

MEDIA STATEMENT: THE ESTATE AGENCY AFFAIRS BOARD (EAAB) AND THE SERVICES SETA (SSETA)

The EAAB and the SSETA, both statutory bodies, are pleased to announce that, after mutual engagement and extensive consultation, they have agreed as follows:

The establishment of an Estate Agency Qualification and Certification Forum

The EAAB and the Services SETA jointly intend establishing an Estate Agency Qualification and Certification Forum (“the Forum”) that will not only constitute the Professional Body for the estate agency sector but also be instrumental in the education, training and professional development of estate agency practitioners. The proposed functions of the Forum, more specifically, will be to:

- register and review the National Qualifications Framework (“NQF”) qualifications for the estate agency industry/sector;
- jointly accredit all training providers offering the NQF qualifications;
- jointly moderate all Recognition of Prior Learning (“RPL”) instruments submitted to the SSETA;
- quality assure the activities of all providers, through the SSETA QALA Division, at least twice per annum;
- create an Appeals Forum and ensure that sufficient subject matter experts are made available to serve on that Forum;
- jointly chair all Committee of Expert Practitioners (“CEP”) activities and Organising Framework for Occupations (“OFO”) initiatives for property and estate agency;
- jointly publish resource materials for all certification activities;
- jointly moderate and approve all certification instruments and processes;
- jointly quality assure all certification activities;
- jointly manage the implementation and execution of Continuing Professional Development (“CPD”) activities for all levels of professional certification in property and estate agency through the implementation of an appropriate model of registration and certification; and
- jointly perform all such other identified tasks and functions pertaining to the educational activities for the property and/or estate agency sectors as may be agreed upon between the parties.

The Forum also intends concluding such Memorandums of Agreements with any other established Professional Bodies that may be relevant to its sphere of operations such as, for instance, the property development and management sector, the legal sector and the valuation and auctioneering professions, as may be necessary or desirable in the interest of the property sector in general and the estate agency profession in particular. The Terms of Reference and composition of the Forum have yet to be determined by the EAAB and the SSETA although it has been agreed that the Real Estate Chamber Board of the SSETA and the members of the Education and Training Committee of the EAAB will serve on the Forum. Both bodies welcome this unique innovation which bodes well for their future cooperation and joint interactions where the education and skills development of estate agency practitioners is concerned.

The formation of an Estate Agency Principals Association (“the EAPA”)

The Forum will endeavour to establish an Estate Agency Principals Association in each province and, also, nationally with the aim being that such body will collectively represent duly registered principal estate agents on such structures such as the Forum itself or where social partners are required. The intention behind this action is to ensure that the EAPA always acts in the best interests of organised

employers within the estate agency sector as a member of the Business Coalition of South Africa (BCSA).

NQF Level 4 and 5 estate agency qualifications and Professional Designation Examination Subsidies

All estate agency practitioners registered as such on 15 April 2008 have been granted until 31 December 2011 within which to be certificated against the relevant NQF level 4 and/or 5 qualifications for non-principals and principals respectively. The Forum remains keen on discouraging any form of entitlement to, or dependency on, external funding, whether from the SSETA or any other governmental agency, by practicing estate agents who wish to be certificated against these qualifications and will, as a result, operationally administer all bursaries that are made available to the estate agency sector by the SSETA.

The SSETA has, indeed, indicated that a further bursary allocation of R20 million will be released to the estate agency sector from 1 August 2010. It has been agreed that any individual associated with a SSETA levy-paying member company will be granted a rebate of R5 000 against the tuition/assessment costs incurred when such member has been duly certificated against either the NQF Level 4 or 5 estate agency qualifications respectively by the SSETA. To qualify for this refund the individual estate agency practitioner concerned must have completed the relevant qualification through a SSETA-accredited training provider who has duly registered the person concerned as a learner with the Forum.

The SSETA has, in addition, agreed to release a further allocation of R10 million to enable those estate agency practitioners who, having completed either the NQF Level 4 or 5 estate agency qualification, seek to write the Professional Designation Examination ("the PDE") as provided for in the Education Regulations. Once the candidate has duly registered for, written and passed the PDE that candidate may qualify for a refund of R1 000 from the SSETA to offset the costs necessarily incurred in purchasing the required study material from the EAAB and paying the examination entry fee which is estimated to be approximately R1 500. The candidate, to qualify for the refund, must have registered with a SSETA-accredited training provider recognised by the Forum as a PDE Tuition Centre. Each such PDE Tuition Centre will register the candidate as a PDE Learner with the Forum.

Mutually harmonious working relationship

The SSETA and the EAAB are pleased, finally, to record that, through the exercise of considerable cooperation and goodwill on both sides, they have been able to overcome the vicissitudes of the past and to establish a mutually harmonious and cooperative working relationship in the best interests of all affected stakeholders and the two Executive Authorities to whom they report. The two bodies, indeed, look forward to working closely and supportively together in the future and to using the Forum as an ideal mechanism to advance the interests of the estate agency sector and its professionalisation.