

# Enter the Better Living competition

Designers and innovators, inventors and creators, students and professionals, manufacturers and retailers - local and beyond SA's borders - are encouraged to enter the Better Living Challenge (BLC), which opens this month.



Three winners will each receive support worth R500,000 to commercialise their home improvement solutions. Students will compete for a R40,000 cash prize.

The BLC is part of the Western Cape Government's 110% Green initiative, which encourages organisations to commit to a green economy. The competition is intended to take powerful ideas to market and to provide a platform for consumers to experience and interact with innovative solutions.

The roll-out will be project managed by the Cape Craft & Design Institute (CCDI), an organisation established in 2001 to promote and grow the economic sustainability of the Western Cape craft and design sector. This competition is one of seven CCDI projects selected for the Cape Town World Design Capital 2014 programme.

## Solutions are needed

"Millions of South Africans live in dire conditions in informal settlements, backyard shacks and RDP houses," CCDI executive director Erica Elk said. "The need is much greater than the capacity and resources of government to deliver. We need to find solutions for home improvements that are affordable, result in better living conditions and quality of life, and provide people with the choices and resources to help themselves at their own pace. There are many needs and also many opportunities."

The competition will be rolled out in three phases, said Elk. Entries of new or existing prototypes and products can be submitted from 1 March to 31 May ([www.betterlivingchallenge.co.za](http://www.betterlivingchallenge.co.za)). During this period the CCDI will host three co-design workshops, bringing together designers and users to explore areas of need. Selection of the finalists will take place from June to August, followed by a showcase from September to November displaying the best home improvement solutions. This interactive space will enable user testing, feedback and judging. The public will be invited to vote for their favourite solutions.

## Business support

Winners will be announced in November 2014 and will receive tailored business and product support, starting next year. Assistance could include coaching, business consulting, legal services, prototyping, market research, graphic design and more.

**There are three entry categories:**

- **Structural home:** Innovative products and materials to construct safe, sustainable homes. This could include

components and systems for new, self-built homes, or systems that add bulk to an existing footprint in an affordable way. Fire-proofing, sanitation and flooding are key challenges that could be addressed.

- **Comfortable home:** Products used to create enjoyable interiors. These could be affordable modular and space-saving furniture ranges; products that enhance temperature control and light, energy and water efficiencies; and systems offering privacy within multi-purpose spaces.
- **Connected home:** This category calls for products and services that connect a home to its surroundings and beyond, digitally or physically. They could include food production and waste water systems, for example.

## Students are welcome

Elk called on tertiary institutions to support the competition. "Lecturers could encourage their students to channel their expertise into this vital sector. They could base a design brief on the Challenge, with cross-disciplinary teams from various departments working together."

Jenny Cargill, who leads 110% Green, said the Challenge differs from the usual design contests. "It encompasses innovative marketing to test consumer acceptance of the designs and products on show, hopes to encourage financial institutions to provide new financial products to support self-improvement, and follow-up business support to award winning manufacturers and designers in the subsequent year."

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