

Media Statement

Minister of Communications and Information Technology media statement 5 December 2007

Fairer and more transparent annual fees for radio and spectrum licences will come into effect from 1 February 2008, Communications and Information Technology Minister David Cunliffe said today.

“The new fee changes on 1 February 2008 will be the third fee review adjustment since 2003 and will provide better alignment between licence fees and the costs associated with the planning and management of the radio spectrum resource,” said Communications and Information Technology Minister, David Cunliffe.

“The main feature of the changes is a direct adjustment of most licence fees based on the costs of providing services, this will reduce most of the remaining cross-subsidisation between or within licence categories. There is no change to the overall cost of providing spectrum administration services.”

Mr Cunliffe noted that currently fees do not meet the full costs because of the drawing down of past surpluses. The realignment has been spread over several years to ease any transition issues.

“Earlier this year stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on three options for licence fee adjustments. The government’s approach is consistent with the option most favoured by those who made submissions.”

As well as the move to directly align licence fees to the cost of services provided, the new regulations also include a ten percent reduction in licence fees for licence holders who undertake their own interference investigations.

Mr Cunliffe said there will be no changes to the amateur licence fees for repeaters, beacons and fixed links – but these will be included in a review of the amateur fees to be commenced in the New Year.

Background

The changes to radio and spectrum licence fees were agreed by Cabinet as part of the Radiocommunications Amendment Regulations 2007. The regulations also include a number of additional amendments including:

- provision for greater security of tenure of radio licences;
- provisions related to interception of radiocommunications;
- a definition of ‘inappropriate receivers’ for VHF-FM broadcasting reception (band expanders); and
- specification of the fees for an infringement specified by the Radiocommunications Act in relation to a licence holder failing to notify the Registrar of a change of name or address.