

Consumer protection initiative to eliminate non-legal real estate operators

An initiative launched last month by the Estate Agency Affairs Board, whereby estate agents have to register themselves for digital accreditation through PrivySeal, will go a long way toward protecting the public against illegal operators in the property industry, says Annette Evans, general manager of the Institute of Estate Agents of SA's Western Cape branch.



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All key bodies in the property industry agree that consumers need to deal only with registered estate agents, as they, after going through extensive training and qualifying examinations, can be trusted with the intricacies of property buying and selling, said Evans.

Digital seal

PrivySeal is a digital seal which offers a hyperlinked verification certificate that confirms the real-time registration status of the estate agent in question. This summarises the agent's professional credentials and enables members of the public to check that the person they are dealing with is registered and suitably qualified in their field.

The PrivySeal is only displayed once it is confirmed via the EAAB's database that the agent concerned has a valid Fidelity Fund Certificate (FFC). The PrivySeal should be embedded into all agents' email signatures and their digital media (such as websites and social media profiles). As from this month, it is a requirement for all agents to be registered with PrivySeal and use the service, and members of the public are urged to check whether they are dealing with current FFC holders, said Evans.

All estate agents can obtain their personal PrivySeal from www.privyseal.com. They should first, however, check that all their information is correctly recorded on the MyEAAB portal as the information entered there will be used for their PrivySeal. Once the agent has successfully signed up, he will be automatically issued with a PrivySeal to use on all their correspondence and digital portals. Further detailed information may be obtained via the [EAAB's website](#).

The EAAB will begin their public awareness campaign in August, said Evans, so agents are urged to get their registration done as soon as possible.

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