

Media Releases 2007

Successful end to phase one of Filing Season

Pretoria 28 November 2007 - Taxpayers and tax practitioners have overwhelmingly embraced the new income tax assessment process introduced this year to simplify and ease the burden of tax compliance.

At the end of the 31 October 2007 deadline 3.2 million taxpayers had filed their tax returns. This is a 20% increase on last year and the first time we pass the 3 million returns mark.

Tax returns for the current year (2007) numbered more than 2.3 million – an increase of 6% - and is another record. The filing of outstanding returns also reached record numbers with 872 000 returns filed.

The biggest success story of the 2007 filing season campaign so far had been the uptake of SARS eFiling. We are encouraged by the rate at which taxpayers and practitioners have adopted electronic filing with more than 940 000 returns having been issued via eFiling and already more than 250 000 filed. This is an increase of 600% on last year.

SARS still expects about 1 million tax returns to be filed this season. This can only be done via SARS eFiling and must be done by 31 January 2008. Taxpayers who have not yet registered for eFiling should do so at www.sarsefiling.co.za before the end of the year as we are anticipating very high network and call centre volumes during January as taxpayers rush to meet the deadline. Ideally people should at least register for eFiling now even if they opt to file later.

With regard to the processing of returns, SARS would like to advise that where the information supplied by taxpayers matches the information in SARS's possession, taxpayers can expect reduced turnaround times in receiving their assessment and, where applicable, refunds. However, where the information does not correlate, SARS will investigate further, including requesting that taxpayers submit copies of their supporting documents for review.

SARS has also introduced two new forms to speed up and simplify the objection process. The first, a Request for Correction, is completed by taxpayers who have made an error on their return or believe SARS to have made an error. The second form, a Notice of Objection, is used when the information is accurate but the taxpayer disputes SARS's assessment. Both these forms are available for download from www.sarsefiling.co.za and can be mailed to SARS or dropped off at the nearest branch.

As we continue to roll out the new assessment process and are getting better at providing better service to taxpayers, we are acutely aware of the important role employers have in this tax administration process. The provision information about employees accurately, timeously and electronically to SARS is vital in offering honest taxpayers with the best response time.

We will be engaging with employers over the coming months to work out systems and procedures to streamline relations with SARS especially where the provision of taxpayer data is concerned for both this year and preparations for next year