



green life

Tiara Walters

www.facebook.com/stgreenlife
Tiara is on Twitter via sundaytimes_eco
Email walterst@sundaytimes.co.za

DIANA Carney, wife of the new governor of the Bank of England, has emerged as an unlikely environmentalist. She has noted that global financial institutions are “threatened, rotten or inadequate”, and has urged the world to banish “out-of-control” bottled water.

How do our own politicians stack up? We compiled a report card on some of the best and worst on the local green scene. Here’s how the scoring works:

- ★★★★★ Well done, Al Gore would be proud
- ★★★★ You’re on the right side of the green curtain
- ★★★ Average. You haven’t totally abandoned your responsibilities as a citizen of this planet
- ★★ Get it together — the mothership is sinking
- ★ Abort the mission

JACOB ZUMA
President of South Africa ★
The president’s office did not respond to our questions about how he leads by example. We’ve established, however, that his underrated carbon-awareness drive does not yet intend harvesting poo from the Hartbeespoort Dam to power the new fleet of multi-billion-dollar presidential jets. Waters at the president’s private residence, Nkandla, look equally murky. A government insider told Green Life that the “main-entrance drawbridge” will not rely on 100% solar energy, “should the area be struck by a close-range meteor and fill the sky with soot”. According to a source close to ousted human settlements minister Tokyo Sexwale, Nkandla is also “no place for poodles”. It cost R270-million to upgrade the president’s bolthole, which is enough to keep the Endangered Wildlife Trust going for the next 12.5 years.

MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI
Leader: Inkatha Freedom Party ★★★
The chief “chooses to drive rather than fly whenever possible, reducing his carbon footprint substantially”. His spokesperson Lyndith Waller adds he gave up eating meat “years ago and opts for sustainably harvested fish or free-range chicken and locally sourced vegetables”. Buthelezi has established various conservation agencies and reserves, such as Tembe Elephant Park. Waller also notes that he won conservation awards in 1999 and 1973. The chief appears to be living on the right side of the green curtain, but could his halo be wobbling? It’s been some time since he won critical recognition.

JUDY SOLE
Leader of the Green Party ★★★
Sole has greened her rustic Noordhoek holiday resort, which also happens to be Green Party HQ, by recycling, using non-toxic products for cleaning and pest control, and refusing to serve battery-farmed meat. She plans to take the resort off the grid by year-end. As SA president, some of Sole’s more eccentric policies would include a ban on gold mining; barricades around cities to protect wildlife and a new currency called the “eco”.

TINA JOEMAT-PETERSSON
Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries ★★
The minister uses energy-saving light bulbs in her residences. On their birthdays, her children plant trees. Recycling is the “family mantra”, adds spokesperson Palesa Mokomele, who says the minister “regularly visits vintage clothing shops”, and eats “a lot” of organic food and locally sourced fish. But has Joemat-Petersson faltered on the job front? In July SA’s 1.5-million square-metre off-shore dominion had been patrolled eight times in 400 days, due to a tender debacle in



LIVING ON THE VEG: Mangosuthu Buthelezi gave up red meat ‘years ago’

Environmental Affairs over who should approve a mining project’s environmental integrity may help boost Shabangu’s eco credentials. Approval has been her department’s responsibility, but a compromise will now force mines to comply with the same environmental requirements as all other industries — although mineral resources still has the final say over a project’s future. While the minister’s office could not be reached for comment, you may argue that environmental experts, rather than the department tasked with growing the mining sector, should be given this responsibility.

EDNA MOLEWA
Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs ★★★
Molewa has launched critical building regulations to fit all new buildings with energy-efficient features, such as solar water heaters. Her department’s new R653-million head office in Pretoria will incorporate a roof covered almost entirely in solar panels, a rainwater harvester, green wall, roof garden, smart building materials and a charging station for a pilot fleet of four electric vehicles. Molewa has shown grit in the fight against rhino poaching, backing a radical proposal to legalise the international trade in rhino horn. We’d like to see more resolve on less fashionable issues, such as unchecked litter and acid-mine drainage. SA consumers deserve answers to what happened to the R1-billion we paid into the plastic-bag levy fund between 2004 and 2011.

HELEN ZILLE
Premier of the Western Cape ★★★
Last year the premier defended the construction of a luxury toll office in the Chapman’s Peak section of the Table Mountain National Park, a decision which may have set a precedent for the construction of random buildings in Sanparks territory. At home, however, we’ll give her a thumbs up for taking on the carbon-hungry spooks of Leeuwenhof, her official residence in Cape Town. “I make sure to switch off the lights, though the ghosts occasionally like to switch them back on to play pranks on me,” she says. She has trained her husband to switch on the geyser after work, so she does not have to brave “freezing cold” showers. She admits she’s “lagged” in some areas. “When on the road, I eat what is put in front of me. I still drink bottled water.”

Whatever happened to ... MOHAMMED VALLI MOOSA?
Former minister of environmental affairs and tourism, Moosa introduced thicker, recyclable plastic bags in 2003. Moosa, who was subsequently World Conservation Union president between 2004 and 2008, was hailed as an environmental visionary. Today he is living it up on various boards for corporations like Anglo Platinum and Sun International.
TELL US: How would you score the green credentials of SA’s leaders?
E-mail walterst@sundaytimes.co.za

HEROES AND VILLAINS

The good, the bad and the ugly of South Africa’s green politics



SAVING ENERGY: Western Cape Premier Helen Zille with Ngowenceba Mputing at Leeuwenhof

her department that had marooned six patrol vessels at a time when poaching was rampant and fish stocks were plummeting. Mokomele said she did not see how the

stranded vessels were “directly related to the minister greening her life”.

TREVOR MANUEL
Minister in the Presidency: National Planning Commission; too early to rate
In February, Manuel became co-chair of the Global Ocean Commission, an initiative tasked to produce UN recommendations on how to combat overfishing, biodiversity and habitat loss and poor high-seas governance. His PA, Rahima Shaik, noted the minister was “extremely busy” and “not able to answer” questions on his green-living habits.

MARTHINUS VAN SCHALKWYK
Minister of Tourism ★★★
Tourism arrivals in SA grew by 10.2% last year — more than double the average global growth rate and a boon for ecotourism. When it comes to green living, he avoids bottled water “where possible” and “prefers” Fairtrade products. WWF’s annual Earth Hour is observed to educate his children. He reads books on iPad and Kindle and says he uses reusable shopping bags. His Rondebosch home is fitted with “dual-flush” toilets and compact fluorescent light bulbs, while the garden features drought-resistant, native landscaping. The minister admits he “falters many a time, but that you must always strive to improve and subscribe to sustainable practices”.

SUSAN SHABANGU
Minister of Mineral Resources ★★
Relinquishing her position in a protracted scrap with the Department of Water and

Canon

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