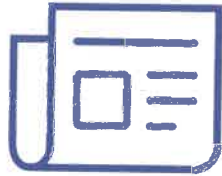


NEWS



PAYING ATTENTION!

Sand is key to sustainable landscaping



Landscapers need to pay more attention to the origins of sand and stones used on projects to ensure that they are derived from legal quarries that uphold legal requirements for worker safety and environmental stewardship of the aggregate reserves being exploited.

Surface mining industry association, ASPASA, urges landscapers to support the industry's ongoing attempts to eradicate illegal sand and stone mining and only to support quarries that can produce documentation that shows they have a legal mining licence, as well as upholding Government's strict policies on mine health and safety, as well as water usage licences, environmental management compliance, as well as necessary permissions from local councils among others.

Considering the important role that sand and stone plays in landscaping, suppliers should also uphold strict quality standards to produce all the products supplied. Although the process of qualifying suppliers is onerous it need not

be if procurement is done through one of the hundreds of ASPASA certified member quarries throughout South Africa.

False economy

According to ASPASA director, Nico Pienaar, members of ASPASA are bound by comprehensive legislation regarding mining rights, royalties, health, safety and environment, as well as water usage right and rehabilitation requirements that ensures they are well run. In addition, members also must adhere to the association's own strict requirements and are audited on an annual basis to ensure compliance.

They also strive to be good neighbours and get involved in all manner of social upliftment schemes. They also encourage communication and try to work with communities to give them good quality landscaping materials, at a reasonable price, without jeopardising the health of workers, the environment nor the sustainability of the industry.

"A saving of a couple of Rand per tonne of material is not worth the risk to our workers and surroundings. We therefore call on landscapers to contact Aspasa, the Department of Mineral Resources, the Police and local Municipalities to report potentially illegal operators and help snuff-out harmful quarrying practices," says Nico.

Legal requirement

Nico reminds landscapers that they must not excavate and remove sand, stones or aggregate for resale or private usage without the necessary permissions and permits no matter how small the operation is. This includes "borrow pits" used by some municipalities and construction companies, as well as illegal operations on rivers, beaches etc.

"There are rules that need to be followed whenever the removal and relocation of sand and stones is required. If suppliers are not in possession of the required permits it is your duty to report them and prevent their surroundings being ruined for the sake of a few individuals' gain.

"Illegal operations undermine the effectiveness of the work of legal quarries who have to comply with strict mining legislation to sustainably produce sands and aggregates and rehabilitate the land when quarrying operations are completed.

Right thing

This compliance naturally comes at a cost but the legal fraternity and allows unscrupulous illegal operators to undercut prices and jeopardise the livelihoods of legitimate operators.

As a result, ASPASA calls on concerned landscapers to be on the lookout for operators that do not seem to be well run, that do not care for the environment or that are not good neighbours, as these may well be illegal.



ASPASA, Nico Pienaar
(011) 791 3327, Fax: 011 647 8034, Email: info@aspasa.co.za, Web: www.aspasa.co.za