04 JULY 2025 **10:40**

CITY POWER ELECTRIFICATION OF USINDISO FIRE VICTIMS GETS RECOGNITION

City Power is proud to have been recognised at the 2025 SAPVIA Awards, held at Melrose Arch, where the Shalazile Microgrid Project was named Runner-Up in the Socio-Economic Development category. The SAPVIA Awards, hosted by the South African Photovoltaic Industry Association, celebrate individuals and institutions advancing South Africa's renewable energy goals through innovation, sustainability, and impact.

While Shalazile was the project in the spotlight, this award is a recognition of City Power's broader microgrid program, South Africa's first municipal-led rollout of decentralised, solar-powered energy systems. The program, the first of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, is central to the utility's 10-Point Strategic Plan to improve supply security, reduce reliance on Eskom, address the problems of illegal connections and energy losses, while expanding energy access in informal settlements.

The journey began in Alexandra at the Amarasta informal settlement, where City Power installed its very first microgrid, setting the foundation for a new approach to electrification that is faster, cleaner, and more resilient. Since then, the program has expanded to include microgrid projects in areas like Vlakfontein, which is even larger in scale than Shalazile, as well as ongoing work in Vukani and The View. Shalazile is one of several projects completed in the 2024/2025 financial year, and many more are planned in the months ahead.

"The recognition we received at SAPVIA is not just about infrastructure. It's about our people, and our commitment to dignity, equity and sustainable energy access," said City Power CEO, Tshifularo Mashava. "Our microgrid projects are designed to address the real, daily struggles of our communities, poverty, unsafe living conditions, and illegal connections. Through innovation, we are restoring safety, creating opportunity, and building resilience."

Backed by the Gauteng Provincial Government and aligned to the Gauteng Energy Response Plan, the microgrid rollout enables safe and legal access to power in underserved areas while reducing strain on the main grid. These decentralised systems offer uninterrupted power during outages, prevent cable theft and vandalism, and empower local economies through short-term jobs and SMME participation.

City Power Board Chairperson, Makhosini Kharodi, added: “This is a moment of pride for our organisation, but more importantly, it’s a validation of our strategy and our values. We are not waiting for change, we are building it. Our 10-Point Plan is a blueprint for a sustainable, people-driven energy future.”

The utility has also launched complementary initiatives under the 10-Point Plan, including:

- Installation of solar PV systems on government buildings such as schools, clinics, and hospitals
- Street and high-mast solar lighting across informal settlements to improve safety
- Solar retrofitting of City Power’s own facilities to maintain operations during load shedding
- The refurbishment of gas turbines at John Ware Substation and upgrades at Durban Street Substation to bolster backup supply capacity

These projects collectively reduce dependency on Eskom, improve energy security, and contribute to the just energy transition.

As City Power continues rolling out solar microgrids across the City of Johannesburg, the vision remains clear: electrify every informal settlement, empower every community, and build an energy future that works for all.

“This is just the beginning,” said Mashava. “The rollout continues one community, one microgrid, one life at a time.”

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ISSUED BY CITY POWER
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