

Intern estate agents may be interested to read the following “quandary” they and the PPRA are facing (Article appears in the latest edition of REI) Sept 2022

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The PPRA (Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority) has instructed all candidate estate agents who have been registered for more than two years, to obtain the required qualifications before 31 January 2023, or be deregistered. At present this would mean that more than twenty thousand agents will no longer be able to practice and earn a living should they not comply timeously.

This places the PPRA in a quandary as these agents cannot possibly qualify in the time made available in terms of qualification standard set by the PPRA itself (the NQF 4 qualification takes over a year to complete at a cost of R10 000, which is then followed by writing the PDE4 exam).

On the other hand, the PPRA has to apply the regulations which clearly states that agents can only hold the status of candidate for 180 days (six months), which implies that the PPRA is already in default in applying the new law.

“Deregistering these agents will be devastating to many households and would really be an insult to the President’s ongoing efforts to promote job creation, allowing them to continue practising is illegal” says Jan le Roux, CE of REBOSA (Real Estate Business Owners of South Africa).

Not deregistering these candidates is equally problematic as the PPRA’s main objective is the protection of consumers. Le Roux urges consumers to ensure the status of agents they are dealing with as candidates may only practice under supervision and are obliged to divulge their status to clients.

Making matters even more problematic is the fact that the majority of these candidates have not even registered to start obtaining the required qualifications. At the moment there is no indication of the educational status of those candidates at all. Le Roux explains that “It appears that some of these candidates have been trading under these illegal circumstances, some for up to twelve years. This is clearly a problem inherited by the PPRA from the previous EAAB, but it is incumbent on the PPRA to address it”.

He believes that the solution seems obvious; The PPRA as the professional body of the industry can change the qualification standards and put something in place that would allow those who are willing to put in the effort to study for a required exam and pass it before the deadline. In this manner most candidates can qualify, prove that they have the required know-how and remain registered. The new regulations provide for a practical training course which will ensure that these candidates get the necessary practical experience.

The industry has made several proposals to that effect which align with the provisions of the regulations.

It is up to the PPRA to immediately take decisive action which it alone has the authority to do to solve this problem.