



SEPTEMBER 2025

# THE FOCUS





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NEWSTART COMMUNICATION

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## Editor's note

### Welcome to the second issue of The Focus for the 2025/26 financial year

This special edition marks a momentous milestone: *25 years of ICASA regulating in the public interest*. Over the past quarter-century, ICASA has served not only as a regulator but also as a bridge, linking policy to people and spectrum to service.

In this special edition, we celebrate ICASA's journey. You will find reflections on key legislative and regulatory checkpoints, including the framework provided for South Africa's transition from analogue to digital broadcasting and interventions to reduce the cost of communication, such as the initial regulations governing Call Termination Services.

We showcase the 25th anniversary milestones, highlighting statistics such as the 206 community broadcasting service licences currently in the market and the total number of Type Approvals reaching 23,634. We also explore the technological evolution over 25 years in the section "Then vs Now".

Furthermore, we are proud to feature colleagues who have been part of ICASA since its formation, reflecting on their career and contribution.

Finally, this issue explores the Authority's influence on the international stage, detailing 25 Years of forging relations in the international fora.

As always, we value your feedback and encourage you to engage with us through [thefocus@icasa.org.za](mailto:thefocus@icasa.org.za)

*We trust you will enjoy reading this special issue and we hope it inspires you.*

EDITOR & EDITORIAL TEAM

# The Impact of ICASA on communities over 25 years

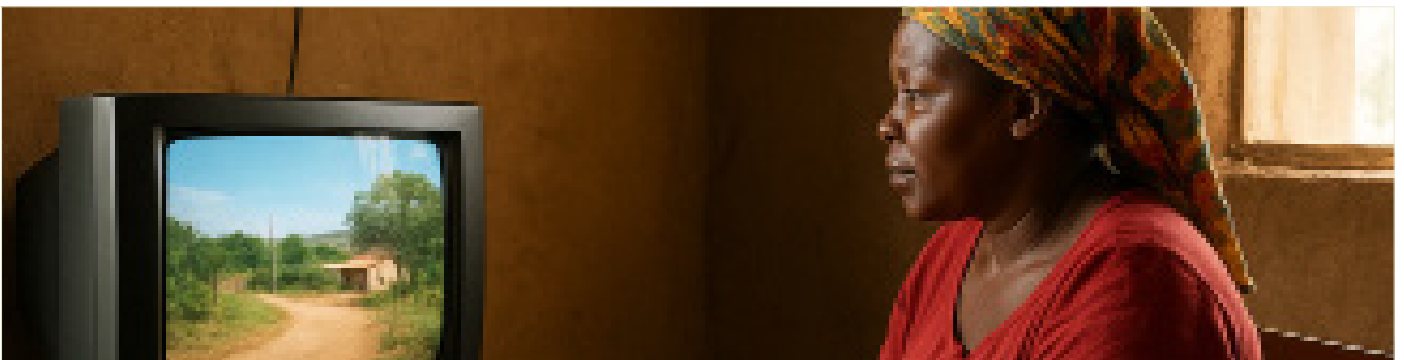
*Over the past 25 years, ICASA has served not only as a regulator but also as a bridge, linking policy to people and spectrum to service. From a family in a rural village connecting to mobile data for the first time, to a community radio station going on air, ICASA's work continues to shape the everyday lives of South Africans.*

In many areas, community radio stations are usually the first source of news. These are not just stations, they offer a sense of belonging. They provide essential information and updates in local languages, provide a platform for upcoming artists and educate listeners on different topics. Behind every legal community broadcast is a licence issued by the Authority after guidance, support and consultation.

Beyond the microphone, ICASA extends its reach to telecommunications, ensuring fair access, market competitiveness and quality service. Over the years, South Africans have turned to ICASA for recourse, holding licensees accountable and most importantly, safeguarding consumer rights.

Even in today's digital age, the postal sector remains a lifeline connecting remote communities, pensioners and small businesses. Over the years, ICASA has ensured that this sector continues to serve the people by monitoring performance and regulating service delivery.

Across broadcasting, telecommunications and postal services, ICASA has played a vital role in shaping South Africa's communications landscape. Through licensing, monitoring, enforcing compliance and enabling public participation, the Authority has worked to guarantee that communication services are accessible, reliable and truly in the public interest.



# 25th Anniversary Milestones

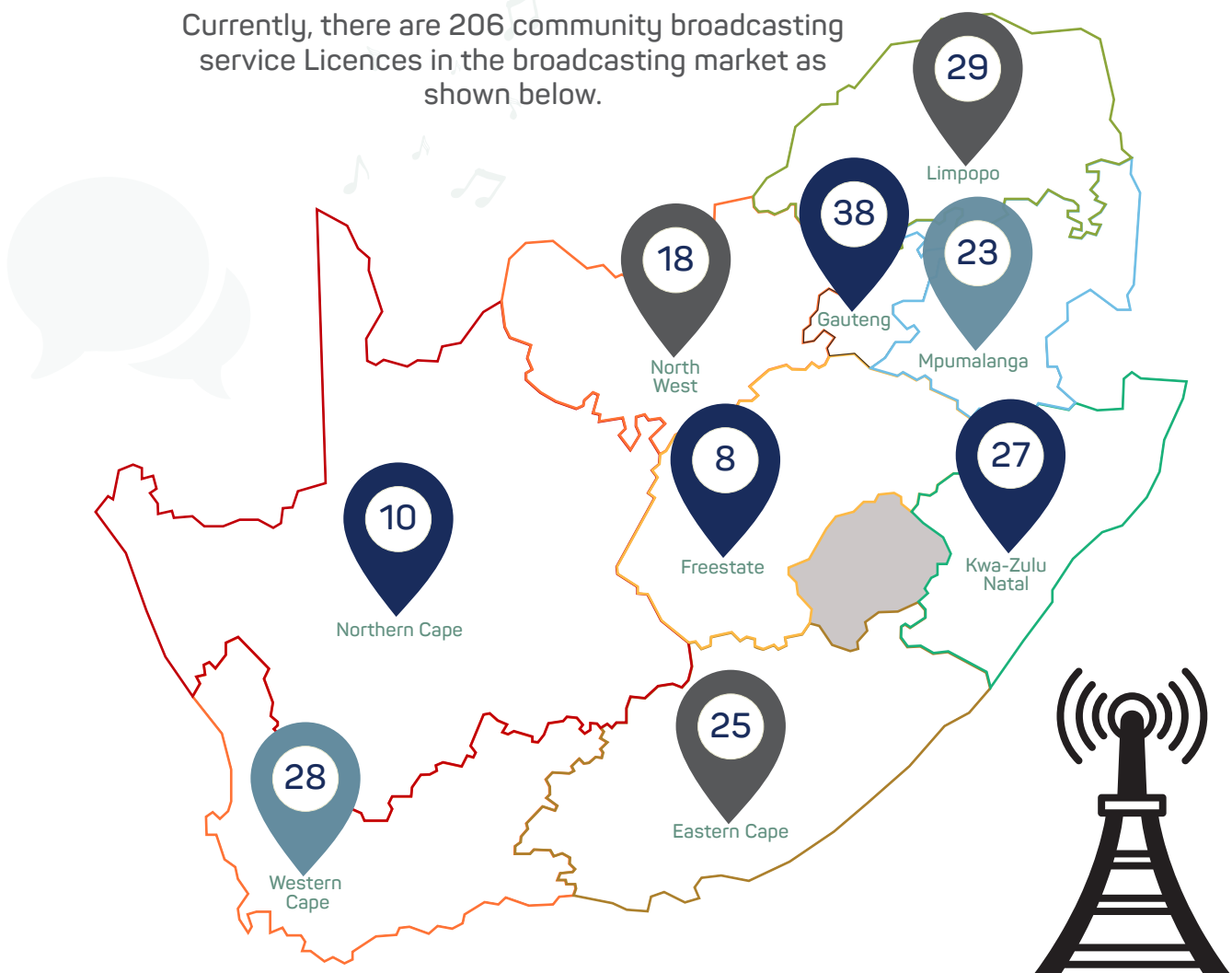
## Number of Broadcasting Licences



Numbers tell a story and ICASA has plenty to share. The following infographics captures ICASA's licensing milestones and the work it has done to strengthen the sector for all South Africans.

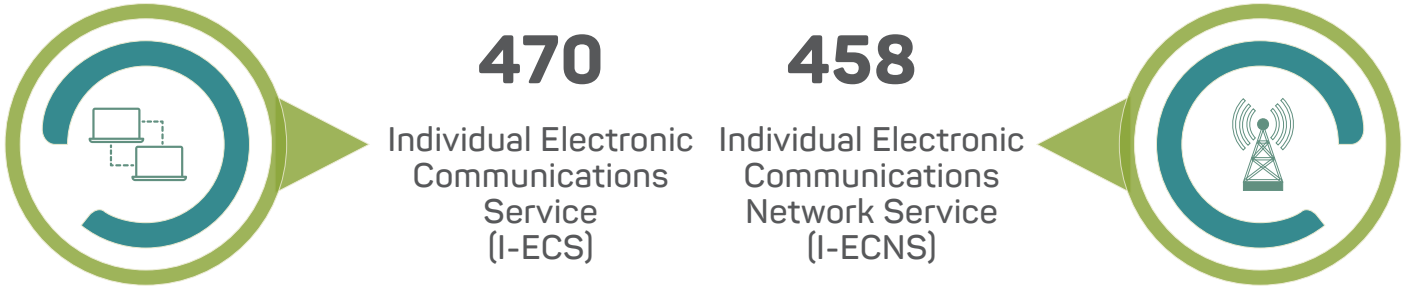
## Provincial Breakdown of Community Licences

Currently, there are 206 community broadcasting service Licences in the broadcasting market as shown below.

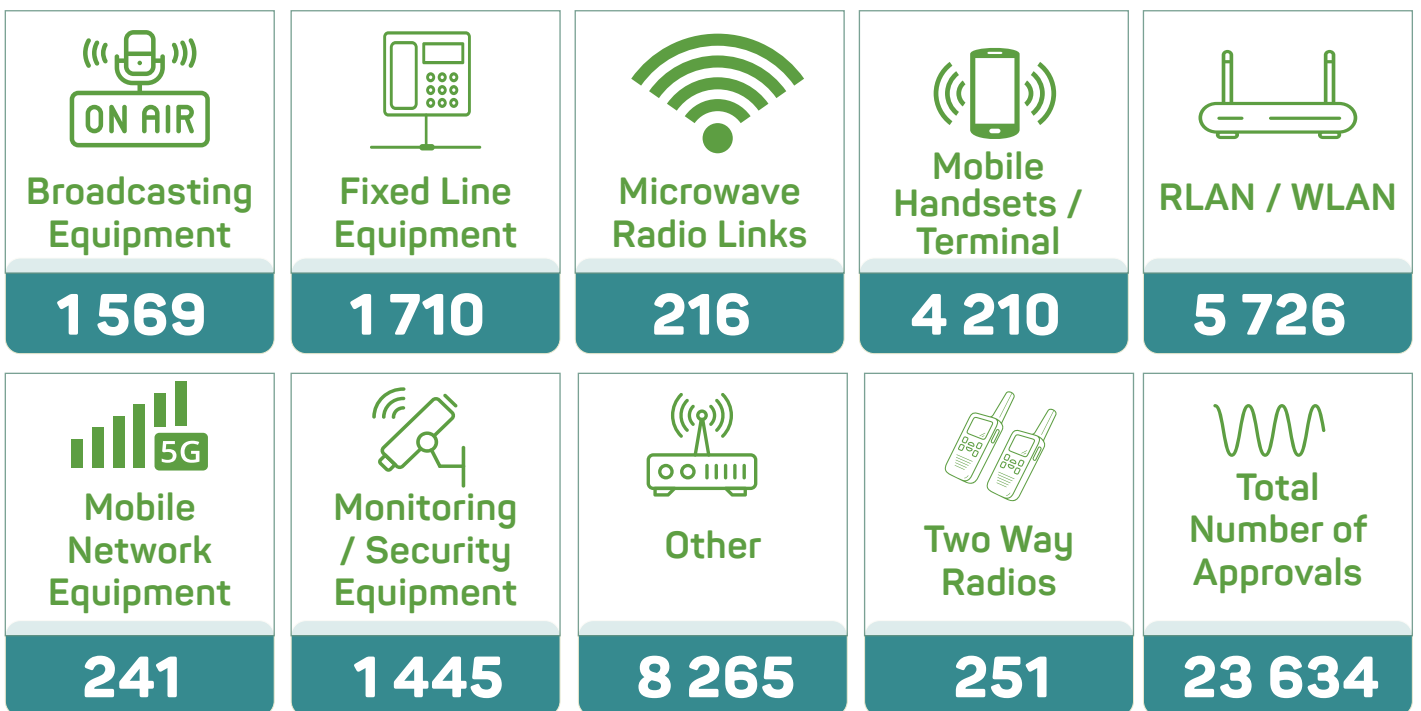


# 25th Annivessary Milestones

## Number of I-ECS and I-ECNS Licensees



## Type Approval



## Number of Radio Frequency Spectrum Licenses





# Licences issued on the ASMS since inception as at 19 August 2025

## Land Mobile



### STATUSES OF LICENCES

Active:  
4 533

Up for Renewal:  
508

Renewal in Progress:  
456

Amendment in Progress:  
60

Renewal Predecessor:  
11 659

Amendment Predecessor:  
476

Expired:  
337

**TOTALS:**  
**18 029**

## Fixed



### STATUSES OF LICENCES

Active:  
77

Up for Renewal:  
29

Renewal in Progress:  
75

Amendment in Progress:  
5

Renewal Predecessor:  
218

Amendment Predecessor:  
20

Expired:  
3

**TOTALS:**  
**427**

## Satellite



### STATUSES OF LICENCES

Active:  
158

Up for Renewal:  
36

Renewal in Progress:  
22

Amendment in Progress:  
2

Renewal Predecessor:  
333

Amendment Predecessor:  
45

Expired:  
0

**TOTALS:**  
**596**

## Aeronautical



### STATUSES OF LICENCES

Active:  
4 848

Up for Renewal:  
914

Renewal in Progress:  
136

Amendment in Progress:  
80

Renewal Predecessor:  
2 416

Amendment Predecessor:  
680

Expired:  
21

**TOTALS:**  
**9 095**

## Maritime



### STATUSES OF LICENCES

Active:  
7 569

Up for Renewal:  
1 848

Renewal in Progress:  
246

Amendment in Progress:  
173

Renewal Predecessor:  
4 518

Amendment Predecessor:  
1 901

Expired:  
26

**TOTALS:**  
**16 281**

## Amateur Radio



### STATUSES OF LICENCES

Active:  
3 131

Up for Renewal:  
655

Renewal in Progress:  
95

Amendment in Progress:  
30

Renewal Predecessor:  
5 700

Amendment Predecessor:  
569

Expired:  
28

**TOTALS:**  
**10 208**

## Radio Dealer



### STATUSES OF LICENCES

Active:  
949

Up for Renewal:  
359

Renewal in Progress:  
131

Amendment in Progress:  
21

Renewal Predecessor:  
2 577

Amendment Predecessor:  
165

Expired:  
19

**TOTALS:**  
**4 221**

## Totals



### STATUSES OF LICENCES

Active:  
21 265

Up for Renewal:  
4 349

Renewal in Progress:  
1 161

Amendment in Progress:  
371

Renewal Predecessor:  
27 421

Amendment Predecessor:  
3 856

Expired:  
434

**TOTALS:**  
**58 857**

# ICASA's 25-Year Journey: Charting Regulatory Milestones in South Africa's Digital Transformation (2000 – 2025)

Established in July 2000, through the merger of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA), ICASA is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Mandated to regulate the telecommunications, broadcasting and postal sectors in the public interest, ICASA has guided South Africa through technological convergence and market liberalisation, achieving key accomplishments across five distinct regulatory periods.

## 1. July 2000 – June 2005: The Formative Years

This period focused on integrating the merged entities and establishing foundational legal and licensing frameworks. Early steps involved shaping the competitive landscape and addressing ownership structures.

- The Authority published draft regulations for **Value-Added Network Services (VANS)** and **Private Telecommunications Networks (PTNs)** in October 2000, finalising the findings and proposed licence definitions in June 2001. Simultaneously, work progressed on the Fees and Charges for PSTN Services ("Rate Regime").
- Licensing the **Second National Operator (SNO)** was also an active project during this period.
- ICASA launched its final **South African Music and Television Content Regulations** in February 2002. Concerns over restrictive rules prompted a review of the **ownership and control regulations** for private radio licences starting in January 2002.
- The Authority initiated an inquiry into sports rights for broadcasting to inform the development of a sustainable regulatory regime.
- Policy development began for commercial broadcasting, culminating in the publication of a **Subscription Broadcasting Discussion Paper** in April 2004, setting the stage for new entrants. The Authority also examined **M-Net's "Open Window"** rights, eventually deciding to terminate them effective April 1, 2007.

## 3. July 2010 – June 2015: Cost to Communicate & Digital Transition

This period was characterised by interventions to promote competition, reduce the cost to communicate and modernise technical frameworks in anticipation of digital broadband growth.

- A major regulatory shift occurred in October 2010 when ICASA released the **Final Regulations governing the provision of Call Termination Services**, establishing the first pro-competitive price control mechanism under the ECA.
- The groundwork was laid for future high-demand spectrum licensing with the publication of the **Radio Frequency Spectrum Fees Regulations and the Spectrum Licensing Framework Regulations for high-demand bands**. ICASA also published the approved Roadmap for all IMT spectrum in 2014, setting a national plan for mobile broadband frequency bands.
- The Authority gazetted the **Findings document on local content for broadcasting** on September 2014, following extensive consultation. Furthermore, essential consumer frameworks were developed, including finalising the framework for **toll-free numbers** by March 2014.

## 2. July 2005 – June 2010: The ECA Implementation Era

With the enactment of the Electronic Communications Act (ECA) of 2005, ICASA focused on licence conversion and creating consumer protection and digital migration frameworks.

- The **Invitation to Apply (ITA) and Regulations for Commercial Subscription Broadcasting licenses** were published in January 2006. Crucially, final regulations for **Digital Migration** were gazetted and published in November 2008, detailing the move from analogue to digital broadcasting. The Authority also finalised the **Broadcasting Frequency Plan** in November 2009.
- ICASA established core consumer protection measures, including the publication of the **End-User and Subscriber Service Charter Regulations and the E-Rate Regulations**, which mandated a 50% discount for electronic communications services provided to qualifying public institutions. The **Universal Access and Service Fund Regulations** were also published to promote access to basic services.
- To govern the relationship between public and subscription broadcasters, the **Must Carry Regulations** were finalised and published in October 2008.
- Regulatory attention was also given to defining under-served areas, with a findings document published in February 2009.

## 4. July 2015 – June 2020: Dynamic Spectrum & Market Inquiries

ICASA increasingly focused on using market inquiries to address competition deficits (especially in mobile data) and advancing spectrum technologies for universal access.

- Responding to public interest in reducing data costs, ICASA launched an inquiry into the **Mobile Broadband Services Market**, publishing a Discussion Document outlining preliminary views on market definition and proposing pro-competitive remedies.
- To boost rural connectivity, the **Final Regulations for the use of Television White Spaces (TVWS)** were published in March 2018, establishing a framework for dynamic and opportunistic spectrum management.
- Regulations for the use of the E and V bands were also published in November 2016, targeting high-capacity wireless links.
- In preparation for the 2019 National Elections, the **Final Amendment Regulations on Party Election Broadcasts, Political Advertisements and Equitable Treatment** were published to ensure fairness among political parties.
- The Authority finalised the regulatory framework for the licensing of community broadcasting services for both sound and television, lifting a moratorium imposed in 2015/16.
- The **Findings Document and Position Paper on the use of Digital Sound Broadcasting** in South Africa was concluded and published in March 2019.
- Draft regulations for a **Code of Conduct for Premium-Rated Services** were published in December 2015.

# ICASA's 25-Year Journey: Charting Regulatory Milestones in South Africa's Digital Transformation (2000 – 2025)

## 5. July 2020 – Current (2025): The Pandemic & Spectrum Auction

The most recent period has been dominated by regulatory responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the licencing of high-demand spectrum.

- The **ICT COVID-19 National Disaster Regulations** were published in April 2020 to ensure information dissemination and connectivity during the national disaster.
- The **RF Spectrum Auction**, concluded in March 2022, licensed high-demand IMT spectrum (including 700MHz, 800MHz, 2600MHz, and 3500MHz bands).
- The Authority addressed potential harms in advertising by publishing a Discussion Document on **Advertising, Infomercials and Programme Sponsorship** in March 2021. In addition, work commenced to amend the **End-User and Subscriber Service Charter Regulations**, specifically reviewing Quality of Service (QoS) and new parameters related to "Data Service".
- Dynamic spectrum work continued with an inquiry into Phase 2 of the **Dynamic Spectrum Access and Opportunistic Spectrum Management** planned for 2022-23. A Discussion Document on the **Optimisation of the Frequency Modulation Sound Broadcasting** was published in March 2022, followed by a Position Paper and Findings Document in 2022/23.
- An inquiry on the review of the regulations on the **Conveyance of Mail, 2009** was initiated in 2022/23 to address evolving consumer needs.
- ICASA gazetted **amendments to the National and Provincial Party Elections Broadcasts and Political Advertisements Regulations** on February 2024, in preparation for the national elections which took place in 29 May 2024.

Looking ahead to the next 25 years, ICASA remains focused on its long-term vision of an inclusive digital society.

Cheers to 25 years of ICASA





# Then vs Now: 25 Years of Tech Evolution in South Africa

In 1999, the internet was still a novelty in many South African homes. Logging on meant listening to the high-pitched screech of a dial-up modem, hoping no one would pick up the landline and disconnect you mid-email. Mobile phones were brick-like, heavy in the pocket and light on features, you could call, send a text and maybe play a round of Snake if you were lucky. Television meant a few terrestrial channels. If you missed your favourite show, that was it, no repeats, no rewinds, no streaming.



Fast forward to today and it's a completely different world. Fibre hums invisibly beneath our feet, bringing high-speed connectivity to homes, schools and businesses. Smartphones are not just for calling, they're our cameras, calendars, maps, music players, news sources and so much more. Entertainment is no longer confined to a schedule; we stream what we want, when we want, from just about anywhere. The transformation has been rapid, relentless and revolutionary.

But this didn't happen by accident. As technology evolved, so did the need for a strong, forward-thinking regulator and that's where ICASA stepped in. Established in 2000, right at the cusp of this digital revolution, ICASA has played a critical role in shaping South Africa's communications landscape. From allocating spectrum to enabling mobile growth, from regulating broadcasters to ensuring fair competition, ICASA has helped steer the sector through seismic shifts.

When mobile networks expanded to rural areas, ICASA was there to guide and enforce universal service obligations. When South Africa made the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting, ICASA provided the regulatory framework. When data became the new currency of communication, ICASA worked to ensure that access was affordable and equitable. Behind the scenes of every call, stream, download and broadcast, ICASA's hand has helped keep the playing field fair, open and future-focused.

Looking back, it's hard not to feel a sense of awe at how far ICASA has come. The devices in our pockets today are more powerful than the computers that once filled an entire desk. The speed at which we communicate would have seemed like science fiction in 1999. However, through all this change, one thing has remained constant: the need to connect.

**As ICASA celebrates 25 years of progress, we also celebrate the people, policies and partnerships that made this transformation possible. The tech may have changed, but the mission remains to enable communication that is accessible, inclusive and empowering for all South Africans.**





# 25th Annivesary Highlights





# 25th Anniversary Highlights





# The “Focus” engaged with Caroline Nkosi, Joyce Malimavhi and Papi Molapi in celebration of their 25 year career at ICASA

## 1. What does reaching 25 years at ICASA mean to you personally?

It feels like being part of a family that has grown and achieved so much together. I'm proud to have contributed to an organisation that plays such an important role in people's everyday lives.

## 2. What has been your proudest moment or achievement during your time here?

My proudest moment was seeing projects I worked on directly improve access to communication for communities. Knowing that my efforts helped make services more affordable and accessible has been very rewarding.

## 3. How has ICASA shaped your professional journey over the years?

ICASA has given me room to grow, learn and challenge myself. I've gained valuable experience, built strong relationships and developed skills I never imagined when I first started.

## 4. What message would you like to share with colleagues as we celebrate 25 years of ICASA?

I'd like to say thank you to my colleagues for their teamwork, dedication and support. Together, we've achieved so much and I believe the next 25 years will be even brighter.



**Caroline Thandi Nkosi**  
PA to Council



**Joyce Malimavhi**  
PA to Council

## 1. What does reaching 25 years at ICASA mean to you personally?

It is incredibly fulfilling to be a member of an organisation that has expanded and accomplished so much. I am honoured to have contributed to an organisation that is essential to the communities it serves daily.

## 2. What has been your proudest moment or achievement during your time here?

Seeing the projects that I helped with directly improve community communication access has been my finest moment.

## 3. How has ICASA shaped your professional journey over the years?

The Authority has given people a place to grow, learn and take on new challenges. I have developed abilities that have exceeded my initial expectations upon joining the organisation, acquired significant experience and established solid professional relationships during my career.

## 4. What message would you like to share with colleagues as we celebrate 25 years of ICASA?

My appreciation goes out to my coworkers for their cooperation, commitment and encouragement. We've come a long way together and I have no doubt that we'll accomplish considerably more in the coming 25 years.

## 1. What does reaching 25 years at ICASA mean to you personally?

I am an all rounder with one thing in common, managing radio frequency spectrum qualified in the military aviation, continued at SATRA/ICASA as a Technical Officer-Jhb region, RF Specialist in Radiocommunications-RF Specialist in Broadcasting and now back at Radiocommunications spectrum licensing. This is when Engineering & Technology was just one unit and it has shaped my career in both international and continental ICT projects and developments.

## 2. How has ICASA shaped your professional journey over the years?

During the 2010 FIFA World Cup, I was a busy bee. It was like a year of special dispensation as I was also a unionist and negotiator.

## 3. What has been your proudest moment or achievement during your time here?

Being selected as part of the World Cup technical preparation Team. During the same year, I was promoted from Technical Officer (after 10 years in Jhb Region) to RF Specialist in Radiocommunications. The slogans 'Ke Nako' and 'Can you feel it is here' were just a propelling motivation for me to celebrate with Africa and the globe, my career as an RF guru and unionist-ntse dintsha, ntse ho etsahala. My sentiments go along with "DJ Fishbone's" bring back year-end functions.



**Papi Molapi**  
Radio Frequency Specialist



# 25 Years of forging relations in the international fora



ICASA actively strengthens its global engagement to ensure that its mandate aligns with international best practices and promotes the development and harmonisation of the communications sector both internationally and regionally. ICASA's activities support the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) and are conducted in accordance with the foreign policy objectives set at a national level and organisational strategy.

Throughout the years, ICASA has consistently provided technical and expert support to the DCDT at the various international forums. In addition, ICASA is a member of various international organisations for ICT sector regulators (i.e. the Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) since 1997, International Institute of Communications (IIC) since 2010, and Wireless World Research Forum (WWRF) since 2016.

ICASA maintains a strategic international focus, carrying out activities at the regional level (such as SADC, ATU, PAPU, and AU) and on the global stage (including the ITU, UPU, ITSO and GSMA).

## Global Leadership

During the 25 years, South Africa, through ICASA, has held various leadership positions in international sectors and some of them are summarised below:

- Chaired the CRASA AGM and Executive Committee from 2009 - 2010.
- Chairperson of the CRASA Executive Committee in 2012 and 2016.
- Chairperson of the CRASA Electronic Communications Committee from 2011 - 2020.
- Board member of the ITU Radio Regulations Board from 2019 - 2022.
- Chairperson of the CRASA Finance and Audit Committee from 2016 – 2024.

- Chairperson of the CRASA Human Resource and Development Committee from 2016 – to date
- Vice Chairperson for the ITU Conference Preparatory Meeting (CPM) for WRC-27.
- Election to the Panel of Legal Experts at the International Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (ITSO) from 2024 – 2026.
- Chairperson of the Sub-Working Group at ITU Working Party 4A.
- Vice Chair for ITU Study Group 2 from 2025 - 2028.
- Vice Chair for ITU Study Group 17 from 2025 - 2028.

In 2018, ICASA was awarded a Global Award for innovation by the Dynamic Spectrum Alliance in London.

## Benchmarking and Bilateral Partnerships

International exposure enables ICASA to benchmark its work against international best practice. ICASA maintains an active bilateral relations programme, hosting study visits and engaging in technical cooperation. Delegations hosted internationally include those from Brazil, Tanzania, Malawi, Uganda, Nigeria, Mozambique (INCM), Kenya, and Thailand (NBTC). Brazil's ANATEL notably conducted a study visit to benchmark ICASA's role during the FIFA 2010 World Cup.

ICASA has MoUs with neighbouring SADC counterparts focusing on collaboration in radio frequency spectrum management and the mitigation of cross-border signal spillage. Under the international banner, other MoUs and agreements include those with the FCC (USA), NBTC (Thailand), ARTCI (Ivory Coast) and a Letter of Intent (LoI) with TRAI (India).

**As ICASA marks 25 years of global impact, the Authority remains committed to strengthening partnerships and leading Africa's voice on the international stage.**

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