



ESTATE AGENCY AFFAIRS BOARD
OF SOUTH AFRICA

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

04 JULY 2012

It may, at the outset, be recorded that the Estate Agency Affairs Board (EAAB) was, with effect from 17 May 2012, relocated from the Department of Trade and Industry to the Department of Human Settlements which now constitutes its Executive Authority. It should be emphasised, furthermore, that the EAAB is an entirely self-funding entity which receives no financial assistance from government. All moneys accruing to the EAAB are exclusively utilised in the furtherance of its statutory aims and objectives.

It must be underscored that, the obligatory departures of the former chairman and chief executive officer notwithstanding, the EAAB has continued to function effectively. The settlement agreement eventually reached between the EAAB and the previous chief executive officer was preceded by an extensive cost/benefit analysis which indicated that the conclusion of such a settlement would be in the best interests of the EAAB, despite the fact that the EAAB remained firmly of the view that it had at all times acted correctly and within the parameters of the law. As can be appreciated matters dealing with the salaries and emoluments of EAAB staff both past and present, are confidential in nature and it is regretted that this confidentiality cannot now be breached.

A new chairman, in the person of Ms. Ina Wilken, who is both eminently qualified as well as being a renowned consumer activist, was recently appointed by the Board. It is gratifying to report that Ms. Wilken has seamlessly taken charge and that she has capably and proficiently exercised all the necessary functions and duties attaching to that high office to the benefit and satisfaction of all stakeholders. An Acting Chief Executive Officer was, similarly, appointed to run the EAAB until such time as a permanent appointment could be made and, to his credit, has done so conscientiously and competently. The permanent appointment of a chief executive officer was, unfortunately, delayed due to the relocation of the EAAB from **the dti** to the Department of Human Settlements.

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It is an empirical fact that the EAAB has, since the departure of the former chairman and chief executive officer, considered and implemented many innovative policies and procedures, all of which have been specially designed to accommodate the identified needs of stakeholders. Specific attention was, for instance, given to such vital matters as the facilitation of the timeous issue of fidelity fund certificates (or licences to operate as estate agents) to qualifying applicants, the enhancement of the range of services provided by the Call Centre and, generally speaking, simply to ensuring that the EAAB is made more 'user friendly' and as accessible as possible to its various sector role players. These policies and procedures are bearing fruit and will undoubtedly achieve their stated objectives. It might be noted, for instance, that while the EAAB issued a total of 49,980 fidelity fund certificates to estate agents in 2011 it has, to date, already issued 52,304 fidelity fund certificates.

The EAAB has intensified its concerted endeavours to interact, both formally and informally, with as many relevant bodies on matters of mutual interest and concern as possible. Stakeholders active in the estate agency sector with whom the EAAB has recently engaged and cooperated include the Institute of Estate Agents South Africa (IEASA), the Real Estate Business Owners of South Africa (REBOSA), the National Property Forum (NPF), the Black Estate Agents Forum of South Africa (BEAFSA), the National Association of Managing Agents (NAMA), the South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA), the Property Sector Transformation Council (PSTC), the Services Sector Education and Training Authority (SSETA), the Financial Services Board (FSB), the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC), the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA), the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA), the South African Institute of Auctioneers (SAIA), the Banking Association of South Africa (BASA) and the Association of Law Societies. These positive interactions have been well received by the estate agency sector as a whole and will shortly be expanded into a recognised and formalised Stakeholder Forum structure.

During the course of this year the EAAB has, thus far, successfully presented eleven seminars countrywide. These seminars, which serve as a valuable mechanism for stakeholders to provide feedback on issues directly affecting them, were attended by no less than 4,250 participants. A 'CEO's Task Team' was also specifically established to resolve all matters raised at the seminars and has done so.

It is, of course, also incumbent on the EAAB to ensure that all estate agents and estate agency enterprises comply with the provisions of both the Estate Agency Affairs Act as well as the Financial Intelligence Centre - since immovable property has been empirically identified as one of the major mechanisms presently being utilised for money laundering purposes in South Africa. The EAAB has, accordingly, undertaken to ensure that a minimum of 1000 routine inspections are conducted countrywide per annum and is achieving this aim.

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In the end result it may be concluded the EAAB is a stable and effective organisation that remains committed to ensuring that it fulfills its statutory and regulatory mandate in the most effective and efficient manner possible and that by so doing, consumers are fully protected in their dealing with estate agents while the legitimate interests of professional estate agents are not neglected.

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