

SABC: Faulty Towers at its worst



By [Rod Baker](#)

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NEWSWATCH: According to yesterday's *Sunday Times* and today's *Times Live*, much of the licence fees we pay to the SABC are being wasted, misspent and if the newspaper terminology is to be used... "looted". Meanwhile, *Times Live* also reports taxpayers are going to be coughing up yet more cash to prop up the broadcaster's new 24-hour news channel - which in an editorial the publication says we can "ill-afford". However, some good news: The new press regulations have been well received, reports *BDrive*.



For more:

- *Times Live*: [Massive looting at SABC exposed...](#) There are perhaps a great many people who dutifully pay their TV licences every year (because we have to) even though they never watch anything on the SABC. So that's galling enough, but to then hear that our hard-earned money is being used to fund parties, bar bills, millions on deals that add "no significant value" to the corporation, and a great deal more wastage and "looting" then we're entitled to be miffed.

Apparently board chairman Ben Ngubane has rejected the view that the trail of disaster shows the SABC is far from being fixed. He's quoted as saying that, "It's no longer a sinking ship, [but] it may still be leaking a bit".

Leaking "a bit"?

The last time anyone might have said that with the same lack of appreciation of the dire straits in which a ship has found itself would have been on 15 April 1912. And we all know what happened then, don't we.

- *Times Live*: [Taxpayers face big SABC bill...](#) OK, let's have a show of hands: Who reckons the SABC will be able to make a success of its much-vaunted 24-hour news channel?

Anyone...? Anyone...? Well according to a poll on *Times Live*, 93% of the respondents reckon No! The bad news is that all of us taxpayers - and that includes the 93% in the poll who reckon the proposed channel is essentially a non-starter - will be paying towards it nevertheless.

The Treasury will probably have to keep throwing money at it to keep it going, and you know of course where the Treasury gets a great deal of its money, right?



(Image: GCIS)

Communications Minister Dina Pule is reported as saying that the new channel will cost R180m in its first year, increasing to R240m in the fifth year. Oh, and there's a little matter of an extra R75m it will need for its capital expenditure programme.

Have you ever heard of any government project staying within budget? No? Well, nor have we - so if you want to try to convince us this will be a first, just Pule the other one.

In an editorial, *Times Live* says that [we can ill-afford SABC's 24-hour news channel](#).

- *BDlive*: [New press regulations well received...](#) The upside is that it seems that the changes to South Africa's press regulations, [announced last week by the Press Council](#) have generally met positively.

The downside is that there is still no guarantee that the government will be any happier with the media.

ABOUT ROD BAKER

Rod Baker is Content Director at Bizcommunity.com. A journalist since before computers, he worked on a wide range of magazines and, in his youth, rose through the ranks from being a lowly and abused sub-editor, to a high and still abused editor and publisher. He has been editor and publisher of a number of magazines, as well as a newspaper. He has edited many books, and written a number too. Email him at rod@bizcommunity.com

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