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**Telkom, phone costs under fire**

16/01/2007 14:40

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**Currencies**

	%
Rand/US\$	↓ 7.16 0.2
Rand/£	↓ 14.19 0.7
Rand/€	↓ 9.32 0.1
US\$/€	↓ 1.30 0.0
US\$/Aus\$	↓ 0.78 0.3

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Johannesburg - Frustrated South African consumers, led by the Telecommunications Action Group (TAG), will publish an advert in a national newspaper calling for the reform of the telecommunications sector in the country on Friday.

The full page advert is to highlight the cost of telecommunications in South Africa.

"We took this action because as consumers we are tired of the exorbitant costs of telecommunications in South Africa and the poor service from Telkom," TAG founder Alastair Otter said in a statement on Tuesday.

The advert was paid for by individual consumers who donated between R100 and R1 000 towards the campaign. Based on the very successful [firefox advert campaign](#), the TAG advert will include the names of all the contributors to the advert.

**Horror stories**

"Since we started this campaign we have heard countless stories from consumers who have been trying for months, sometimes even years, to have telephone lines and broadband internet connections installed," says Otter.

"And with just a single fixed line provider in the country there is no alternative to users but to accept the poor service.

"On top of this, South Africa has telecommunications costs that are among the highest in the world and these costs are a significant barrier to all South Africans benefiting from the information age."

The advert will highlight Telkom's ongoing monopoly over the telecommunication sector as well as the lack of action by government and the industry regulator Icasa to change the situation.

"Icasa is charged with regulating the telecoms sector for the benefit of all South Africans. However, Icasa's lack of political will has ensured that Telkom has been allowed to profit financially while the country has waited for years for alternative operators to be licensed."

**Demanding change**

On Neotel, the recently licensed second national operator, Otter says: "We are glad that the licence has been awarded and that Neotel is starting operations. We are still concerned, however, that Neotel's consumer services are still many months away from realisation.

"For consumers there is still no alternative but to wait for Neotel to become operational."

The full page ad in one of SA's major newspapers calls on all consumers to take action to challenge the telecoms status quo, says Otter.

"What we want to achieve with the advert is to both highlight the exorbitant cost of telecommunications services in South Africa as well as encourage consumers to stand up and demand change.

"We initiated this campaign as individual consumers who had had enough. We hope that this first step will encourage others to take action as we have," says Otter.

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- Telkom rival spells cost cuts
- Call costs cut business chances
- Telkom warns phone users

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**Subject:** Telkom and there sister company vodacom

**Message:** We all scream and cry about this but what about vodacom 2 ZAR a meg download costs this is ridiculous look at the Koreans for instance a 1 Gig file costs less to download there than a meg in SA do the math if you have a very large data transfer. It would be cheaper to fly to Korea and fill a hard drive than to download it locally. So telkom and its subsidiaries need to be goverened.

**Date Inserted:** 1/17/2007 11:44:11 AM

**Nickname:** Annie

**Subject:** Telkom

**Message:** I agree with this. Just because you are lucky enough to have a phone in your house, you pay a fortune for never mind the cost of calls. If there is already a phone in a house you move into, it cost the same to have it transferred onto your name than when you have a new live connected.

**Date Inserted:** 1/17/2007 7:33:17 AM

**Nickname:** Will

**Subject:** Telkom costs

**Message:** Telkom are exceptionally thick skinned. Complaints will be like water off a ducks back. Only strong regulatory pressure will force them to change ). TELKOM are, in effect, holding the entire country to ransom for the narrow interests of one company. For obvious reasons ICASA does not have the will to challenge TELKOM - their inactivity has assisted TELKOMs annual profit ( and hence governments share thereof ), as we all know, to billions of rand. TELKOM will need to be forced to do the "right" thing.

Government should be considering nationalising the submarine cable from Europe in the interests of the country and its economy as a whole