

MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release

Johannesburg, South Africa, 1 February 2023

NAB members adopt BCCSA Online Content Services Code of Conduct

On 1 February 2023, the Broadcast Complaints Commission of South Africa's ("BCCSA") new Online Content Services Code of Conduct ("Online Content Code") will become operational. Licensed broadcasters can elect to become signatories to the new code, thereby submitting their online content services, including streaming and catch-up services, to the jurisdiction of the BCCSA.

"The adoption of this Code demonstrates the commitment of licensed broadcasters to act in the public interest by ensuring that the BCCSA as an independent administrative tribunal will not only adjudicate complaints concerning traditional radio and TV content, but also online content services of NAB members," said BCCSA chairperson Sunette Lötter.

"It must be understood that the BCCSA's Online Content Code is limited to actual content services under the editorial control of NAB members and therefore excludes general content on broadcasters' websites and any associated social media commentary for example Twitter, Facebook, Tiktok etc.", added Lötter.

Members of the public who believe the code may have been violated can lodge a complaint within 30 days after the date the online content was first made available for delivery to end users. The new Online Content Code, as well as the BCCSA's complaints procedure, are available on the BCCSA website.

Licensed broadcasters who are members of the National Association of Broadcasters ("NAB") and who provide online content services can sign up immediately to the BCCSA Online Content Code - and can also do so as and when new online content services are launched. The list of signatories to the code will be made available on the BCCSA website (www.bccsa.org.za) and will be updated regularly.

The NAB is encouraged by the leadership of the BCCSA in maintaining credible self-regulation and allocating resources to address online content.

"As a heavily regulated broadcasting sector that finds itself competing more and more with unregulated online services, our members pride themselves on adhering to codes of conduct toward trust and accountability," said the chairperson of the NAB, Thabo Makenete.

"Our members have always taken seriously their obligations to adhere to codes of conduct and this Online Content Code should be no different. We are pleased that the public can continue to rely on the BCCSA for independent adjudication of complaints in the online environment as well," said Makenete.

Since 1995, the BCCSA have administered Codes of Conduct for broadcasters who are members of the NAB. The BCCSA Codes are applicable to free-to-air and subscription broadcasters. Over the last 30 years, the BCCSA have issued various warnings and sanctions against broadcasters who have breached the Codes. In addition to providing traditional (linear) broadcasting services, many broadcasters also provide online content services and in November 2022, the NAB adopted an online content code and widened the remit of the BCCSA to administer this new code.

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For media enquiries please contact NAB Research & Communications Specialist Ofentse Mboweni on 082 849 7404 or comms@nabsa.co.za

About the BCCSA

The BCCSA was established by the NAB in 1993 as an independent tribunal that, without fear or favour, adjudicates complaints from the public against the broadcasters, who are signatories to the BCCSA Codes of Conduct.

As an independent tribunal, the BCCSA must reach its decisions on the Broadcasting Code and Online Code independently, and in line with the precepts of administrative justice, as required by the Constitution of the Republic and legislation that governs fair administrative justice. Justice Froneman (a retired Constitutional Court Judge) presides over appeals from any party aggrieved by a decision of the BCCSA Tribunal.

The Online Content Services Code is available on the BCCSA website on www.bccsa.org.za

About the NAB

The 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 BCCSA that is recognised by the sector regulator, ICASA.