

Eskom's anti-green stance and other agendas

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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Report after report tells us coal is doomed, yet Eskom keeps on perpetuating the myth that renewables can't supply baseload and are expensive.

Eskom CEO, Brian Molefe said a while back that renewables were undependable and that the power utility won't sign any more purchase agreements, even though this flies in the face of legislation. "Then less than two weeks ago, the minister, who has been a champion for renewables, back peddled on Eskom's say-so to proclaim that renewables are too expensive costing trillion, which strangely is the same price as nukes," says Robyn Hugo, Centre of Environmental Rights head: pollution and climate control.



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She explains that 40% of electricity comes from coal, and globally in 2012 there were 1,200 new coal-fired power stations. "The position in South Africa is that the country is one of the top producers and exporters of coal, and Eskom has 13 coal-fired power stations, all in air quality priority areas. These power stations are much older than the global norm, while the two new ones, Medupi and Kusile, ran into huge construction costs."

Coal and the environment

Fossil fuel use is the main source of carbon dioxide and the burning of coal, natural gas and oil for electricity and heat is the largest single cause of global warming. But there is nothing really to regulate fossil fuel usage, even international accords on greenhouse gas (ghg) mitigation don't have any legal recourse for signatories who don't meet the goals.

“Parties must be clear and transparent on the nationally determined contribution. But the sum total of ghg reductions is less than what the parties with reference to the science say is needed to prevent climate change,” she explains. “Like all developing countries, South Africa is especially vulnerable to climate change especially regarding water and food security and impacts on health, human settlements and infrastructure.”

Hugo refers to the country’s National Development Plan. “At the heart of this is a complete transformation to future energy, which is completely out of synch with what is actually happening.”

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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