

MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release

INTERIM DATA HIGHLIGHT RADIO'S POWERFUL APPEAL FOR SA YOUTH

Johannesburg, South Africa 30 June 2021: Interim radio listenership data, released by the Broadcasting Research Council of South Africa (“BRC”) for Quarter 1 of 2021, show a high listenership amongst the youth of South Africa. Some 95 % of respondents between the ages of 15 and 24 said they listen to radio, while, also of the 15 to 24 year olds, 92 % said they listen every week, and over 70 % said they listen on a daily basis.

Asked which content they listen to the radio for, news headed the list, with other preferred content including debates and discussions. Amongst the reasons they gave for listening to the radio, “Radio keeps them informed about the news” and “Enjoying the talk shows” were ranked highly.

This, according to the National Association of Broadcasters (“NAB”), highlights the continuing appeal of radio to this important sector, despite competition from social media. It also highlights the crucial role played by broadcasting in empowering the country’s youth through information sharing and educational programmes.

With South Africa experiencing its third Covid-19 wave, radio’s power to educate and inform in crises, as well as everyday life, has never been more important. Educators and learners have turned to tuition via the airwaves, providing a vital resource for young people who have no or limited access to online learning. In Learning during the Covid-19 Lockdown (section27.org.za/learning-during-the-covid-19-lockdown), Section27 reported that more than 10 commercial radio stations were broadcasting educational content for learners nationally through the SABC, while community radio stations across all provinces were also playing their part. In the Eastern Cape, for example, more than 20 community radio stations were broadcasting lessons for learners.

Besides providing an alternative where physical and online learning are not possible, radio offers young listeners a sense of engagement, especially in times of social distancing and hard lockdowns. “It keeps me company” was a major reason from young listeners for listening to the radio, They are also 32 % more likely to listen to the radio on their mobile phones, meaning they can tune in anywhere, anytime.

“The Covid-19 pandemic is one of the biggest disruptors we will ever experience,” says NAB Executive Director Nadia Bulbulia. “While South Africa has turned to online education to ensure continued learning, the harsh reality is that a significant number of learners, particularly in the remote areas, do not have access to a home computer or the internet. Radio has assisted us to bridge the digital divide in education, particularly for the most marginalised learners.”

Further information on the Interim Radio Listenership Data is available on <https://brcsa.org.za/radio-audience-trends/>

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About NAB

The National Association of Broadcasters (“NAB”) is a voluntary association that was formed in 1993 to foster and promote the development of a sustainable and robust broadcasting system in South Africa.

It supports the principles of democracy, freedom of expression and the diversity of voices.

As the leading representative of South Africa’s regulated broadcasting industry, the NAB members comprise all three tiers of broadcasters (public, private and community) as well as signal providers and industry associates. It has since the dawn of SA’s democracy, engaged in policy and regulatory processes that affect the broadcasting sector.

The NAB is funded entirely by its members and responds to a broad range of needs and developments to strengthen and create a favourable climate for a vibrant industry. It established the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of SA (BCCSA) that is recognized by the sector regulator, ICASA.

Further information: www.nabsa.org.za