

Top competition lawyer to join leading South African law firm

Competition law has grown significantly in South Africa over the past ten years with prominent South African businesses being fined millions of rands due to anti-competitive practices.

The recent announcement by President Kgalema Motlanthe to refer the Competition Amendment Bill back to the National Assembly for reconsideration, the corporate leniency programme and heightened focus on cartels has underpinned the growth of Werksmans competition practice.

As such, Werksmans has bolstered its competition law practice with the announcement that Paul Coetser, leading competition lawyer, has recently joined the law firm.

The chairperson of the Competition Law Committee of the Law Society of South Africa, Coetser has some 15 years experience as a commercial and corporate lawyer, specialising in competition law.

According to Gareth Driver, Head of Werksmans' commercial department, "Both local and international competition laws are changing rapidly. This has noticeably increased demand from our clients for competition law services, including business audits. As a highly respected practitioner in the industry we believe Paul Coetser's appointment to head up and expand our competition law practice will ensure we continue to service this demand and deliver to the high standard for which we are known."

With his longstanding experience in this specialist practice, Coetser says the development of competition law and the approach of the competition authorities in South Africa has been transformational.

"The Act of 1998 has been significantly amended and added to. We also see more frequent and in-depth investigations from the relevant authorities, not only in SA, but in several other foreign jurisdictions in which South African businesses transact," says Coetser.

Consistently rated as one of SA's top competition lawyers, he is ranked in several international listings - The International Who's Who of Business Lawyers, Chambers Global, PLC Cross-Border Competition Handbook and Best Lawyers (The World's Premier Guide).

Coetser was one of the founding forces behind the establishment of the South Africa Black Lawyers Association Commercial Law Education Program (SABLACLEP) - a joint initiative of the Black Lawyers Association, the International Senior Lawyers Project and the American Bar Association - which aims to develop and improve the commercial law skills of black lawyers in SA.

Coetser holds LLB and LLM degrees from the University of South Africa, a further LLM degree from the University of Virginia in the United States which he attended on a Fulbright scholarship, and a Higher Diploma in Taxation Law. He has practiced in the United States and London and joins Werksmans from legal firm Brink Cohen Le Roux.