

HOME & GARDEN

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Home is where the earth is

Investing in an eco-friendly home is not only an ethically sound decision, it's a financially and logistically beneficial decision as well. Long-term cost-savings through sustainable lifestyle practices are far-reaching, with off-the-grid living allowing residents autonomy from overstretched municipal systems.

Reece Daniel, the developer of the eco-focused estate, Serenity Hills on the KZN South Coast, outlines several eco-friendly qualities that home buyers should look out for when considering an estate, or incorporate these qualities, as far as possible, when building their own home.

Water conservation

The threat of Day Zero in the Western Cape, and water woes experienced elsewhere in the country are just a few examples of what is anticipated to be an ongoing global challenge in the coming years. Eco-friendly estates will include water-saving features such as low-flow faucets and showerheads, rainwater harvesting systems, and drought-resistant landscaping. An added benefit is water storage systems such as dams for uninterrupted water provision. These initiatives help reduce water consumption and support sustainable resource management.

Green building materials

Construction of homes and other facilities on the estate should be done using sustainable building materials wherever possible. This includes locally sourced materials that reduce the estate's carbon footprint while enhancing indoor air quality and providing healthier living spaces.

Energy-efficient infrastructure

The home designs, additionally, should incorporate energy-efficient features such as maximising the use of natural light and air to minimise reliance on artificial lighting and temperature regulation systems. High-performance HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems and LED lighting also reduce energy use while maintaining comfortable, well-lit spaces.

Renewable energy sources

Incorporating renewable energy into a modern estate is a must, with properties equipped for solar panel installations and gas-powered cooking appliances to minimise reliance on the grid.

Waste reduction initiatives

An estate should promote recycling, composting and waste reduction programmes at a residential level and throughout its facilities. Investors should look out for recycling stations and composting areas that reduce landfill contributions.

Eco-friendly community projects

An estate cannot be inherently eco-friendly if it's operating in isolation from the rest of the community. Investors should consider how the estate management engages with the surrounding communities in terms of sustainability and eco-friendly initiatives. Skills development, educational initiatives, job creation and more can contribute towards long-term sustainability. Within the estate itself, practices such as community vegetable gardens and conservation groups are incredibly impactful.

