



POSTAL DIVISION

Since its inception, the Postal Regulator has been located as a directorate within the Department of Communications (Doc). However, with the coming into effect of the ICASA Amendment Act of 2005, the Postal Regulator has been incorporated into ICASA's divisions of Licensing, Markets and Competition, Consumer Protection and Legal and the Complaints and Compliance Committee. In January 2007, the Postal Division relocated to the ICASA offices.

The Postal Division comprised of three departments, namely:

- Policy Research and Licensing
- Monitoring and Enforcement
- Pricing and Tariffs.

POLICY RESEARCH AND LICENSING

The Policy Research and Licensing department was responsible for registering and licensing postal operators and developed relevant policies and regulations to govern the postal industry.

The department undertook the following projects:

- Developed a code of practice for postal operators in the unreserved postal area (courier companies). The purpose of the Code is to develop uniform standards for the sector. The Code is binding to all postal operators.
- Registration of new unreserved postal operators and the renewal of existing operators. Currently there are 232 registered courier companies.
- Desktop research was completed on secure mail, post boxes and philately. The purpose of the research was to benchmark the way in which the three areas of postal services are regulated.
- Revised the application form for unreserved postal operators.

MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

The Monitoring and Enforcement department was responsible for ensuring compliance with legislation, licence conditions and regulations. The department executed this responsibility by monitoring the quality of postal services, inspecting the quality of services, promoting good customer service and handling customer complaints.

Compliance with legislation, licensing conditions and regulations is achieved through the following activities:

Postal inspections

Postal inspections were conducted to

- root out illegal operators in the reserved postal area, verify the location and operation of new postal outlets and monitor retail infrastructure roll-out;
- promote the functions and the interests of the Authority in the nine regional provinces; and
- enforce compliance to postal legislature and regulations in the industry.

Postal Services Delivery Standards

An independent monitoring project was undertaken on a three-year contractual basis. The purpose of this project was to ensure improvements on the delivery standards of the South African Post Office as a licensee.

Customer service

The Monitoring and Enforcement department conducted and participated in provincial outreach programmes to educate customers on postal issues. These outreach programmes entailed educating and informing customers about their rights and channels of redress with regard to postal services providers. The areas visited included Sekhukhune District, Vhembe District, Upington and North West.

Customer complaints

The Monitoring and Enforcement department received and responded to customer complaints on an on-going basis. During the past year, four customer disputes were resolved and the customers that had been negatively affected were compensated by SAPO.

Complaints about SAPO included poor customer service, non-delivery, mail theft and poor quality of service. Complaints about international mail and courier services were also received and resolved.

PRICING AND TARIFFS

The Pricing and Tariffs department determined postal pricing and tariffs for the reserved postal area of the South African Post Office. The department conducted economic and financial analyses of postal operators and evaluated tariff proposals to ensure the provision of reliable universal postal services at uniform and affordable rates. In the reporting year, the following activities were undertaken:

- A detailed economic and financial analysis of the South African Post Office's tariff increase proposal and financial information. Recommendations made regarding SAPO's proposal resulted in ICASA approving a 4.1% average general price increase for national tariffs and a 5.5 % average general increase for international tariffs.
- The approved tariffs were published, and addressed issues relating to postal fees and charges.
- Managed the quarterly regulatory reporting by the national operator (SAPO).
- Ongoing research was conducted on developments in international tariff regulation and reporting.