



**PSA**  
The Union Of Choice

# magazine

2/2026

FREE TO PSA MEMBERS

We pay more, we suffer more!

**GEMS MUST FALL!**

Enough is ENOUGH - Greedy GEMS Board MUST GO!

We pay more, we SUFFER more!

53 Board meetings in 52 weeks of the year!

53 board meetings in 52 weeks of the year!

**GEMS SE MOERI!**

Who is GEMS serving - Members or the Board?

**TO HELL WITH GEMS INCREASES**

Medical aid must PROTECT us Not BANKRUPT us!

Reclaiming promise of **FREEDOM** through ethical conduct and choice



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Regenerating Africa's public service through youth empowerment



### VISION

Be the leading politically non-aligned, professional trade union of choice, in the public sector and globally.

### MISSION

Ensure the sustainability of the PSA through dynamic stakeholder management to protect the rights and to promote the interest of members. The following values guide our conduct aimed at achieving the PSA's mission:

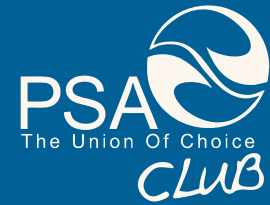
**Loyalty, transparency, respect, ethical conduct, consistency, and service excellence**



Scan QR Code to access the PSA website [www.psa.co.za](http://www.psa.co.za)

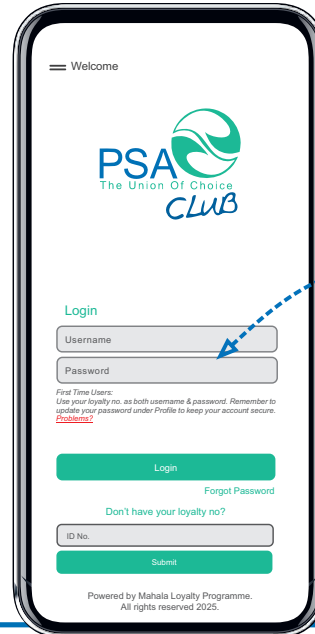


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1. First time user? Enter Loyalty Number as Username and Password & select "Submit", **Check your welcome SMS or Email for your loyalty no.**
2. Update your password to keep your account secure.
3. If you can't find your loyalty no. scroll down & enter your ID no. Your login details will be populated in the fields.



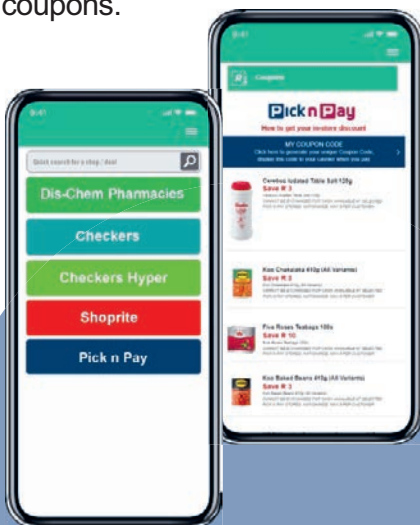
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Welcome to PSACLUB  
 #8800000057 use it as login and password.  
 Go to [www.psaclub.mobi](http://www.psaclub.mobi)  
 info 0860 021 076

## GROCERY COUPONS

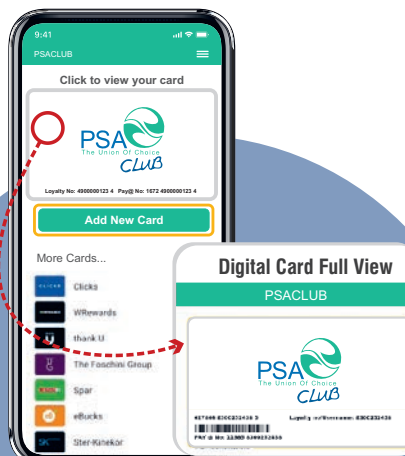
PSACLUB gives you access to grocery coupons every month that could help you save up to R1750 just by planning your shop!

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# editorial

## Reclaiming promise of **FREEDOM** through ethical conduct and choice

**W**hen commemorating Freedom Day, South Africans are reminded of the sacrifices made to secure the democratic rights and freedoms enjoyed today. Freedom Day is, however, more than a historical milestone - it is a call to reflection and accountability. It challenges us to assess whether the promise of freedom has been meaningfully realised for all, particularly in the public sector.

Economic and social freedom remain elusive for millions of South Africans. One of the most significant obstacles to the realisation of freedom has been the persistent scourge of fraud, corruption, and crime. These practices undermine democratic institutions, erode public trust, and divert critical resources from service delivery and development. Every rand lost to corruption is a rand stolen from communities, from infrastructure, from healthcare, from education, and from the future of the youth.

The impact of fraud and corruption is particularly devastating for young people seeking entry into the public service. Youth unemployment remains one of South Africa's most pressing challenges, and the public sector should be a key engine for skills development, training, and meaningful employment. Instead, corrupt recruitment practices, irregular appointments, and manipulated procurement processes often deny deserving young graduates and interns the opportunity to serve their country. When posts are filled through favours rather than merit, freedom of opportunity is replaced by exclusion and disillusionment.

Corruption also distorts government priorities. Funds meant to expand programmes, create posts, or improve working conditions are siphoned off. This compromises service delivery and entrenches inequality and poverty conditions incompatible with the ideals of freedom.

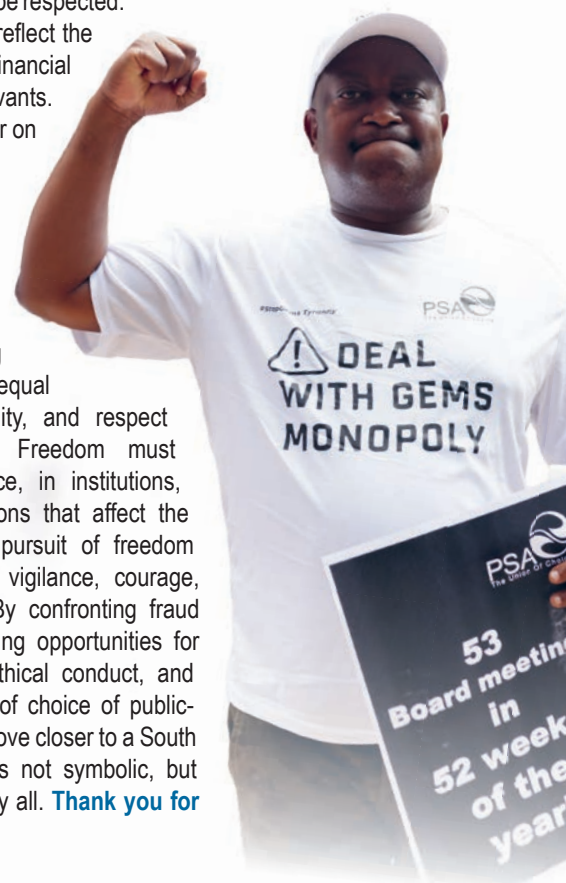
Freedom Day must therefore reaffirm the importance of ethical conduct in the public service. Integrity, transparency, and accountability are not optional values. Government officials and public servants are custodians of public resources and must always act with honesty and professionalism. The PSA continues to advocate for a capable, professional, and ethical public service rooted in ethical conduct and service to South Africans, rather than narrow or personal interests. Whistle-blower protection, consequence management, and decisive action against wrongdoing are essential if the promise of freedom is to be reclaimed.

Another critical dimension relates to freedom of choice. True freedom empowers people to make informed decisions about their lives, including matters that affect their financial wellbeing and access to healthcare. The PSA is therefore extremely concerned about limitations placed on public servants' ability to choose medical-aid schemes outside the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS). The recent 9.8% increase in GEMS premiums places additional financial strain on public servants who are already grappling with the rising cost of living, stagnant wages, and increasing household debt. Whilst GEMS plays a significant role, it cannot be the only option. Denying public servants the freedom to choose alternative medical-aid schemes undermines competition and individual autonomy.


Freedom of choice must be respected. Policies must evolve to reflect the diverse needs and financial realities of public servants. Read more on this matter on page 4.

The PSA repeats the Union's calls for a recommitment to the values that underpin the democracy including ethical conduct, equal opportunity, accountability, and respect for individual choice. Freedom must be protected in practice, in institutions, workplaces, and decisions that affect the lives of workers. The pursuit of freedom is ongoing, it requires vigilance, courage, and collective action. By confronting fraud and corruption, expanding opportunities for the youth, upholding ethical conduct, and defending the freedom of choice of public-sector employees, we move closer to a South Africa where freedom is not symbolic, but lived and experienced by all. **Thank you for your support!**

Reuben Maleka  
GENERAL MANAGER



*In service of public-sector employees*



**P**ublic servants across South Africa have sent a clear, unified message, calling for healthcare to remain affordable, accessible, and aligned with the principles on which the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) was founded.

On 21 February 2026, large groups of public servants mobilised nationwide in a coordinated Day of Action to oppose what is regarded as excessive and unjustifiable contribution increases for 2026. The strong, disciplined turnout demonstrated unity, resolve, and a shared commitment to defending the financial security and healthcare access of public servants and their families. GEMS was given until 3 March 2026 to respond formally to labour's demands but on 27 February 2026 requested an extension. The request was attributed to the complexity and breadth of the issues raised, as well as the need to follow internal governance structures, verify supporting information, and consultation with relevant legislative bodies. The request was granted with a proposed due date of 6 March 2026 as unions believe in fairness but have not given in - the fight against GEMS tyranny and monopoly continues. Engagement with lawyers is still underway as members are urged to be patient as the battle continues.

The mass action follows the announcement of a 9.8% increase in GEMS membership contributions effective January 2026, which would inconsequentially be lowered to 9.5% from February 2026. Organised labour in the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) rejected these increases as excessive, financially unsustainable, and inconsistent with the founding mandate of GEMS. Public servants are central to service delivery in South Africa. They render services in hospitals, clinics, schools, police stations, correctional centres, and government departments. Imposing steep medical-aid increases on these workers reduces disposable income, threatens household financial stability, and compromises access to quality healthcare for members and their dependants.

These increases come at a time of sustained cost-of-living pressures. Public servants continue to face rising food prices, escalating transport costs, electricity tariff hikes, school fees, and growing household debt. Salary adjustments of 5.5% were made for 2025/26. An increase of 4% is scheduled for 2026/27 (effective April 2026). Inflation stands at approximately 3.5%. In contrast, GEMS contributions increased by 13.4% in 2025 and, once the 2026 adjustments take effect, will have risen cumulatively by approximately 23.2% over two years.

## Organised labour **UNITES** against unjust **GEMS** contribution increases

Medical-aid contributions are thus increasing at a rate significantly above wage growth and inflation.

The practical consequence is a measurable erosion of purchasing power. A growing proportion of public servants' income is being absorbed by healthcare contributions, leaving less available for housing, education, transport, and basic household needs.

For many, this translates into difficult and unsustainable choices: Downgrading benefit options, reducing essential expenditure, or incurring additional debt.

### Scheme founded on social solidarity

GEMS was established in terms of PSCBC Resolution 1/2006 as a social-solidarity scheme and not a profit-driven commercial enterprise. Its founding objectives were to ensure accessible healthcare for lower- and middle-income public servants; provide affordable and sustainable medical cover; and promote fairness and risk-sharing in the public service.

A social-solidarity model relies on affordability, cross-subsidisation, and the protection of lower-income members. When contribution increases consistently exceed inflation and wage growth, the principle of solidarity is weakened. Above-inflation adjustments of this magnitude raise major concerns that GEMS is drifting from its original mandate. For 2026, the employer subsidy will increase by 4.5% from January to March and a further 0.5% from April. These adjustments, however, do not offset the announced contribution increases. Members will still carry a substantial portion of the additional cost. The subsidy framework is intended to cushion workers against sharp healthcare-cost escalations. In this instance, it provides insufficient relief.

The Council for Medical Schemes recommended an average contribution increase of 3.3% for 2026 across medical schemes. The GEMS adjustments of 9.8% and 9.5% are nearly three times this benchmark. Organised labour therefore called for strengthened regulatory oversight to ensure that contribution increases remain reasonable, transparent, and aligned with members' capacity to pay. Healthcare affordability is central to financial security and social protection.



## Governance and cost drivers under scrutiny

Unions have raised sustained concerns regarding governance and operational practices at GEMS. Key issues include:

- Continued outsourcing of administrative services nearly two decades after establishment.
- High administrative and managed-care expenditure.
- Limited transparency regarding operational budgets and detailed line-item cost breakdowns.
- Executive and board remuneration perceived to be misaligned with broader public-service norms.
- Weak accountability and consequence management mechanisms.

Before members are required to absorb further financial burdens, there must be full disclosure of internal cost drivers. Public servants should not be expected to finance inefficiencies, structural weaknesses, or governance shortcomings. Lower-income public servants are particularly vulnerable. Without enhanced cross-subsidisation, restructuring of benefit options, or stronger cost-containment measures, affordability pressures will intensify. If members are compelled to downgrade benefits or exit GEMS entirely, the risk pool is destabilised. This undermines long-term sustainability and threatens the viability of the solidarity model itself.

Labour also expressed dissatisfaction with the consultation process in the PSCBC. Whilst engagements occurred, there is limited evidence that labour's alternative proposals were substantively incorporated prior to final decisions. Effective collective bargaining requires meaningful engagement, especially when decisions directly affect workers' livelihoods and healthcare access.

The PSA has rejected the announcement of a "revised" 9.5%-contribution increase, reduced from 9.8%, as superficial. A 0.3% reduction does not materially alter the financial burden. In the context of cumulative increases over two years, the adjustment offers no meaningful relief. Concerns were also raised about financial modelling assumptions, including projected healthcare utilisation trends, reserve levels, and subsidy calculations. Labour maintains that alternative strategies must be prioritised, including:

- Enhanced anti-fraud and abuse detection mechanisms,
- Internal efficiency reforms,
- Procurement review and rationalisation of outsourced services, and
- Examination of the statutory 25% reserve requirement and its application in the GEMS funding model.

Cost-containment must begin internally before additional burdens are transferred to members.

## Labour's key demands

Organised labour in the PSCBC formally called for:

1. Immediate withdrawal of January and April 2026 contribution increases.
2. A forensic audit into governance, procurement, and administrative expenditure.
3. Full transparency on operational budgets and line-item expenditure.
4. A comprehensive review of outsourcing arrangements and associated costs.
5. Implementation of strengthened anti-fraud and cost-containment measures.
6. A review of the funding model, including reserve requirements.
7. Structured, meaningful, and ongoing engagement with organised labour.
8. Appropriate governance interventions at executive level where warranted.

These demands are directed at restoring affordability, accountability, and alignment with the GEMS founding principles. GEMS was created to serve public servants through fairness, solidarity, and sustainability. Ensuring that it remains true to that mandate is imperative.

## Clear message from public servants

Access to affordable, quality healthcare is essential. Public servants are dedicated to delivering critical services to communities across South Africa. They should not face financial instability as a consequence of disproportionate medical-aid increases. The well-supported Day of Action sent a clear message: When workers unite, their collective voice carries weight. Organised labour is committed to defending the interests of public servants through collective bargaining, regulatory engagement, and, where necessary, legal intervention.

**The PSA is committed to pursuing all necessary institutional and legal avenues, including exploring options to challenge the monopoly position of GEMS. The action on 21 February 2026 marked the start of sustained engagement to confront what labour views as unreasonable and disproportionate member contribution increases.**

Source  
PSA Labour/Collective Bargaining/PSCBC



# World Day for Safety and Health at the Workplace

## South African REALITIES

World Day for Safety and Health at the Workplace, commemorated on 28 April, is an international initiative declared by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2003 to spotlight the critical importance of safe and healthy work environments across all sectors.

In South Africa, workers at mining pits to public hospitals and schools, courts to paramedic stations and public service centres, are impacted by hazards that go beyond traditional definitions of workplace safety. Violent crime, socio-economic instability, and systemic violence have created environments where even those entrusted with the duty to protect and serve are not safe. This convergence of risks demands urgent action, as continuously pursued by the PSA.

This global day is aimed at preventing occupational accidents, injuries, and diseases through awareness, meaningful policy, and enforcement of safety standards. It is further part of a broader effort to foster a culture where the safety of every worker is a priority.

The Department of Employment and Labour consistently uses this day to promote health and safety in workplaces nationwide. Annual commemorations involve seminars, high-impact inspections, workshop series, and engagement with employers, workers, and government stakeholders. Themes tackle emerging matters such as digitalisation, artificial intelligence, climate change, and other evolving workplace challenges.

In South Africa, workplace safety now intersects with public safety risks that extend beyond traditional occupational hazards. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedics and ambulance teams are increasingly targets of violent crime. Recorded incidents include stone-throwing, vehicle hijackings, stabbings, and robberies of EMS personnel and vehicles as they respond to emergencies. In some areas, EMS teams now require police escorts to reach patients owing to a severe threat of attack.

Healthcare workers at clinics and hospitals are also at risk. There have been court rulings specifically ordering police and authorities to protect clinics that were being blocked or attacked by groups seeking to intimidate or disrupt services, especially against foreign nationals. This situation is impacting on the delivery of essential services and eroding the protective environment that occupational health and safety legislation is meant to guarantee.

Educators, administrative staff, and learners are also increasingly exposed to violent attacks in school environments, including a recent fatal school shooting at a primary school, as a stark reminder that schools can become environments where occupational safety is a matter of life and death.

Courts and justice facilities are also not immune. Threats and violence directed at judicial officers and institutions undermine their ability to function safely. Combined with broader crime dynamics, these attacks weaken citizens' trust in state protection and court processes, which should uphold justice and protect rights, including the right to a safe workplace.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* legally binds employers and state organs to provide safe and healthy working conditions. It extends protections to anyone whose activities are connected to the use of plant and machinery, and to persons in connection with other work activities. Legislation on paper is, however, only as good as its enforcement and the environment in which it operates.



When health workers are attacked when doing their jobs, when paramedics need armed escorts, when learners and educators fear for their safety, and when courts cannot function free of threat, it signals a systemic breakdown in the culture of safety that related laws are intended to build.

World Day for Safety and Health at Work is not just about hard hats and hazard lights. It calls for a nationwide commitment to safety that crosses workplaces, public spaces, and every sector in society. If South Africa truly values safe work environments, the approach to occupational health and safety must include real protections for frontline workers, including EMS, healthcare professionals, police, and educators. Active enforcement of laws must guard against workplace violence, backed by robust training and risk assessments. Cross-sector collaboration is required between government departments, unions, employers, and civil society to turn awareness into action. Community education on respecting and protecting those whose work supports society's well-being is also of critical importance.

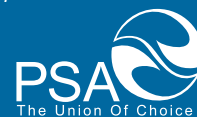
**A safe workplace whether it is an office, a clinic, or a classroom is a fundamental right and actions must match words.**

The PSA provides **PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE** cover for health-sector members of R1 million per member per year (at no additional cost as part of the PSA membership fee) covers members in various occupational groups.



Scan QR code for more information

[www.psa.co.za](http://www.psa.co.za)  
0861 452 452



Sources

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In service of public-sector employees

# Climate and weather change:

## Expected **IMPACT** on strained public healthcare

Climate change is increasingly impacting on South Africans, with ordinary citizens bearing the brunt of the most immediate consequences. Rising temperatures, persistent heavy rainfall, flooding, and prolonged droughts are disrupting livelihoods, displacing families, threatening food security, and exposing vulnerable communities to heightened health risks. For many households, particularly in rural and low-income areas, climate-related disasters mean the loss of homes, limited access to clean water and sanitation, increased exposure to disease, and growing economic insecurity.

Climate change further places growing and sustained pressure on public systems, particularly healthcare infrastructure, access to education, and overall service delivery. As communities experience worsening health outcomes owing to climate-related impacts, clinics, hospitals, and support services are simultaneously expected to operate under increasingly challenging conditions. Public servants tasked with delivering essential services face rising workloads, heightened operational complexity, and persistent resource constraints. South Africa's healthcare system is already grappling with chronic challenges, including under-resourced facilities, aging and fragile infrastructure, inequitable access to care, and a high burden of disease. Climate change compounds these vulnerabilities by damaging facilities and interrupting essential health services whilst demand is escalating.

The impact of climate change is also increasingly disrupting education, as illustrated by recent devastating floods in Limpopo and Mpumalanga. The PSA expressed concern regarding flood-related school closures across Mpumalanga, which kept learners out of school owing to unsafe roads and inaccessible school premises. The PSA acknowledged the responsible decisions taken by school principals and the Mpumalanga Department of Education to prioritise safety. These closures, however, expose long-standing and unresolved failures in infrastructure development, scholar transport, and disaster preparedness.

Persistent heavy rainfall rendered access routes impassable, particularly in rural areas where roads collapsed, bridges were damaged, and learner transport systems remain unreliable. Learners and educators continue to bear the consequences of years of infrastructure neglect. Whilst safety must never be compromised, it is unacceptable that education for rural learners repeatedly comes to a halt whenever severe weather occurs. Climate resilience in public infrastructure is no longer optional. It is essential for safeguarding the right to education and ensuring continuity in service delivery.

Changing weather patterns further bring increased risk of infectious diseases, particularly illnesses such as malaria. Warmer temperatures, heavier rainfall, and more frequent extreme-weather events create conditions where mosquitoes thrive and spread disease more easily. Stagnant water after heavy rains and floods provides ideal breeding grounds, whilst higher temperatures allow the malaria parasite to develop faster. At the same time, damaged roads, clinics, and health facilities make it harder for people to access treatment and prevention services. Flooding and unpredictable rainfall have made mosquito control more difficult. Although South Africa is not traditionally a malaria-endemic country, these conditions have raised concerns about a possible rise in cases, including areas that were previously considered as low risk.

World Malaria Day, observed on 25 April, is a powerful reminder that malaria remains one of the diseases most affected by climate change and continues to plague communities. The reality is stark. The overwhelming majority of malaria cases and deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa, where changing weather patterns further expose vulnerable communities.

Public servants, especially healthcare workers and emergency responders are at the frontline of this growing crisis. They are often the first to respond when floods hit, when heatwaves strain clinics, or when disease outbreaks spread through communities. They shoulder heavier workloads, respond to emergencies with limited resources, and carry the emotional weight of protecting lives under increasingly unpredictable conditions. These pressures are intensified by long-standing social and economic inequalities. Public servants must operate in environments where roads are washed away, communication systems fail, and essential infrastructure is damaged. This reality demands extraordinary resilience from a workforce that is already stretched thin yet continues to serve communities under the most challenging circumstances.

Tackling the challenges of climate change requires a hands-on, people-centred approach that protects health systems and safeguards communities. There is a need to invest in clinics and hospitals that can withstand floods, storms, and extreme weather, and ensure that public servants are equipped with training and resources to respond rapidly and effectively when disasters strike. Strong, resilient primary-care networks that continue to function during crises are vital to ensure that lives can be saved.

Resilience, however, goes beyond buildings and equipment. By linking weather forecasts with health monitoring, it becomes easier to determine emerging threats early. Early warning allows for action, awareness campaigns, and emergency medical support, thus preventing full-blown disasters.

Observed globally on 22 April, Earth Day is an alarm call that environmental protection is essential for public health, social stability, and the wellbeing of future generations. It is one of the largest international civic events, with over a billion people in nearly 200 countries raising their voices for sustainability. For South Africa, Earth Day highlights the link between climate action, public service, and community resilience.

As floods, disease outbreaks, and extreme weather become more frequent, environmental stewardship has become inseparable from protecting lives and ensuring continuity in healthcare, education, and essential services. The PSA urges public servants and communities to cooperate in strengthening resilience. Climate change is a reality but with preparedness and solidarity, lives will be protected, services safeguarded towards a stronger South Africa.



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## Workers' Day and Public Service Day

# DEFENDING workers, SUSTAINING public service

**W**orkers' Day and Public Service Day 2026 arrive at a time when substance rather than symbolism is required. For workers in general, and public servants in particular, the environment remains unforgiving. Expectations continue to rise, resources remain constrained, and policy decisions increasingly place financial and operational pressure on employees. Against this backdrop, these commemorative days must serve as a reality check rather than a public-relations exercise.

Workers' Day exists because labour rights were contested, negotiated, and defended over time. That historical truth remains relevant in 2026. Across the public service, workers are experiencing sustained workload increases, persistent vacancies, stagnant real wages, and rising living costs. The assumption that commitment can indefinitely compensate for under-resourcing is flawed. Productivity cannot be separated from conditions of service, and resilience should not be mistaken for limitless capacity.

Public servants continue to carry the weight of service delivery in health, education, safety, social development, and administration. They are often the visible face of government, absorbing public frustration whilst operating in systems they do not control. Yet, despite their vital role, public servants are frequently excluded from meaningful decision-making about reforms that directly affect their work and livelihoods. This disconnect undermines morale and weakens performance.

Public Service Day should therefore move beyond generic appreciation. Recognition without material support is hollow. Respect must be demonstrated through funded posts, realistic performance expectations, fair labour practices, and policy certainty. It must a

Reform imposed without worker buy-in is not reform but risk-management failure.

Recently, the financial pressure on public servants further intensified by Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) contribution increases. For many members, the increase is not a marginal adjustment but a direct reduction in disposable income at a time when inflation, transport costs, food prices, and household expenses are under strain. Medical aid is not a luxury. It is a necessity, particularly for workers and their families who rely on predictable access to healthcare.

The GEMS increase has a disproportionate impact on lower- and middle-income public servants, effectively forcing difficult trade-offs between healthcare, housing, education, and basic living costs. The increase raises fundamental questions about affordability and long-term sustainability. This is not an abstract policy issue but a financial reality that affects well-being, productivity, and job satisfaction.

The PSA has been clear and consistent in the Union's position. Cost containment cannot be achieved by shifting the burden onto workers without proper consultation, transparency, and mitigation. Decisions that affect take-home pay and access to healthcare must be subjected to rigorous engagement with labour, supported by credible data, and aligned with the principle of fairness. Anything less erodes trust. In response to the GEMS increase and broader cost-of-living pressures, the PSA will intensify engagement on behalf of members. This includes sustained pressure for affordability safeguards and continued advocacy for medical-aid arrangements that do not • undermine workers' financial security. Where engagement fails to yield reasonable outcomes, the PSA will pursue all appropriate avenues available in the labour-relations framework.



Workers' Day and Public Service Day also highlight an uncomfortable but necessary truth: Public servants are workers first. They are entitled to the same protection, dignity, and voice as all other workers in the economy. The tendency to treat public servants as a controllable expense line rather than as professionals delivering constitutionally mandated services is short-sighted and counterproductive. Labour stability in the public service is a prerequisite for effective governance. When workers feel respected and protected, service delivery benefits. When they feel marginalised, overburdened, or financially squeezed, the consequences are felt across institutions and communities. The link between working conditions and public outcomes is direct, whether acknowledged or not.

As South Africa navigates ongoing fiscal constraints, administrative reform, and political transition, the role of organised labour becomes more critical. The PSA remains firm in defending collective bargaining, opposing unilateral decision-making, and resisting any erosion of hard-won labour rights.

At the same time, the PSA remains open to constructive, good-faith engagement that recognises workers as partners rather than obstacles.

Workers' Day and Public Service Day must be approached with honesty and resolve. Platitudes will not address rising medical-aid costs, workload pressures, or declining morale – only tangible action will. For government, this is an opportunity to recalibrate its relationship with the public service workforce. For workers, it is a reminder of the importance of unity and organised representation. For the PSA, it reaffirms the Union's mandate to act decisively, consistently, and in the best interests of members.

**The message is clear: A capable, ethical, and effective public service depends on workers who are supported, protected, and heard. Recognition must translate into policy choices that respect workers' realities. Anything less places strain on a system that cannot afford this.**

#### Sources

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# Legitimate expectation of renewal of contract in Public Sector

By **Wandile Mphahlele** - PSA Legal Officer

**The use of fixed-term employment contracts has been the subject of contention for many years. Opponents have argued that because these contracts terminate automatically after the period of time for which they have been entered into, they can be used to avoid liability for unfair dismissal. Added to this is the argument that it is not unknown for employees to have their fixed-term contracts renewed on several occasions, which leads to the situation where these employees are used in the same way as permanent employees, but often with lesser terms and conditions of employment.**

The legislature has responded to these concerns in two ways. The first is found in section 186(1)(b) of the *Labour Relations Act, 1995 (LRA)*. This section provides that if an employee who is employed on a fixed-term contract has a reasonable expectation that his/her contract will be renewed on the same or similar terms, and the employer fails to renew it, or offers to renew it on less favourable terms, this constitutes a dismissal. It also provides that if an employee employed on a fixed-term contract has a reasonable expectation that he/she will be retained in employment on an indefinite basis on terms and conditions of employment that he/she currently enjoys, but the employer offers to retain the employee on less favourable terms, or does not offer to do so, this will also constitute a dismissal.

The second response is found in section 198B of the *LRA*, which provides that an employee who earns less than the threshold amount published by the Minister of Labour in the *Government Gazette* may not be employed in terms of such a contract for a period of longer than three months unless the fixed-term contract has been entered into for purposes specified in the section. If such a purpose does not exist, the employee will be regarded as being employed on an indefinite basis. In addition, such an employee must not be treated less favourably than employees employed on a permanent basis performing the same or similar work, unless there is a justifiable reason for doing so.

The applicants in the decision in *Nowalaza and Others v The Office of the Chief Justice and Others (J1177/2017)* were judges' secretaries (also known as judges' clerks or associates) employed by the Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ) and working in the Labour Court and the Labour Appeal Court. For a number of years, the practice had been that the applicants had been employed by the Department of Justice, and later by the OCJ, in terms of yearly fixed-term contracts that expired at the end of March of each year. These contracts had been renewed on an automatic basis. The number of automatic renewals of these fixed-term contracts of employment ranged between one and eight years.

After it took over responsibilities for employees employed in courts, the OCJ commenced an investigation into the possibility of appointing all employees who were employed on fixed-term contracts of employment for a period exceeding three months into permanent positions. Subsequent to this, the Auditor-General (AG) submitted a report in terms of which it advised the OCJ that the automatic renewal of fixed-term contracts of employment was in contravention of the *Public Service Act, 1994 (PSA)* and its regulations. Vacant positions had to be advertised, and a competitive process followed in filling these posts. The OCJ accepted the AG report.

The applicants voiced their concerns and the fact that they may not be appointed. Having received no answer that satisfied them, they approached the Labour Court for a declaratory order to the effect, *inter alia*, that they were permanent employees. The OCJ had already advertised the posts, and the applicants had applied for appointment to safeguard their positions. They also asked for an order restraining the OCJ from interviewing and placing candidates.

As the applicants' remuneration exceeded the ministerially determined threshold, section 198B did not apply. The applicants therefore relied on section 186(1)(b) of the *LRA*. They based their case on their view that they had a reasonable expectation of indefinite or permanent employment. Their argument can be summarised as follows:

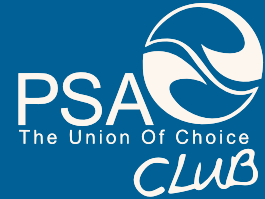
- *The reasonable expectation flowed from the automatic renewal of their contracts over a number of years, as well as the fact that the OCJ had, prior to the AG's report, contemplated converting their employment into permanent employment without a recruitment process.*
- *In substance, they were already permanently employed and there were no vacancies to be advertised and filled.*
- *For the OCJ to rely on the provisions of the PSA and its regulations would not only be unfair, but also unlawful.*

The OCJ's counter argument was that the employees could not have had a reasonable expectation of permanent employment. This was because the information that the applicants had been provided with regarding how the OCJ was to proceed, as well as the fact that the applicants' contracts had been extended for a further period of three months to enable the recruitment process to be finalised, prevented such an expectation from arising. More importantly, it was argued that the applicants could never have a reasonable expectation of renewal if this was in conflict with the provisions of the *PSA* and its regulations.

**The Court rejected the OCJ's arguments, its most important finding being that reliance on the PSA and its regulations had serious consequences. It meant that a temporary employee in the Public Service could never rely on the protection of section 186(1)(b). There was a clear conflict between the provisions of the LRA and the PSA and its regulations. Section 210 of the LRA resolved this conflict. It provides that if any conflict arises between the LRA and any other law, the provisions of the LRA will apply unless the other Act expressly states otherwise.**

The Court granted a declaratory order to the effect that the applicants were permanent employees employed on the same terms and conditions of employment as were agreed between the applicants and the OCJ in the three-month fixed-term contracts that they entered into. The OCJ was also restrained from interviewing and placing candidates in the positions currently occupied by the applicants. This decision clearly has important implications for the Public Sector. The Labour Court's view is that *PSA* regulations dealing with appointments cannot be used to avoid section 186 (1) (b) of the *LRA*.

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## World Blood Donor Day

## Taking public service to next level:

# Become a regular blood donor

**P**ublic service is more than a profession - it is a commitment to uplifting communities and contributing to the wellbeing of the nation. One of the most powerful ways public servants and PSA members can deepen this impact is by becoming regular blood donors. Each donation represents hope, healing, and humanity.

In honour of World Blood Donor Day, the PSA engaged the South African National Blood Service (SANBS) to explore why consistent blood donation is essential and how public servants can play a transformative role in strengthening the country's healthcare system.

According to the SANBS, public service employees form one of the most dependable and socially conscious groups in society - making their contribution to the blood supply vital and irreplaceable. Their participation strengthens national blood stock levels, ensures stability during high-demand periods, and sets a powerful example of civic responsibility. With this in mind, it becomes important to understand the current state of South Africa's blood supply, the challenges faced, and why the ongoing commitment of regular donors is crucial to preventing shortages and safeguarding lives.

The PSA asked the SANBS various questions to assist public servants and members to equip themselves on their journey to becoming regular blood donors:

### **What is the current status of the national blood supply in South Africa?**

South Africa's blood supply remains under consistent pressure, particularly during and after holiday periods when donations decline but medical needs do not. Whilst the SANBS works continuously to collect and distribute blood, national blood stock levels often fall below what is considered optimal for a resilient healthcare system.

Blood is needed every day for surgeries, emergencies, cancer treatments, and childbirth complications. When donation levels drop, the system becomes more vulnerable, leaving less buffer for unexpected spikes in demand such as road accidents, medical emergencies, or seasonal increases in hospital admissions. This is why the SANBS regularly calls on the public to donate - not because of a single crisis, but to prevent one.

### **How many units of blood are needed daily to meet the demand?**

To meet the ongoing needs of hospitals and clinics across the country, the SANBS must collect approximately 3 500 units of blood every day. This daily target ensures that there is enough blood available for routine medical care and emergency situations.

Unlike many other medical supplies, blood cannot be manufactured or imported in large quantities at short notice. It relies entirely on the willingness of eligible donors to give regularly. Falling even slightly below the daily collection target can place strain on hospitals, particularly in high-demand periods.

### **Why is regular blood donation essential, as opposed to once-off donations?**

Blood donation is most effective when it is regular and consistent. This is because blood has a limited shelf life, a unit of donated blood can only be stored for up to 42 days. Once that time passes, it can no longer be used and must be discarded. Whilst once-off donations are valuable and appreciated, these are not enough to sustain a stable blood supply. Regular donors help ensure continuity, predictability, and safety in the system. Their ongoing commitment allows the SANBS to plan ahead and ensure that blood is available when patients need it most.

### **What are the basic eligibility requirements to donate blood?**

To be eligible to donate blood, persons must:

- Be 16 years or older (with parental consent if under 18),
- Weigh 50 kg or more,
- Be in good general health, and
- Lead a low-risk lifestyle.

A brief health screening is conducted at each donation to ensure donor and patient safety.

### **What safety measures are in place to protect donors during the donation process?**

Donor safety is a top priority for the SANBS. All blood donations are carried out using sterile, single-use equipment, eliminating the risk of infection. Donors are carefully screened before donating, and trained healthcare professionals are present throughout the process to monitor wellbeing.

The SANBS adheres to world-class testing, collection, and quality assurance standards. These measures ensure that donating blood is a safe experience and that the blood supplied to hospitals meets the highest safety requirements.

### **What are the most common medical situations or conditions that require donated blood?**

Donated blood is vital for a wide range of medical needs, including:

- Accident and trauma cases
- Cancer treatment
- Surgical procedures
- Mothers experiencing complications during childbirth
- Patients with chronic blood disorders

Every donation plays a role in saving lives across these situations.

### **Can the SANBS share recent stories or examples that illustrate the lifesaving impact of regular donations?**

Whilst patient confidentiality prevents the SANBS from sharing individual stories, the impact of regular donations is seen daily in hospitals across the country. Patients who require repeated transfusions, such as those undergoing cancer treatment or mothers facing severe childbirth complications, rely entirely on the availability of donated blood. In these situations, the reliability of regular donors is what makes timely treatment possible. Donors often never meet the people they help, but their commitment directly supports survival, recovery, and dignity in care.

### **What donation options are available for persons working full-time?**

The SANBS recognises that many South Africans work full-time and may find it difficult to visit donation centres during traditional hours. To address this, the SANBS operates more than 70 fixed donor centres and over 100 mobile blood drives daily, including visits to workplaces, government precincts, and community locations. These options are designed to make blood donation as convenient and accessible as possible, allowing working individuals to donate without disrupting their daily responsibilities.

### **Are there specific SANBS donation centres or mobile units that frequently service government precincts?**

The SANBS regularly services government precincts through fixed donor centres and mobile blood drives.

**To find the most convenient option, use the SANBS donor-centre locator at <https://www.sanbs.org.za>. Alternatively, call the SANBS toll-free number 0800 119 031 for assistance in locating the nearest donation site.**

By donating blood regularly, public servants can extend their commitment to service beyond the workplace. Blood donation is a tangible, lifesaving act that strengthens South Africa's healthcare system and supports patients across the country every day.

By donating blood regularly, public servants extend their service far beyond their professional roles. Each donation is a direct contribution to saving lives, strengthening healthcare, and supporting families during their most vulnerable moments. As the core of South Africa's public institutions, PSA members are uniquely positioned to build a culture of consistent blood donation - a simple act with extraordinary impact. Your donation is more than a gesture of kindness - it is a lifeline that keeps the nation's healthcare system strong, responsive, and humane.



*In service of public-sector employees*



**PSA employee:  
Regular and proud**

# **BLOOD DONOR**

PSA employee, **Charles Botman**, based in the PSA Provincial Office in Cape Town says:

For me, donating blood has never been just a routine act - it has always been rooted in a deep belief that helping my fellow citizen is a Godly principle. From the very first time I donated, I knew I wanted to do good, and that conviction has guided me ever since.

It is profoundly satisfying to know that my contributions have made a difference in people's lives - people I may never see or meet. Yet, the knowledge that someone, somewhere, was given a second chance because of a simple act of generosity is overwhelming. Doing good to my neighbour, even unseen, fills me with joy, and I truly love doing it. I have encouraged many others to join me on this journey. I have told friends, colleagues, and community members that donating blood is not only a civic responsibility but also a Godly duty - a way to serve others in need. Every donation touches families, saves lives, and restores hope.

I want to encourage everyone to consider becoming a donor. Whether it is blood or platelets, each contribution is a gift of life. Together, we can multiply the impact, ensuring that more people receive second chances and more families are spared the pain of loss. Blood Week is a reminder that we all have the power to make a difference. My journey has been one of faith, service, and satisfaction - I invite you to share in it.

# PSA member recruitment: How **YOU** benefit!

A strong Union, growing union, supported by member recruitment efforts, provides significant benefits for individual members and the collective group of members.

A solid and growing membership base strengthens the union's collective bargaining power, allowing it to negotiate better wages and improved working conditions. It further strengthens worker representation in workplace disputes, promotes labour rights advocacy, ensures safer work environments, and educates employees about their rights. The union empowers workers with a collective voice to address concerns, influence policies, and drive positive change in their workplaces.

The PSA is such a strong and growing Union of Choice of more than 245 000 public-sector employees and retired employees, thanks also to members' continued efforts!

*The PSA rewards registered members who successfully recruit new members for the Union with an honorarium.*

To qualify, the recruiter must submit the fully completed membership application form of the new member, ensuring that the recruiter's details are also fully completed on the form. Once the PSA collects the first membership fee from the new member's employer, the recruiter will receive an honorarium equal to the current PSA monthly membership fee of R119 (minus 25% tax).

All PSA members are encouraged to recruit\* as many members as possible for the Union of Choice and reap the rewards for these efforts!

*\*Membership application form provided on page 18 of this magazine (also available at [www.psa.co.za](http://www.psa.co.za))*



## PSA Holiday Resort



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# VERY GOOD REASONS

## WHY THE PSA SHOULD BE YOUR LABOUR HOME

The PSA, a registered trade union, is the largest, politically non-affiliated, fully-representative Union in the Public Service and State-Owned Entities, with a proud history of more than a century of service to members. The PSA...

- 1. Is a growing Union** with 240 000+ members served by Provincial Offices across the country.
- 2. Attends to members' individual disputes FREE** of charge.
- 3. Negotiates fair terms of remuneration** and represents members' interests in bargaining structures.
- 4. Protects members' service benefits** (including medical aid, pension schemes, and housing subsidies).
- 5. Addresses issues** such as fair and reasonable working conditions, hours of work, and leave.
- 6. Is the only Union in the Public Service that serves Public Service pensioners.**
- 7. Is financially stable** (complies with the *Companies Act and Labour Relations Act*).
- 8. Assists beneficiaries and communities throughout South Africa as part of the Union's corporate social investment programs.**
- 9. Protects members' rights** and defends them in unfair labour practices or infringements of constitutional rights and legislation (*Labour Relations Act, 1996, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997, and Employment Equity Act, 1998*). Disputes are resolved at the CCMA, Labour Court, and Labour Appeal Court. In the Public Service, the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC), Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), Safety and Security Sectoral Bargaining Council (SSSBC), Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC), and General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council (GPSSBC) provide dispute resolution functions. With the promotion of interests, rights are also established with collective agreements - non-compliance with such rights is being taken care of by these institutions.
- 10. Employs professional, dedicated and competent staff** to support member structures in service of members.
- 11. Promotes members' interests** during collective bargaining in bargaining forums with employers.
- 12. Is admitted to the various bargaining councils**, which enables the Union to resolve workplace problems in these councils, saving cost and time.
- 13. Acts only on members' mandate** (mandates on collective issues are obtained from member structures).
- 14. Has country-wide, extensive member structures** (national and sectoral) that are the link between the Union and members. These structures mirror the structures for collective bargaining and ensure the protection and promotion of members' rights and interests. Structures are active in all provinces to promote the organisation of members, obtain mandates and improve communication. For information on your PSA representative and structure, contact your local PSA Provincial Office.
- 15. Has an impressive success rate in resolving cases** by the Union's full-time staff and thousands of democratically elected, trained shop stewards.
- 16. Offers fringe benefits to members, including FREE membership of PSA CLUB!**  
Other benefits include an exclusive PSA short-term insurance scheme, insurance benefits, funeral schemes, and assistance with debt and personal loans.
- 17. Provides FREE financial assistance with funeral costs at a member's death.**
- 18. Provides FREE professional indemnity insurance cover** for identified groupings of members (R1 million, per member, per year with no limitation in the aggregate).
- 19. Holiday Resort** offers holiday accommodation at discounted rates.
- 20. Magazine and workplace-specific newsletters** are issued to members **FREE** of charge - Update your contact details with the PSA's Membership Section ([updatemyinfo@psa.co.za](mailto:updatemyinfo@psa.co.za)) to ensure that you receive all news.

The PSA effectively represents the full spectrum of the South African population and lives by the values of **LOYALTY, TRANSPARENCY, RESPECT, ETHICAL CONDUCT, CONSISTENCY and SERVICE EXCELLENCE!**

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# PSA membership application

Public Servants Association of South Africa (NPC)  
Reg No 1942/015415/08



**\*COMPULSORY FIELDS**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

DEPARTMENT / EMPLOYER\*

TITLE (DR, MR, MRS, MS)\*  PERSAL / SALARY NUMBER\*

SURNAME\*  INITIALS

FIRST NAMES\*

IDENTITY NUMBER\*  DATE OF BIRTH

CELL PHONE\*  TELEPHONE  FAX

EMAIL ADDRESS

METHOD OF PAYMENT\* STOP ORDER (SALARY DEDUCTION)  DEBIT ORDER (BANK DEDUCTION)   
*(Indicate choice with X) (Noting that the Agency Fee will also be payable in this instance)*

**MEMBER'S BANKING DETAILS** (only if debit-order payment option is chosen)

BANK NAME  BRANCH CODE

ACCOUNT NO  ACCOUNT TYPE

ACCOUNT HOLDER

**CONSENT**

I hereby **explicitly consent** to the processing of my personal information by the PSA for the **specific purposes** indicated below (Please tick (✓) purposes for which you consent OR (X) for which you do not give consent):

- Marketing and promotions (PSA and all Business Partners)
- Discount and special offers (PSA and all its Business Partners)
- Research activities (PSA and all its Business Partners)

**I confirm and understand that:** (1) I have been informed of the purpose of processing; (2) The processing is voluntary, and I may withdraw consent at any time by contacting the Information Officer of the PSA; (3) I understand the consequences of not providing consent where required and withdrawal of consent may limit my ability to use certain services; (4) My consent is specific and applies only to the ticked purposes; and (5) My personal information will be processed in accordance with the POPI Act, 4 of 2013, and the PSA Privacy Policy (available at [www.psa.co.za](http://www.psa.co.za)). By taking up membership, I agree to the said Policy.

*\*Failure to tick any consent checkbox, or failure to return this form, shall under no circumstances be interpreted as consent. It shall be deemed an explicit refusal (X) to the processing of personal information for the purposes listed.*

**SALARY STOP-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership of the PSA (Public Servants Association of South Africa) and authorise and request the Accounting Officer of my employer to deduct the applicable PSA Membership Fee (as approved by the PSA Board of Directors) from my salary as membership fee, starting from the STOP-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE, and thereafter to continue such monthly deductions until my further written notice.

**I UNDERSTAND THAT IN TERMS OF SECTION 13(3) OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT, 1995, THIS STOP-ORDER MAY ONLY BE REVOKED BY THE GIVING OF THREE MONTHS' (ONE MONTH IN THE CASE OF NON-PUBLIC SERVANTS) WRITTEN NOTICE TO MY EMPLOYER AND THE PSA.**

I understand that membership fees are due to and collectable by the PSA while I am a member of the PSA.

**BANK DEBIT-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership of the PSA (Public Servants Association of South Africa), requesting and authorising you at the same time to deduct from my account at the above bank the applicable PSA Membership Fee (as approved by the PSA Board of Directors), which covers my membership fee to the PSA, starting from the DEBIT-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE and **continue deducting said amount monthly on the ...<sup>th</sup> day of each month thereafter until further my written notice.**

**SIGNATURE\***

**DATE\***

RECRUITER (NOT PSA STAFF MEMBER)	PSA MEMBERSHIP NO*	<input type="text"/>	TAX NO*	<input type="text"/>
	IDENTITY NO*	<input type="text"/>	CELL PHONE	<input type="text"/>
	INITIALS & SURNAME	<input type="text"/>		
	POSTAL ADDRESS*	<input type="text"/>	POSTAL CODE	<input type="text"/>
	EMAIL ADDRESS	<input type="text"/>		
	BANK NAME*	<input type="text"/>	BRANCH CODE	<input type="text"/>
	ACCOUNT NO*	<input type="text"/>	ACCOUNT TYPE	<input type="text"/>
	ACCOUNT HOLDER	<input type="text"/>		

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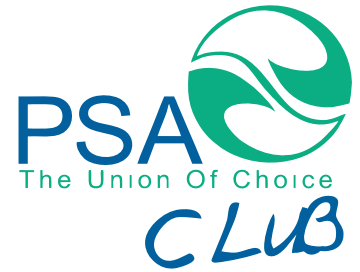
	WEEK NO*

**OFFICE DATE STAMP**

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**WEEKLY REPORT ID**

NOTE: THE PSA WILL ASSIST MEMBERS (REPRESENTATION, FINANCIALLY, OTHERWISE) ON CONDITION THAT THE CAUSE OF ACTION FOR WHICH ASSISTANCE IS SOUGHT AROSE AFTER THE PSA'S ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.



## UPDATE MY DETAILS:

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR CHOICE WITH A

CELL PHONE NUMBER  EMAIL ADDRESS  NEW PSA MEMBERSHIP CARD

\*Will be posted to address indicated by member on this form

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PERSAL / EMPLOYEE NUMBER

INITIALS  SURNAME

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EMAIL

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## Understanding your PSA structure

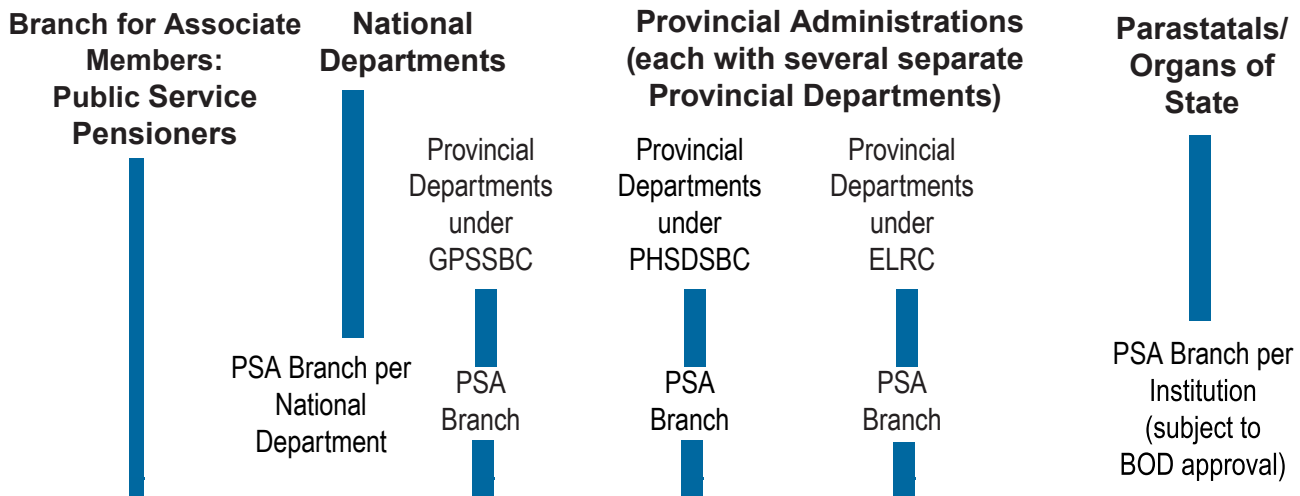
Country-wide member structures (on national and sectoral level) are the link between the PSA and its members. These structures mirror the current structures for collective bargaining and offer direction, thereby ensuring the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of members.

The PSA's Board of Directors (BOD) on 29 March 2017 resolved that in terms of the *Labour Relations Act* or an Organisational Rights agreement, a group will be entitled to elect five shop stewards. The Board may, on good cause shown, establish such a group as a branch.

These structures have been established in all provinces to promote the organisation of members, obtaining their mandates, and improving communication with members.

Details of this extensive network of committees and branches are available from the PSA Head Office as well as any of the twelve PSA Provincial Offices.

It is important to understand PSA member structures. In addition, you should be involved in these structures as active members can provide timeous, informed mandates, and ensure that skilled workplace representatives are elected.



**Sub-structures for communication to grassroot level**

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# Long-distance study: OPENING DOORS to OPPORTUNITY

**E**ducation is the pathway to opportunity, a means to improve economic circumstances, secure employment, and restore personal dignity. Yet for many South Africans, such pathway is obstructed. Whilst much attention is placed on matriculants, there is a group of people whose educational aspirations are often overlooked - working adults and older students.

In 2025, 47.8% of learners achieved a bachelor's pass. This reflects hard work and potential, but the harsh reality is that South Africa's public universities can accommodate just over 200 000 new students annually. More than 100 000 qualifying matriculants are thus left without placement. This widening divide between opportunity and availability, compounded by financial constraints, limited institutional capacity, and systemic barriers to access, places huge pressure on families and erodes confidence in the higher education system.

Access challenges do not end with school leavers. Across the country, people - many already employed, raising families, or serving in the public sector - are seeking opportunities to further their studies. Some were previously denied access because of financial constraints, whilst others entered the workforce early to support their households.

Many find that career progression requires additional qualifications and specialised skills. Yet, they face distinct barriers. Traditional full-time, campus-based education often requires relocation, rigid schedules, and costs that are incompatible with employment and family responsibilities. Limited university capacity and high tuition fees add to the challenge.

Education is often described as the great equaliser but when access is restricted by geography, age, financial means, or institutional capacity, inequality deepens. This is where long-distance study becomes a solution. Distance learning keeps the door to education open at every stage of life. It allows students to remain in their communities, thus reducing accommodation and travel costs. It enables working professionals to earn an income whilst pursuing further qualifications. It provides flexibility for parents, caregivers, and mature students who cannot step away from their responsibilities.

For public servants in particular, flexible study pathways are critical. The evolving demands of governance, compliance, digital transformation, and service delivery require continuous professional development. Without accessible opportunities to upskill, capable employees risk stagnation, not owing to lack of ambition, but because of structural barriers.

Recognising this reality, the PSA continues to prioritise the educational advancement of members. **Through scholarship opportunities and structured support, the Union's business partners assist members who wish to further their studies.** This commitment extends beyond individual benefit - it is an investment in building a competent, ethical, and future-ready public service.

The PSA's collaboration with partners such as **STADIO** strengthens this mission. By promoting accredited, flexible distance-learning programmes, members are empowered to pursue qualifications aligned with career growth whilst maintaining employment stability. These partnerships ensure that education remains accessible, even when funding is limited and time is scarce.

In a country confronting youth unemployment, economic strain, and widening inequality, those who seek a second chance or a new chapter cannot be overlooked. Long-distance education offers hope and opportunity, it recognises that growth is lifelong.

Source  
<https://www.pps.co.za/south-african-students-speak-out-confidence-wanes-education-system-fails-prepare-them>

PSA business partner **FUNDI** offers financial assistance to PSA members, which covers tuition fees, laptops, tablets, accommodation and more. Visit the PSA website ([www.psa.co.za](http://www.psa.co.za)) and click on **Fringe Benefits** for more details.



*In service of public-sector employees*



# PSA alert: Car jamming

**A**s technology advances, so do criminal tactics. Organised criminals are increasingly using car-remote jammers to target vehicles in parking areas frequently used by public servants. These devices block the locking signal, leaving vehicles unlocked and vulnerable. Incidents have increased near malls, hospitals, government offices, and fuel stations, with members reporting thefts of bags, laptops, work files and even hijackings.

This alert provides crucial information and practical steps to help members protect themselves and their belongings.

## How remote jamming works

Criminals use a small device to interrupt the lock signal. When the lock button is pushed, the vehicle does not lock. Once you have left, the criminals quickly remove items from the vehicle, and the problem is only noticed when you return to the vehicle.

## How you protect yourself

- Check the vehicle's door handle after locking.
- Watch for lights or mirrors that fail to respond.
- Move to a different parking spot if someone stands close whilst you lock.
- Keep valuables out of sight.
- Store work documents in the vehicles' boot.
- Inform security if you detect suspicious behaviour.

## High-risk areas

- Parking lots outside government buildings
- Shopping centres parking areas
- Fuel stations
- Hospitals, clinics, and churches
- Isolated areas with low security presence

## What to do after an incident

- Report the incident to the police
- Inform your supervisor if work property or documents were taken
- Alert PSA member structures so that patterns can be tracked.
- Ask site security for safer parking support.

**Awareness protects you -  
the PSA advises members to share  
this alert widely and stay alert when parking  
and locking vehicles.**





# Victories in **SERVICE** of members

## Victory for Limpopo Field Rangers!

The PSA successfully represented 202 Field Rangers in arbitration against the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) at the General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council (GPSSBC). The LEDET unlawfully withdrew these members' danger allowance in July 2019 whilst they continued performing high-risk duties such as anti-poaching operations and law enforcement. The Arbitrator found the withdrawal to constitute an unfair labour practice. The LEDET was ordered to reinstate the allowance with effect from July 2019, immediately implement the reinstatement, and pay each affected employee R34 352.24 in arrears by 10 March 2026, with interest accruing on late payment. The PSA presented compelling evidence of the hazardous conditions under which Field Rangers operate, including confronting armed criminals, assisting security forces, responding to veld fires and hazardous incidents, and working in extreme environments. The PSA welcomes the award as long-overdue justice for Field Rangers who risk their lives daily.

The PSA member, who served as Director: Labour Relations since 2016 with an unblemished disciplinary record, was dismissed in 2023 on allegations of gross negligence and gross dereliction of duty relating to four matters. The Commissioner found that the investigation was fundamentally flawed, as the forensic team failed to interview the member, and that Labour Relations was operating at only 50% capacity owing to a moratorium and the merger of two directorates. COVID-19 restrictions further hampered operations. The award clearly recognised that the delays arose largely from systemic and organisational failures, including shortcomings in Legal Services and the State Attorney, rather than any misconduct on the member's part. The dismissal was therefore found to be substantively unfair. The Department was ordered to reinstate the member within two working days with partial retrospectivity and to pay R1 661 782.58 in compensation by 30 March 2026. This outcome underscores the PSA's firm defence of members and confirms that disproportionate sanctions in the face of institutional failures will not withstand scrutiny.

## Six-year struggle brings victory for member

The PSA welcomes an arbitration award, issued on 5 February 2026 by the GPSSBC (GPBC 1477/2020). PSA member, Nelly Letsholonyane, Deputy Director-General: Corporate Services at in the Department of Human Settlements, was found not guilty on all eleven charges against her. The ruling brings to a close a protracted six-year disciplinary process, which started in 2019, and confirms that the allegations were unsubstantiated, vindicating Ms Letsholonyane after enduring significant professional and personal strain. The outcome underscores the critical role of independent arbitration in upholding procedural fairness and protecting public servants from undue and prolonged disciplinary action.

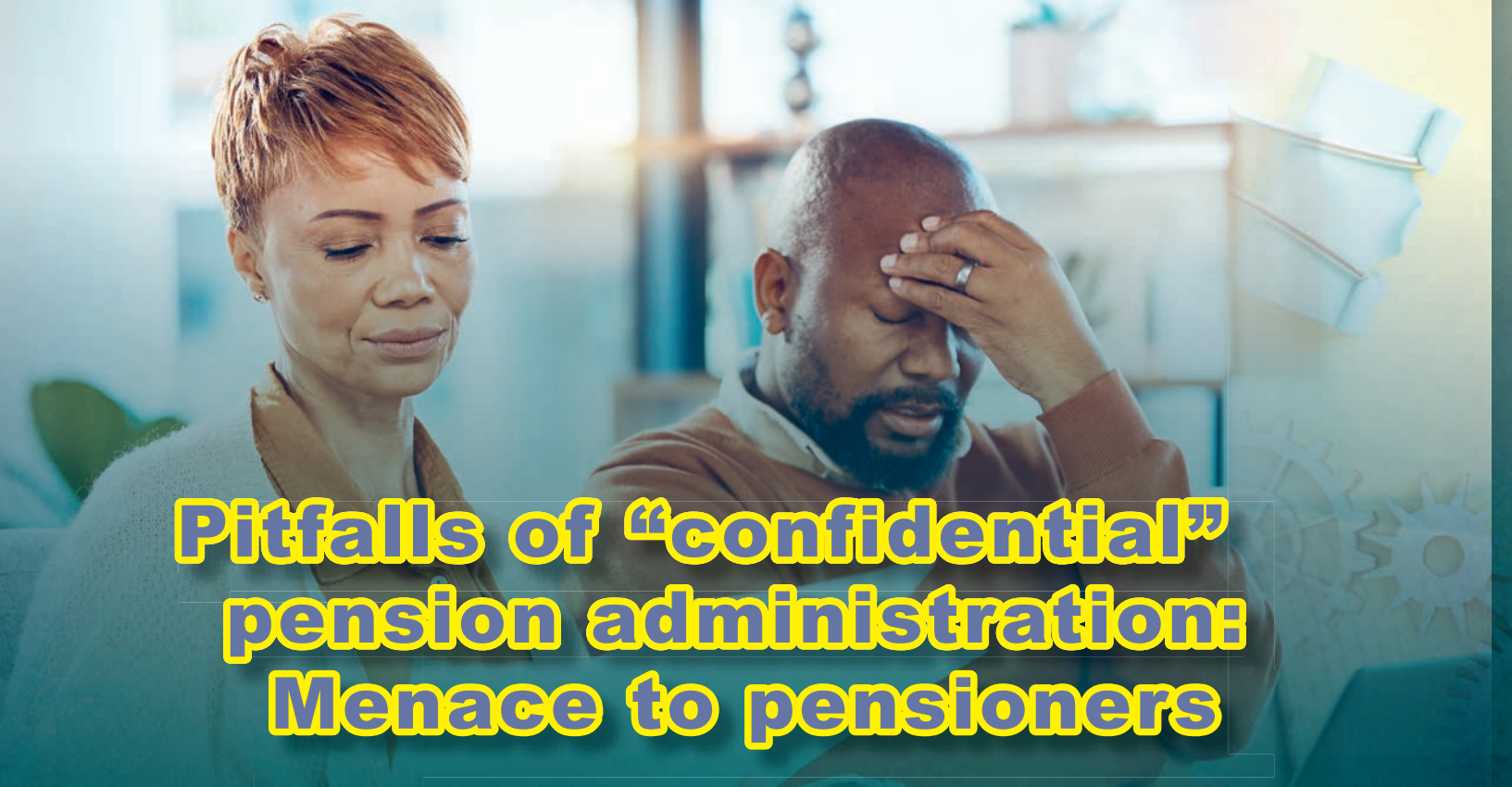
## PSA secures victory for member National Health Laboratory Service

The PSA secured an important victory for a member at the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS), reaffirming the Union's unwavering commitment to defending workers' rights. The member, Laboratory Assistant, was reinstated after being placed on suspension following allegations against him. On 23 October 2025, he was formally informed by his manager that his suspension had been uplifted after he was found not guilty. He subsequently signed his reinstatement letter and resumed duty, bringing a challenging period to a close. The member expressed sincere appreciation to the PSA for the strong and effective representation, recognising the Union's role in ensuring a fair outcome and restoring his professional standing. This victory demonstrates the PSA's dedication to protecting members, upholding justice, and giving a voice to those who might otherwise stand alone in the workplace.

## PSA wins decisive victory on impact of institutional failure

In the matter of *PSA vs Department of Home Affairs* at the GPSSBC, the Commissioner issued an award on 28 January 2026, confirming a decisive victory for the PSA.






# Pitfalls of “confidential” pension administration: Menace to pensioners


By *Reuben Makhubedu* - Chairperson: PSA Mpumalanga Pensioner Committee



**Confidentiality in the governance, management and administration of the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) has potentially detrimental and prejudicial outcomes for millions of serving and retired public servants in South Africa.**



The concealment of information impacts on good governance and accounting principles, posing enormous risk on the sustainability of the Fund owing to a lack of transparency that has become the hallmark of the GEPF and the Public Investment Corporation (PIC), giving credence to the Russian proverb that “Where money speaks, truth keeps silent”.



The lack of diligence and care by the PIC Board in its investment focus and errors in investment choices repeatedly end up in enormous and irretrievable losses incurred over years, raising suspicion on whether those are honest mistakes born out of ineptitude, lack of skill and tact or deliberate kleptocratic tendencies enabled by the lack of transparency in PIC investment dealings.

The GEPF remains the strongest pension fund in South Africa with huge capital reserves to guarantee continuous income for public servants beyond their active years of service. Whilst other pension funds may not sustain their members for life, the GEPF guarantees that as a defined benefit Fund. Recent statistics confirm the GEPF’s continued sustainability. The investment portfolio has grown to R2.63 trillion in 2025 from R2.38 trillion in 2024. Return on investment stands at 14.1%, generating R329 billion in net investment income. Member contributions for 2025 notched R95 billion. These statistics inspire confidence and create the impression that public service pensioners are in good hands, meaning that they earn at a rate in par with or above-average inflation, their living standards are sustained, and they can afford the basics of old age such as medical aid and other essentials.

In reality, public service pensioners belonging to the GEPF earn below 75% of what they earned at the date of retirement, depending on experience and retirement age. The annual adjustment of a public service pensioner in South Africa is below the average CPI by over 30%, which translates in a negative annual growth of pension earnings of 30%. Pensioners must gradually lower their standards annually, resulting in unavoidable poverty.

The GEPF, which collects money from public servants, invests this in the PIC, whose board has the discretion to decide on how much of the capital can be invested, where, and how – a discretion that must be practiced with diligence. This presupposes the appointment of Board members with impeccable credentials, fit and proper people complemented by skills and knowledge in finance and investments, with the moral compass of a reasonable director to ethically carry out their fiduciary duties. Government has the prerogative, through the Ministry of Finance, to appoint Board members who report only to the Minister and not the owners of the GEPF.

# PENSION

Tactical decisions taken by the Board are confidential and may not be shared with anyone outside the Board, except the Minister of Finance.

Workers and pensioners are represented on the Board through their unions and an elected pensioner. Knowledge of such representatives is of no consequence since they are sworn to a pact of confidentiality upon appointment in the Board. There is no problem with the confidentiality requirements for Board members. However, when GEPF beneficiaries' living standards continue to erode, and the Board does not seem to have practical knowledge of the deteriorating conditions of retired public servants, it becomes a problem.

The PIC, whose primary existence relies on GEPF capital, has over the years made questionable investment decisions, questioning the skill and care of the Board of Trustees. *Steinhoff, Early Bird*, and numerous other investment ventures collapsed and led to irretrievable losses, pointing to the lack of accountability enabled by the veil of secrecy attached to the appointment of the Board of Trustees. When the PIC was restructured beyond the State of Capture report and Mpati Commission findings, unions were drafted onto the PIC Board. The PIC Board Chairperson was for the first time not a politician but a reputable business man, creating false hopes of greater transparency and accountability. The veil of secrecy draped in "ethical" concepts of confidentiality, however, persisted to starve pensioners of crucial knowledge to gain insight into decisions that impacted directly on their livelihoods.

The Mpati Commission found that there was impropriety in investment decisions and personal gain potentially leading to criminal conduct. Political interference occurred at the PIC. There was poor governance, a flawed operation model, and non-compliance with PIC legislation. Unethical leakages of crucial investment information akin to insider trading leading to the PIC suffering reputational damage were revealed. There was alleged victimisation of employees to instill fear in furtherance of unethical conduct of the Board. Improprieties in the management of investment owing to the lack of transparency on towards the GEPF on investment choices made were also highlighted. All these findings prompted the "cosmetic" reforms in the composition of the PIC Board whilst the living conditions of pensioners continue to deteriorate.

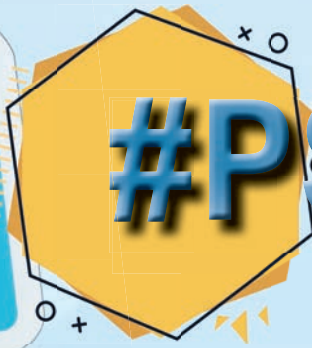
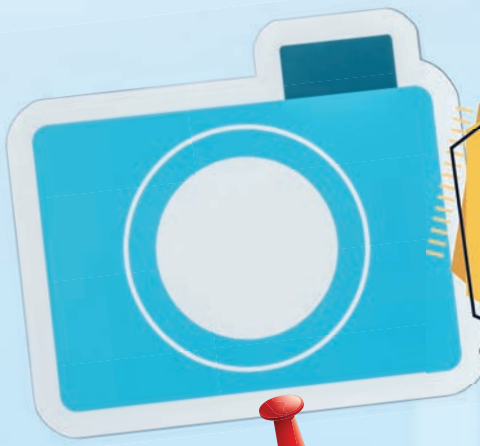
The 2.9% increase in 2025, in the face of an average inflation rate of 4.4%, was a staggering 35% increase below inflation level, with pensioner emoluments for 2025/26 dropping by 35%.

It then raises a question regarding the role and loyalties of Board members of both the GEPF and PIC towards their primary constituencies. The reason to have pensioner and union representatives in the boards is for these primary voices to find expression in the boards. If the voices of pensioners were audible in the corridors of GEPF boards, the pension increase for 2025 would at least have been 4.4% and this would have been agitated by the representatives of unions and pensioners.

The following recommendations are made to salvage the livelihood of public service retirees:

- Clarifying the concept of confidentiality as opposed to accountability not to include suppressing the aspirations of primary constituencies in the Boards and starving them of general and empowering information;
- Empowering bargaining councils to receive updates from the GEPF on matters of mutual interest, such as pension increases and make inputs for the Board's consideration to augment accountability;
- Organise retired public servants into active groups, such as the PSA's Pensioners Branch, to enable a claim for some representation as active observers in bargaining councils when their issues are on the agenda;
- Pensioners' participation in GEPF Annual General Meetings; and
- Amendments to the restrictive and detrimentally prejudicial provisions of the GEP Laws to make these inclusive to the aspirations and expectations of pensioners.

The unfavourable situation, despite its unabated persistence, may still be salvaged. It needs an injection of ethical corporate governance principles and the limitation of political interference with much greater accountability - not only to the Minister of Finance, but also to the primary beneficiaries of the GEPF through the union movement and involvement of pensioners and organised pensioner groups associated with unions or independent.



# #PSApics



PSA Director, *Natalie Adams*, attended the African Labour Law Society meeting in Botswana, in February 2026 along with PSA Labour Relations Manager, *John Teffo*.



PSA Organising/Marketing Officers at a recent recruitment drive at the National Health Laboratory Service.



PSA Director, *Dalinda Swart-Mocke*, attended the official launch of the PSA Office in Bisho in January 2026 with PSA Board Chairperson, *Refitlhile Baloyi*.



The PSA hosted an Intersectoral Members' Meeting in Groblersdal, Limpopo in February 2026.





# Day of Action against GEMS

## #StopGEMSTyranny



The PSA hosted an Intersectoral Members' Meeting in Dundee, KwaZulu-Natal in February 2026.





The PSA Provincial Office in Pretoria donated school shoes to Polonoa Primary School as part of the Union's ongoing support to communities.





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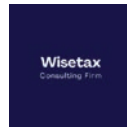
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# Regenerating Africa's public service through youth empowerment

By **Dr Mphutlane Bofelo** - PSA Learning and Development Specialist

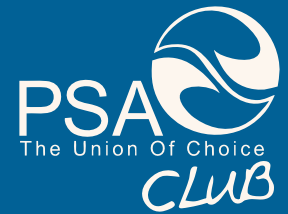
**A**frica has the youngest population in the world, with the majority under the age of 25. This demographic profile presents challenges and opportunities for the renewal of public service across the continent. The sustainability of public service depends on deliberate investment in youth-centered strategies, including skills development, mentoring, role-modelling, and intergenerational dialogue. By positioning young people as active agents rather than passive beneficiaries, Africa can regenerate its public service into a dynamic, innovative, and future-ready institution.

Public service in Africa stands at a critical juncture. With a rapidly growing youth population, governments must re-imagine service delivery and institutional renewal through the lens of generational change. Africa's demographic dividend can only be realised if young people are equipped, empowered, and integrated into governance structures. Four key strategies - skills development, coaching and mentoring, role-modelling, and intergenerational dialogue – are explored as mechanisms for building a resilient public service that reflects Africa's future aspirations.

This discussion is particularly relevant when viewed against the backdrop of Youth Day on 16 June in South Africa, commemorating the 1976 Soweto uprising where young people stood against injustice, and Africa Day on 25 May, which celebrates the founding of the Organisation of African Unity and the continent's collective pursuit of unity and progress. Both days remind us that youth have historically been at the forefront of Africa's transformation, and they must remain central to its future.

*(Article continues on page 32)*

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(From page 30)

## Youth skills development, incubations, and enterprise development

Harnessing Africa's youthful energy requires deliberate investment in skills development programmes that prepare young people for the evolving demands of the labour market. Training hubs, innovation incubators, and enterprise-development initiatives can nurture entrepreneurial mindsets and problem-solving abilities. Such platforms prepare youth for the labour market and create opportunities for their innovations to be integrated into government service delivery. Such initiatives honour the courage of past generations by equipping today's youth with tools to shape a more just and prosperous society.

## Coaching and mentoring

Knowledge transfer between generations is essential for institutional continuity. Coaching and mentoring provide structured pathways for young professionals to learn from experienced public servants whilst offering fresh perspectives. Reverse mentoring, where younger professionals share insights on technology, social trends, and innovation, enriches the outlook of senior officials. This reciprocal exchange ensures that public service remains adaptive, inclusive, and responsive to contemporary challenges. Mentoring symbolises the intergenerational solidarity needed to advance continental unity and development.

## Role-modelling

Role-modelling is a powerful tool for inspiring young people to pursue careers in public service with integrity and commitment. Senior officials who embody ethical leadership and accountability set the standard for future generations. At the same time, displaying the achievements of young leaders demonstrates the tangible impact of youth participation in governance and community development. Visible examples of principled leadership and innovation reinforce a culture of excellence and motivate others to follow suit. This resonates with the legacy of Youth Day, where young people demonstrated leadership in shaping history, and with Africa Day, which calls for visionary leadership across the continent.

## Intergenerational dialogues

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Intergenerational dialogue provides a platform for bridging perspectives between tradition and innovation. Structured forums, cultural exchanges, and collaborative workshops foster mutual respect and collective problem-solving. Youth voices must be central and not tokenistic in these exchanges, ensuring that their ideas actively shape policies and programs. Such dialogues strengthen social cohesion and create a shared vision for the future of public service. They embody the spirit of Africa Day, which emphasises unity across diversity, and Youth Day, which reminds us of the power of young voices in shaping national and continental narratives.

Africa's youthful population is a demographic fact and a strategic resource for the renewal of public service. By investing in skills development, mentoring, role-modelling, and intergenerational dialogue, governments can regenerate institutions into dynamic, innovative, and future-ready systems. This transformation is not about preparing youth for tomorrow but empowering them to lead today.

Youth Day and Africa Day are powerful reminders that young people have always been central to Africa's struggles and triumphs. In honour of their legacy, there must be a commitment to building a public service that harnesses their energy, creativity, and vision. In doing so, Africa ensures that its youngest population becomes its greatest strength, driving unity, progress, and renewal across the Continent.



*In service of public-sector employees*



# A new chapter in financial wellness: **Credit Gateway is now Welltec**

**The name on the door has changed, but the mission remains the same: to free public servants from the burden of debt. Big changes are here for PSA members!**

As public servants, you dedicate your careers to serving the nation. You are the backbone of our communities, ensuring that essential services reach every corner of South Africa. Yet, when it comes to your own financial well-being, the weight of personal debt can often feel like an insurmountable burden. The PSA is committed to protecting not only your working conditions but also your overall quality of life. That is why we are pleased to share some important and positive news from our trusted partner in financial wellness, formerly known as Credit Gateway.

### **Introducing Welltec: The same trusted team, a renewed promise**

You may have seen the name “Welltec” appearing alongside “Credit Gateway” recently, or perhaps you have noticed a new name in the financial wellness space. We are excited to announce that Credit Gateway has officially evolved and is now known as Welltec. This change marks an exciting new chapter for a company that has been dedicated to helping people in South Africa achieve financial freedom.

But what does this mean for you? Simply put, everything you trust about the service remains exactly the same, but with an even stronger commitment to your financial wellbeing.



### **A vital service, now more accessible than ever**

Welltec has officially been onboarded onto the government’s PERSAL payroll system with a dedicated deduction code — a major step forward in making debt rehabilitation more accessible for public servants. This integration allows Welltec to extend their Rehabilitation Loan to Government employees.

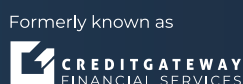
### **Why this matters now: Facing the debt crisis together**

South Africans are facing severe debt crisis, with over 71% of household income going toward debt repayments. Many public servants are struggling with high-interest loans, garnishee orders, judgements, and overwhelming monthly instalments — affecting both personal wellbeing and workplace performance.

### **How Welltec can help you rebuild**

Welltec’s solution includes the negotiation of favourable debt settlements, a Rehabilitation loan that consolidates high interest debts, and a lower monthly instalment deducted from your salary via PERSAL. Funds are paid directly to creditors to ensure debts are properly settled, and assistance is provided to remove adverse listings, judgments, and even withdraw from debt review where applicable. Credit Life Insurance is included for added protection.

This service is available to permanent national and provincial government employees, including SANDF members via PERSOL deduction — offering a structured, secure path toward financial freedom.



### **Contact Us:**

Call Centre: **012 111 1583**  
SMS “PSA” to **30715**

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