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MEDIA RELEASE

ICASA Calls for Prompt Renewal of Class Broadcasting Services Licences

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PRETORIA – The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa urges all holders of class broadcasting licensees to ensure that they renew their licences during the statutory renewal period. This is essential for them to ensure the seamless continuation of business operations and the provision of broadcasting services for their listeners or viewers.

The law requires community broadcasters to initiate the renewal of their licences not less than 6 months, and no earlier than 12 months, before their current licences expire. ICASA has repeatedly pointed out that the law offers the Authority no leeway to consider renewal applications that miss the 6-month deadline by even as little as a day.

Community broadcasting services play a vital role in South Africa. They serve as a key source of information, education, and entertainment. They contribute significantly to promoting diversity of views and building social cohesion — a role that ICASA cherishes and supports. These services form an integral part of the three-tier broadcasting ecosystem that encompasses public, commercial, and community sectors.

"The importance of community broadcasting in South Africa cannot be overstated—it is the heartbeat of the diverse societies of South Africa. Therefore, ICASA urges all class broadcasting licensees to uphold their responsibility by

renewing their licenses on time”, says Councillor Luthando Mkumatela, Chairperson of the Committee.

Class broadcasting services licences include:

- Community Sound Broadcasting Licences;
- Community Television Broadcasting Licences;
- Low Power Community Sound Broadcasting Licences; and
- Low Power Commercial Sound Broadcasting Licences.

Section 19 of the Electronic Communications Act of 2005 gives no scope to the Authority to condone the late submission of the required renewal application. Therefore, no condonation can be accepted for late submission of a renewal application.

All class licensees bear the responsibility of adhering to the legislative and regulatory framework by submitting renewal applications to the Authority on time.

Late applications cannot rely on the recent decision in favour of Open Heaven Community Radio since the case is currently subject to an appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeal and is therefore not enforceable pending the final determination of the appeal.

The Authority reiterates that it is the duty of each licensee to ensure the timeous submission of renewal applications. ICASA looks forward to the cooperation and compliance of all community broadcasting licensees, for this critical sector to continue to flourish.

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