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PRESS RELEASE

TRR issues Radio Apparatus Licence and Spectrum Licence (Fees) Regulation 2012

At some time during the day most of us use equipment which transmits or receives radio signals, including such devices as a mobile telephone, radio, TV, TV remote control, VSat, car door opener or a WiFi device connecting a computer to the internet. Taxis, airplanes and ships also have specialised radios as well as, security and emergencies services such as Police, Red Cross, Ambulances, Fire engines and Maritime rescue. The Telecommunications Operators and Radio and TV Broadcasters rely extensively upon radio transmitters to deliver their services. Ensuring the radio frequency spectrum is well managed so that services can reliably be provided.

In accordance with the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Act No 30 of 2009 (Act) a person must not install or operate a Radiocommunications device in Vanuatu or its territorial waters or airspace, or in any ship or aircraft registered in or under the law of Vanuatu without a Licence unless an exemption has been issued.

The Act established the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator (TRR) with the overall authority to facilitate the development of the telecommunications sector and manage the radio-frequency spectrum in order to promote national social and economic development.

The Regulator, Mr. Alan Horne, has recently issued a Regulation concerning the use of the radio frequency spectrum. Mr. Horne said “the Act gives the Regulator the power to make regulations prescribing standard terms in various licences and exemptions; prescribing procedures, forms and fees in respect of any licence or exception or anything which might be done by any person under the Act, except the provision of reasons for any decision by the Regulator; and providing for the methodology by which any calculation required to be made under the Act is to be made.”

TRR has acted under the powers vested upon it by the Act to issue exemptions through General User Radio Licences (GURLs). GURLs provide for certain classes of radio transmitters that can be used without the requirement for the owner to obtain an individual licence in their own name. Provided the equipment meets the applicable technical standards, operates only on the allocated frequencies specified and meets any other requirements specified in the licence, the equipment may be freely used by anyone.

In general radiocommunications devices, authorised for use under general user radio licences, are typically low power transmitters providing short range communications that do not require individual frequency co-ordination for interference management purposes. Under a general user radio licence, all users operate in the same spectrum segment on a shared basis and are subject to the same conditions. A general user radio licence specifically indicates the frequencies that may be used, power emission levels, and may also specify other technical and operational parameters. General user radio licences do not have to be applied for, and no licence fees are payable. However for higher power devices such as radios used by ships and airplanes and Vsat dishes used for internet connection a Licence is required and fees are required to be paid.

The radio spectrum is a finite but non-exhaustible resource which is a vital input into an ever widening range of services. Use of the radio spectrum is crucial to communications in Vanuatu, and the national economy. Industries that use the spectrum, such as broadcasting and cellular mobile telephony, make substantial contributions to the economy, while other manufacturing and service industries use spectrum to increase their productivity. In order to maximise the efficient and effective use of the radio spectrum by all sectors of society, TRR issued a National Spectrum Planning, Allocation and Assignment Practices, whose overall goal is to create a predictive environment for current and future spectrum usage, which is in the public interest. This document is published on the TRR website after due consultation process through which constructive comments were received from licensed operators and were used to review the document before publishing it on the website together with comments received from licensees and TRR responses.

Mr. Barnabas Boe, the Radio Spectrum and Licensing Engineer at TRR said “The Radio Apparatus Licence and Spectrum Licence (Fees) Regulation 2012 will facilitate the implementation of the National Spectrum Planning, Allocation and Assignment Practices, especially with the setting of licence fees and charges and their collection by the Regulator. The Regulation supports TRR to recover the cost of managing the radio spectrum; encourage efficient use of the radio spectrum; accelerate the migration of spectrum users from one band to another where re-farming is necessary and reflect the socio-economic or market value of radio spectrum where such spectrum can be shown to be congested or scarce.”

For more information please visit www.trr.vu, phone +678 27621 or email enquiries@trr.vu.