

Woolies tops list of renewable energy retailers

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Woolworths took top honours in a ranking of the commitments of SA's five biggest retailers to renewable energy compiled by environment lobby group Greenpeace Africa, while rival Shoprite Group was last.



Image source: [BDive](#)

The Department of Energy's renewable energy independent power producers procurement programme has added almost 2,000MW to the grid since 2011. The programme aims to add more capacity and diversify SA's energy sector away from coal to meet its climate change pledges.

Greenpeace said companies could help to drive the market for renewable energy by making a commitment to obtain 100% of their energy from these sources.

If Woolworths sourced all its electricity from renewables, it would free up enough power for 55,000 households in SA, based on an average per-household electricity consumption of about 8,000kWh a year.

"Arguably, it is the responsibility of all major electricity users in SA to reduce consumption, and produce their own electricity from renewable energy sources, thus decreasing pressure on the grid, and reducing the need for load shedding," Greenpeace said.

Using publicly available information and interviews, Greenpeace Africa ranked SA's five biggest retail groups — Woolworths, Shoprite, Pick n Pay, Spar and Massmart — on four criteria including energy transparency, commitment to renewable energy, greenhouse gas mitigation, and lobbying for renewable energy.

No single retailer did particularly well, Greenpeace said.

On a score out of 10, Woolworths received four, being penalised partly because it did not provide Greenpeace Africa with a detailed plan on how it intended to achieve its commitment to 100% renewables by 2030.

Some of Woolworths's achievements were sourcing about 10% of its head office power from a solar installation last year, and achieving 40% energy saving in its stores compared with 2004 levels.

Massmart ranked second-highest, with 3.5, followed by Pick n Pay with three, and Spar with 1.5 Greenpeace commended Woolworths and Massmart for their transparency. They provided detailed information about their energy consumption and carbon emissions on their websites.

Shoprite received a zero score because "they have a complete lack of transparency with regards to company energy information, and have not engaged with Greenpeace Africa to provide information", the organisation said. Shoprite had not responded to a request for comment by deadline yesterday.

"Ultimately, retailers need to become champions for renewable energy to open up the market and allow renewable energy investments on a broader scale," Greenpeace Africa's climate and energy campaigner, Penny-Jane Cooke, said.

Source: Business Day

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