

South Africa becomes serious about polystyrene

Polystyrene is the most widely used form of packaging throughout the world today, with a wide variety of uses ranging from being the fundamental form of packaging convenience food in the fast food industry, to its use in fridges, the manufacturing of CD boxes or computers.

In an effort to raise awareness of polystyrene as a product and its numerous packaging uses, its impact on the environment and the importance of recycling, various representatives of manufacturers, consumer bodies and recycling organisations joined forces in October 2007 to form the first ever Polystyrene Packaging Council (PSPC) in South Africa.

Ian Edwards, chairman of the forum, describes the primary objectives of the PSPC as being the coordination of efforts by various players in the polystyrene industry in respect of collection and recycling, as well as communicating to consumers the safety, health and hygiene aspects of polystyrene

packaging.

"We see it as our responsibility to educate the consumers and the public about the importance of recycling polystyrene and the true facts about how it is being manufactured, transported and used," says Edwards.

"However, it is not just about polystyrene as a product, but about an industry sector that significantly contributes to job creation, economic growth, addressing unemployment and providing convenience to the consumer.

"The industry's efforts to meet its eco-responsibilities must be seen to be positive, constructive and effective through relevant technical, communications and public policy efforts."

Since its launch, the council has been conducting roadshows, exhibitions, competitions, press functions and information pamphlets explaining the benefits of polystyrene, in ways that are not always evident to the consumer.

