

Increasing shift to green energy

Resources from fossil fuels becoming expensive

Nour Sallam

MORE and more South African companies are becoming environmentally conscious, weaning themselves off fossil fuels and going green.

“Resources from fossil fuels are becoming more expensive,” said Rebekah Hughes, of the Worldwide Fund for Nature.

Hughes argued for the importance of science-based targets that aim to reduce emissions created by greenhouse gasses.

She noted that the initiative “is a platform that encourages ambitious actions by companies against climate change”.

This month the Emira Property Fund became the first South African company with an approved target set by the initia-

tive. The real estate investment trust company promised to reduce its emissions by 13% by 2022.

In South Africa alone, 10 other companies, including Pick 'n Pay, are committed to the initiative, though their targets are yet to be set and approved by the process.

“It is also a business practice that benefits the companies,” said Hughes. .

Yoann Joyeux, chief executive of Emergent Energy, a fast-growing engineering procurement and construction company, noted that “financial sustainability and energy sustainability can be reached on both sides”.

Emergent Energy focuses on solar solutions. Solar energy provides locally generated power by local people which reaches sustainable goals, while being cost efficient.

It also replaces about 90% of the energy

that would be generated by coal.

Solar rooftops, for example, are sustainable both environmentally and financially. “It is a good commitment.

“You are fixing an environmental problem for the long run and you are guaranteed your output in the long run as well.”

Hughes said a move towards environmental sustainability “encourages innovation”.

But Joyeux highlighted that the public should not think of environmental sustainability as simply a technological transformation. “Significant is the availability of the funding to make it possible.”

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CHANGE TO SOLAR ENERGY: Workers fit a solar panel in De Aar, Northern Cape.

PICTURE: NICHOLAS RAMA