

## Community TV to stay?

"There is no decision to close community TV. The frequency plan provides for two fixed and two mobile multiplexes for mobile television. The allocation of the fixed multiplexes will be addressed in the DTT (digital terrestrial transmission) regulations which to be finalised soon. At this point we will take a decision on how to accommodate community TV," says ICASA councillor Robert Nkuna.



Cape Town TV (CTV) is taking this as an assurance from the broadcast regulator, ICASA, that it will remain on air despite the uncertainties around the migration to digital television broadcasting. The channel's supporters marched on Parliament last week to demand that the station be kept on air and that government provide financial support for all community broadcasting ventures.

CTV station director Karen Thorne says, "It seems that ICASA has decided against a general switch-off of community television channels and will try to accommodate the sector as the migration to digital television progresses.

"We expect to meet with the regulator soon in order to address our concerns about the apparent threat to switch off, when a mobile television broadcaster is licensed, around June next year."

The channel is broadcasting on a frequency that was earmarked for mobile television broadcasting and is resisting any move that would take it off air to make way for commercial cellphone broadcasters.

### SAARF figures show growth

Thorne stressed that the channel has reached a point where it has a stable income that can sustain the station's operations. "We have the support of various funders and we are now expanding our production operations.

"Advertising revenue is increasing because we now have official viewership figures from the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF), which show that it is reaching an audience of about 1.4 million people in Cape Town. This is a sizable audience and the fact that we have attained this in just over one year on air is a significant achievement."

Its increased revenues will enable the station to produce more of its own programmes next year, which will boost its quota of local content. These productions will be geared to increase the amount of Afrikaans and Xhosa language programmes on the channel.

## **Local content**

"It has managed a high quota of local content through local acquisitions and some in-house production. But acquisitions of Afrikaans and Xhosa programming have been restricted because most completed programming in this country belongs to the SABC, e.tv or M-Net," says CTV programme manager Shelley Barry.

"The in-house production is reliant on funding and in our first year of broadcast this was limited. Despite this, we have broadcast several productions made especially for the channel by local producers as well as two seasons of in-house programming."

It began broadcasting to the Cape Town metropolitan region in September 2008 and is a non-profit organisation with a membership base of 58 NGOs, institutions and labour unions from Cape Town.

This free-to-air, analogue channel can be found between SABC3 and e.TV on the UHF band. Viewers must have line-of-sight of Tygerberg, where the channel's sole transmitter is located, and TV aerials must be pointed towards Tygerberg Hill in order to pick up the signal.

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