

What about the future of South Africa and Eskom ...

The biggest problem in South Africa, especially amongst the youth, is finding jobs so as to have access to the basic needs to survive. Anton Rupert once said, "You cannot sleep if your neighbour is hungry".

What hope is there for our youth?

My own belief is that "Education empowers a person to earn a quality of life by contributing to the community that helps establish education".

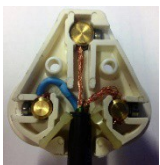
South Africa should implement a two-year voluntary community service programme, building homes for the poor. The cost of building these homes should radically be reduced and the number constructed significantly increased. This will help educate the youth with practical hand skills, create jobs, giving dignity and self-respect. After completion, the participants receive certificates giving them free access to any educational institute they qualify to study at.

The cost for first-year engineering students is in the order of R 120 000, and then only 40% pass. Further, there's the volume of students per teacher, accommodation and parking problems. The first-year engineering course at Universities should be free of charge. This can be achieved by having it online, taking the student from Grade 0 to the end of the first year, over max two-year period, and ensuring all are at the same level and ready for second-year University. Dedicated, self-driven and motivated engineering students ready to further develop their "thinking license". I am busy working on this idea, and it can practically be done.

In the past 20 years, our level of technical expertise in Eskom has dropped drastically, however, we have more Senior and Chief Engineers than ever before, why?

The system of promotions in Eskom is too fast. Acquiring engineering wisdom, learning from mistakes at lower levels, and practical on-job training take time. Eskom is going to have problems with poor engineering decisions, made by young "cut and paste" engineers, promoted far beyond the capabilities required at that level of responsibility. This will lead to depressed/disillusioned engineers, being poorly motivated - especially if there is no more room for promotions or salary increases as they have reached their Eskom career ceiling too soon. Give our young engineers the opportunities that we had, to develop and dream.

Eskom/South Africa urgently needs practical hands-on master Tradesmen and Technicians, who are proud of their profession and not office jockey "want to be Engineers", having the look and talk, but are fairly useless when having to do the real work on site. One of the root causes of this dilemma is that Technicians are trying to be Universities.



This, gap in training has led to Tradesmen, Technicians and Engineers not even being able to practically wire a standard three-point power plug. Most of them theoretically know to which terminal the coloured wire must be connected, but that's it. The example shown was wired by Snr Technician and then approved by the Engineer doing a safety inspection.

Our administrative and commercial side is hopelessly too top-heavy, complicated, non-effective, and slow, generating tons of paper and not electricity. Eskom needs to become a technical engineering company again, focusing on supplying electricity.

History has shown, that when politicians leave Eskom to be run as a Commission/Non-Profit Company by engineers, we produce the most reliable and cheapest electricity in the world. History has now also proved that when politicians and greedy businessmen interfere within Eskom, and the main focus is self-interest and to milk the State Owned Enterprise, we now deliver un-reliable and expensive electricity. This has forced Eskom into a downward "death spiral".

The Eskom of the future should be run as stated by its founder Dr Hendrik van der Bijl - *"It is not the Government's function to do everything for its people, but that it is its duty to create conditions that will encourage enterprise, not the type of enterprise that results in the unfair enrichment of some at the expense of others, but enterprise that results in equitable distribution of all the benefits."* Thus, Eskom should be run as a Non-Profit Company supplying reliable and cost-effective electricity to all South Africans so as to create a stable economy and improve quality of life.

My personal Eskom philosophy is that "We Serve the People as Innovative Technology Leaders so as to Ensure a Safe, Reliable and Economically Viable Electricity Supply within South Africa"

Only "the person in the mirror" looking back at you can make things happen.