

## Communications: Spectrum ‘policy direction’ by Friday?

The Independent Communications Authority of SA should expect to receive ‘policy direction’ on licensing unassigned high-demand radio frequency spectrum before close of business on Friday. This is according to Communications and Digital Technologies Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams’ budget vote [speech](#), which was delivered in the National Assembly a week ago, notes Pam Saxby for [Legalbrief Policy Watch](#).

The Minister provided no explanation or apology for the 10 months that have been allowed to pass since President Cyril Ramaphosa announced in his economic stimulus and recovery [plan](#) that the ‘process’ for allocating spectrum ‘to enable licensing’ would be ‘initiated’ ‘within the next few weeks’. It was – but only with the release of a draft policy directive for comment.

High-demand spectrum licensing ‘is deemed necessary to lessen resource constraints experienced by incumbent mobile operators’ and ‘enable (the) transformation of an historically vertically integrated market’ by facilitating the entry of new service providers ([Engineering News](#)), thus promoting competition.

This, in turn, is expected to contribute towards reducing the cost to communicate and making quality broadband services more accessible – in keeping with policy imperatives and principles articulated in the 2016 White [Paper](#). The ‘reviewed broadcasting digital migration delivery model’ required for SA to migrate from analogue to digital terrestrial television (releasing more high-demand radio frequency spectrum) will be finalised within 90 days. Follow Pam Saxby on Twitter (@SaxbyPam)