard.

Her response was strategic: she learned the technical details and became more prepared than anyone else in the room. "Yes, it's challenging," Reid acknowledges, "and it's made me exceptional at what I do."

Her advice to other women entering the

field is direct. Don't wait for permission to take up space. Knowledge is your power, integrity is your protection, and showing up grounded, prepared, and unapologetically capable is non-negotiable.

### The invisible power of lighting

"I love what I do," Reid says simply. What drives her passion is lighting's unique position at the intersection of science and emotion, engineering and artistry, logic and intuition.

"Lighting is invisible power," she explains. "When done well, people don't notice the fixture. They notice how the room makes them feel. I get to orchestrate that feeling."

"The transformation never gets old," she adds. "Watching a space come alive when the lighting is finally switched on. That moment where vision becomes reality."

### Advice for the next generation

Reid's guidance for young people entering the industry is rooted in her own experience.

"Be curious. Be teachable. Be willing to learn from the ground up," she says. "Don't chase titles, chase knowledge. Spend time on-site. Ask the electricians questions. Touch the product; don't just read the brochure. Lighting is not learned from behind a desk."

Above all, she emphasises that reputation is the industry's greatest asset.

"Protect it with honesty, humility, and consistency," Reid advises. "Credibility is what people remember, not your title."

### Looking ahead

Reid's focus now centres on expansion and elevation. She's working to evolve Liquid Lighting into a streamlined, tech-enabled business, integrating platforms to improve client access and service whilst deepening her expertise through ongoing lighting studies and industry research.

Beyond growth, she wants to raise the standard of professionalism in the lighting sector, leading through accountability, clarity,

and trust. Her vision of success is both professional and personal: the freedom to build, explore, travel, and be present in her son's life whilst doing work that challenges and fulfils her.

Enquiries: [www.liquidlightingsa.com](http://www.liquidlightingsa.com)

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- Earthing, Lighting, and Surge Protection
- Cables and Cable Accessories
- Lighting

#### JANUARY 2026 FEATURES

- Solar and Energy Efficiency
- DBs, Switches, and Sockets
- Lighting

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