



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

PRESS RELEASE

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TELECOMS REGULATOR ISSUES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS – PRICING, QUALITY AND ACCESS ISSUES DOMINATE FIRST YEAR

The Telecommunications Regulator, Etain Doyle, today launched the ODTR's first annual report and accounts. The first year of the Office was devoted to securing reductions in prices paid by service providers for the use of the Telecom Eireann network and laying the foundations for the effective regulation of a competitive industry, centred on the needs of the business, residential and mobile consumer.

During the year¹, approximately 3,000 licences were issued, mainly for the use of radio frequencies. The first wholesale rates for telecommunications service providers in the Irish market were introduced, resulting in price reductions of up to 50% in the rates paid by them for the use of the Telecom Eireann network. The Office also published Ireland's first Table of Frequency Allocations and issued orders to provide for GSM and TACS mobile telephony licensing.

The Office is funded wholly by income received from the broadcasting, radio and telecommunications industry. Licence fees generated income of IR£5,002,000 in 1997/98 of which IR£3,018,000 came from Cable and MMDS licensing. The telecommunications levy which was introduced in April 1998, generated income of IR£645,000 to the period to June 1998. Total income received was IR£5,721,000 and expenditure totalled IR£5,103,000.

MORE

¹ The Annual Report and Accounts covers the Financial Year June 30 1997 – June 30 1998.

Speaking at the launch in the Temple Bar Hotel, Dublin today the Director said, “Regulation is about providing the framework so that consumers receive the highest quality range of services at the lowest possible prices. There are three major interrelated strands to getting this started: pricing issues, quality and access. In our first year we made important progress in telecoms pricing, on quality in respect of consumer protection and on access issues such as establishing alternative networks licensing and the numbering plan.”

The ODTR issued 36 documents in its first year of operation. Nine of these were consultation documents, comments on which proved valuable in framing the final reports/decisions in the areas concerned. Seven regulations were also adopted by the Regulator during the year.

A second document was also issued by the Regulator today. Immediately following the Government’s decision to end Ireland’s derogation from full liberalisation of the telecommunications market before the end of 1998, the Director opened the debate on the regulatory issues that needed to be addressed prior to liberalisation. **Liberalisation – Rising to the Challenge** details the work of the Office in setting the framework for a liberalised telecommunications environment.

The ODTR “**Annual Report and Accounts ‘97-‘98**”, together with “**Liberalisation – Rising to the Challenge**” are available on the ODTR website at <http://www.odtr.ie>.

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