

# *Groundbreaking* *Life changing* *Growth*

1920 - 2020



*In service of workers*







# ***Groundbreaking Life changing Growth***

*1920 - 2020*



*In service of workers*









# PSA Mission Statement

Continue to conduct the core business of the Union and maintain strategic partnerships to protect the rights and promote the interests of our members individually and collectively in the relevant social dialogue platforms.

In addition to this, the marketing of the PSA will be done aggressively by utilising all communication platforms.



DAY OF RAGE







### ***A note of appreciation...***

To all those who envisioned, nurtured and grew the Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) during the past 100 years – the member structures, PSA employees, management, the Board of Directors, partners and stakeholders.

To the research and editorial team of *Phambili* who provided a substantial amount of content for this book.





To the staff at PSA Provincial Offices who supplied the beautiful, grassroot stories.

To the research and editorial team who assisted with interviews, stories and photos, with special appreciation to *Jolande Grobler* and *Belinda Mokhandu*.

To *Intermind Agency South Africa* for writing a compelling story.

To *Tiger Creative* for a captivating design.

And to the real heroes of South Africa – the PSA's members!

The trust of hundreds of thousands of public servants has empowered the Union of Choice for a century. The PSA, driven by excellence since 1920, pledges to continue serving public servants with loyalty, transparency, respect, integrity, consistency and service excellence.









*PSA values*

***Loyalty,  
transparency,  
respect,  
integrity,  
consistency,  
and  
service excellence***









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*During 100 years of service, the PSA has made many changes, achieved many victories and made a difference. The PSA has never been “just another union”. It pursues what is right and fair.*





# Introduction

On 7 July 1920, the Public Service Union and Civil Servants Association merged. This merger resulted in a new trade union, the Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA). In 2020 the Union commemorated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A century is a long time. During these 100 years, many world events shaped history. The worst wars in history were fought. Terrible atrocities took place, but also fascinating breakthroughs occurred in science and technology. PSA members of several generations experienced many of these.

Attempting to provide an account of everything that has shaped the PSA during these times, is as futile as summarising 100 years of world history. The PSA, in an effort to provide insight into some defining moments in the Union's history, in 2021 published this commemorative book. Some of these moments were consequential to many, while others made a difference to an individual person or a small group – the PSA is a Union for all.

During 100 years of service, the PSA has made many changes, achieved many victories and made a difference. Chapter 1 of the book provides a summary of 100 defining moments in the history of the Union. Chapter 2 explores some significant cases bearing testimony to the PSA's commitment to human rights. In Chapter 3, the expansion of the PSA across South Africa is celebrated.

Chapter 4 emphasises the PSA's commitment to a holistic view of wealth and wellness. It highlights prominent milestones for PSA members in obtaining additional consumer benefits. Extending these benefits into retirement, the PSA is also committed to caring for its most vulnerable members, especially pensioners. Chapter 5 discusses the support and protection the PSA has ensured for its retired members.

Chapter 6 celebrates the Union's commitment to diversity, especially in terms of the rights of women. It tells inspiring stories of glass ceilings being shattered and court battles won. In Chapter 7, the strength of a fearless Union is celebrated, with numerous stories of significant and sometimes decades-long court battles to ensure that justice prevails.

Chapters 8 and 9 focus on the wellness and safety of employees – at home and at work. In Chapter 8, a few of many corporate social investment stories are told. Chapter 9 considers the many initiatives taken by the PSA to ensure the health and safety of members in the workplace.

Finally, Chapter 10 looks back on a year like no other: 2020. This year was bittersweet: The PSA commemorated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, but members of this Union were also tested like never before. During the worst pandemic since 1918, economic turmoil in South Africa and abroad and challenging circumstances for employees, the PSA proved once again why it exists: To serve its members, regardless of what it takes.

**Here's to 100 years of service.**





## *In service of workers*







# *Chapter 1* ***Born to serve***





# Born to serve

## 100 defining moments in the PSA's history

A century ago, an organisation was born with the sole purpose of serving public-sector employees. This was its mission, but the attitude of servitude became its character and its soul. Today, the results of this resolve are clear. The Union can list many accomplishments, victories and astonishing growth. The PSA was born for great things, but most of all, it was born to serve.

**1912**

### **A movement is born.**

Following the unification of South Africa in 1910, the terms and conditions of working in the public service are less than satisfactory, prompting a meeting in May 1912 in Pretoria, after which the Public Service Union, the PSA's predecessor is born.

### **THE PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.**

For these words are the light, most, if not all, members will have scanned the expected new Public Service Bill. Although in arrangement and in matter it closely follows the present Act No. 29 of 1912, it contains a number of amendments which are certain to provoke controversy.

The Commission is at great pains in its new document that its recommendation shall not be set aside by the Governor-General, but we are no such anxiety to protect our interests by the intervention of superior authority. It seems probable that we should be mentioned at all were it not that Public Service is a necessary evil.

Not only does the Commission propose to "attend" to the Governor-General, but it attempts to make regulations that further extend the same. We are too people, voters and human beings, yet we of occupation or coordination is contained in the Bill. What, then, becomes of the Commission's recommendation? We wish to know the feeling of the public servants.

**1917**

Public servants in Cape Town establish their own union – the Civil Servants' Association.

**1919**

Personnel associations of public officials are officially recognised.

**1920**

**On 7 July, the Public Service Union and Civil Servants Association merge to form the Public Servants Association of the Union of South Africa (PSA).**

**1920**

The PSA's first head office building is rented for R10.75 per month, located at 425 Schoeman Street in Pretoria.



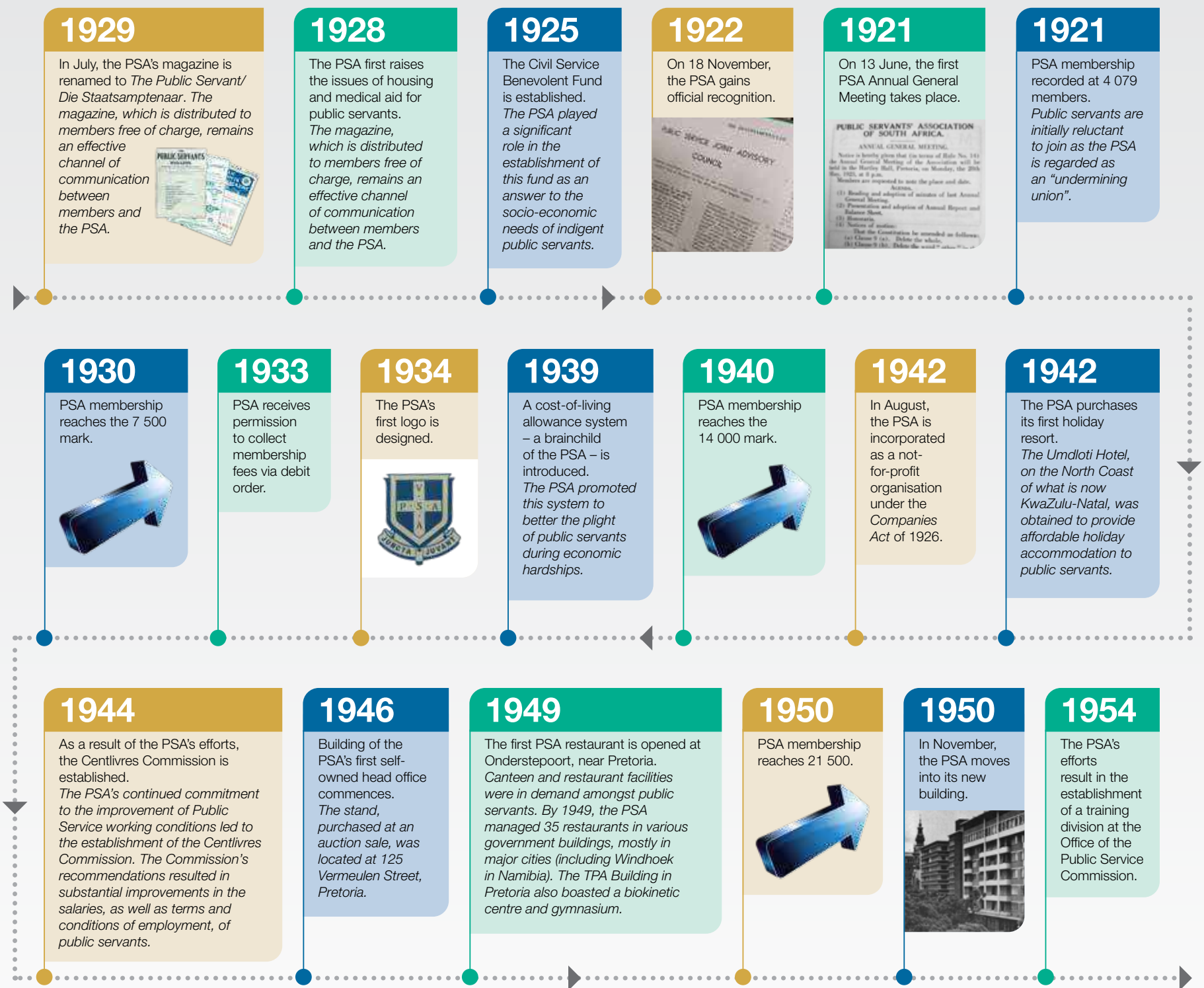
**1920**

In October, the first edition of the PSA's magazine for its members, *The Public Servants' Magazine*, is published.



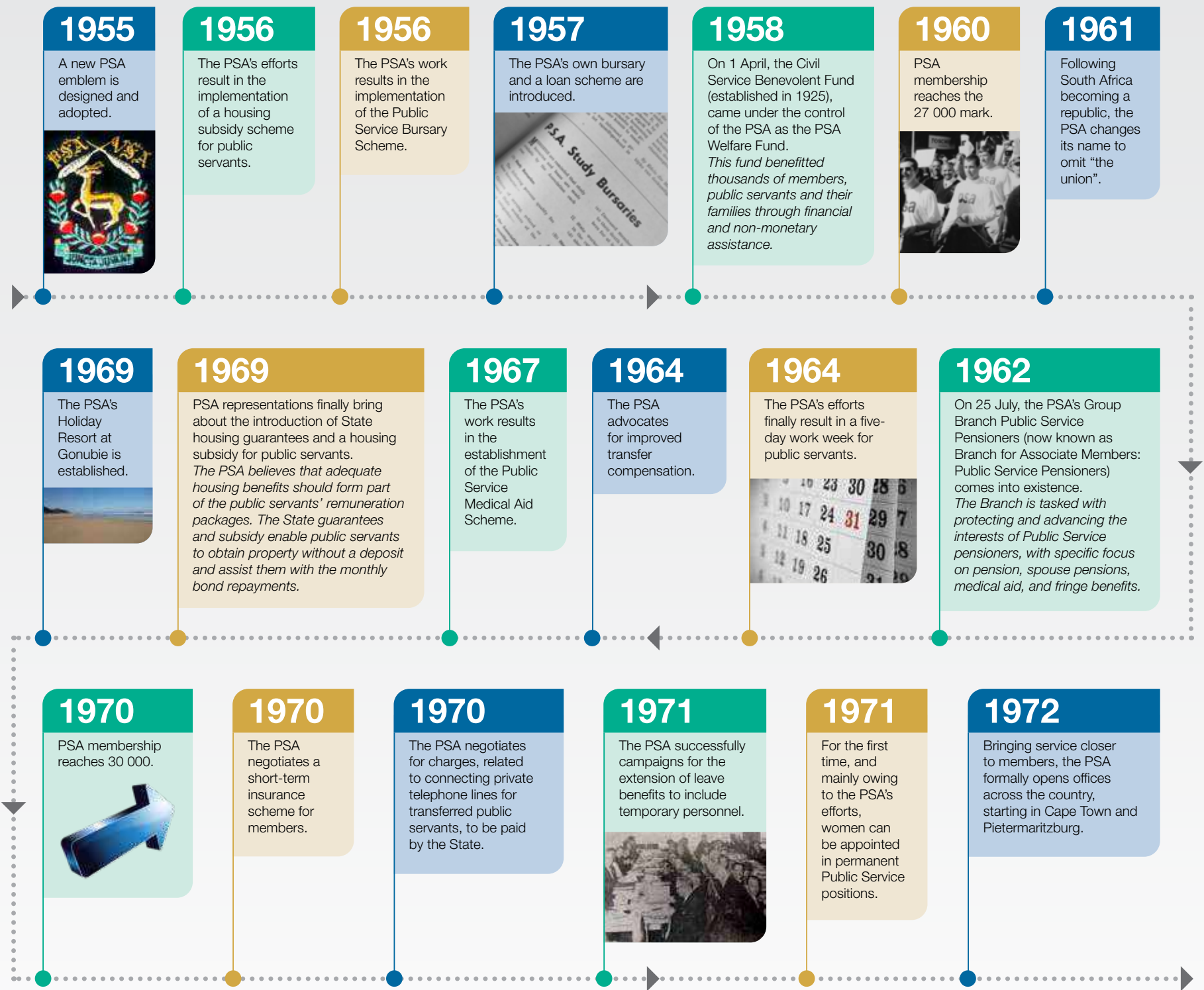


100 defining moments in the PSA's history



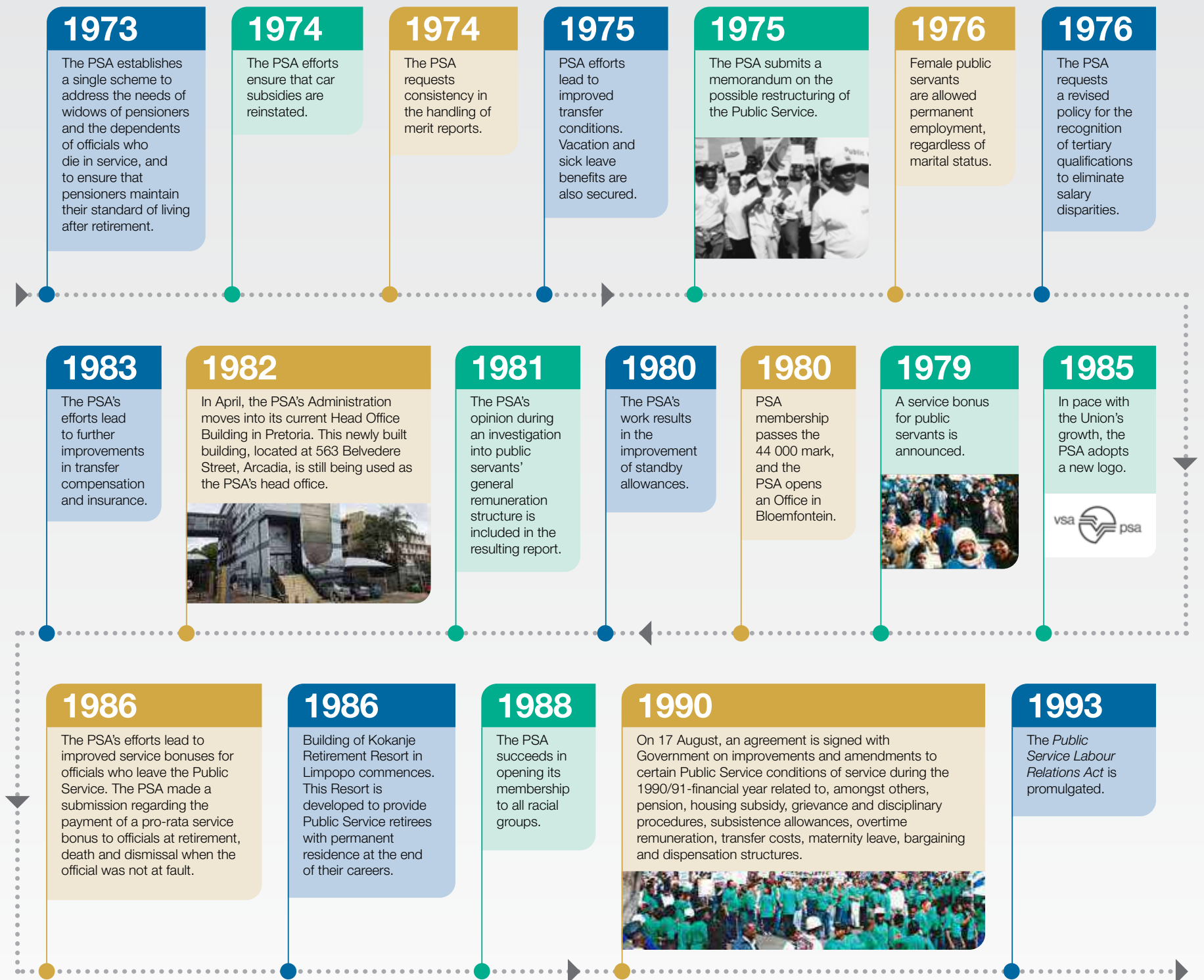


100 defining moments in the PSA's history



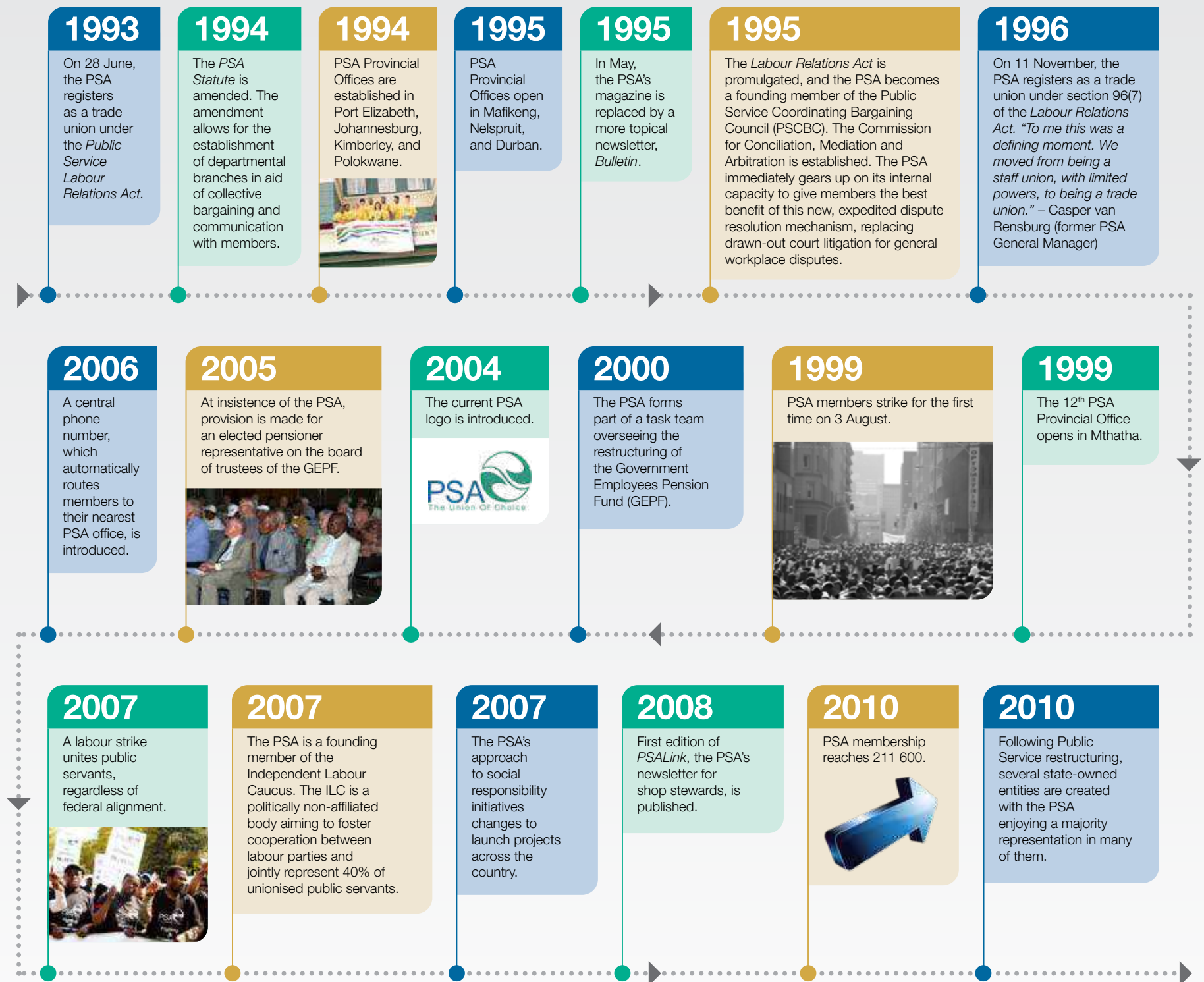


## 100 defining moments in the PSA's history





## 100 defining moments in the PSA's history





## 100 defining moments in the PSA's history

**2010**

*Phambili*, a book celebrating the PSA's legacy since 1920, is published.

**2010**

The biggest Public Service strike takes place. The PSA was the first to give notice of strike.



**2013**

PSA's biggest social responsibility project is launched. This project involves the donation of thousands of school jerseys to learners across the country and becomes an annual initiative.



**2013**

The PSA supports the social responsibility initiative of "No Hungry Student" at the University of the Free State.

**2016**

The PSA affiliates with the Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa).



**2016**

The PSA initiates legal action against the Department of Home Affairs for arbitrarily changing working hours.

**2017**

The PSA contests for a section of the *Public Service Act* to be declared unconstitutional. Sections 34 and 38 of this Act made provision for the employer to deduct money from an employee's salary without consulting with the employee or obtaining their written permission. The Constitutional Court rules that these sections are unconstitutional.



**2018**

The PSA's vigorous actions bring about an amendment to PSCBC Resolution 2 of 2004 to ensure the delinking of the payment of the housing allowance of spouses. This ensured that both spouses who are permanent employees in the Public Service qualify for the housing allowance.

**2018**

The PSA establishes an internal Training and Development division to support and empower shop stewards, members and employees.

**2018**

The PSA protests at SunMet against former Steinhoff CEO, Markus Jooste.



**2017**

*PSA Club*, a loyalty programme for members, is launched.



**2017**

The PSA is victorious in the Family Advocates case with job levels to be translated from LP8 to LP9.

**2017**

After a long court battle, the PSA is victorious in challenging working hours at the Department of Home Affairs.

**2017**

The PSA embarks on a fight to retrieve pension money from Steinhoff International Holdings.

**2017**

The PSA campaigns for the removal of politicians on the board of the Public Investment Corporation (PIC).



**2019**

The PSA embarks on a strike at South African Revenue Service.



**2019**

PSA successfully challenges South African Social Security Agency's (SASSA) application to vary the Essential Service Committee (ESC) designation on the payment of social grants.



**2020**

The PSA is the driving force in ensuring that public servants are paid their salary increases as government reneges on a three-year agreement (PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2018). At the same time, the PSA, as the majority Union at the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), warns that State departments are set to experience information technology interruptions as the possibility of strike action is mounting in the wake of SITA's "offer" of a 0%-salary increase for its employees.



*Towards future centuries in service of workers*





*In service of workers*







## *Chapter 2*

# *Defending human rights*







*The right to live*



# Defending human rights

Human rights are at the core of the PSA. The Union has an extensive history of defending the human rights of public servants. This includes engaging in long and costly court battles in the Constitutional Court, in defence of the vulnerable and exploited. While the *Bill of Rights* guarantees certain rights for all people, the past 100 years bear testimony to the numerous times employers did not respect these rights. It was then that the PSA stepped in for those who could not face the battle alone.

### STANDING UP AGAINST ABUSE AND A CONSTITUTIONAL COURT CASE

In 2011, the Department of Home Affairs absorbed many employees who were part of a one-year internship programme. This had a significant impact on the salary budget. One of the consequences was the elimination of overtime. This meant that employees could either no longer work on Saturdays, or that they had to work on Saturdays without being paid overtime. The Department chose the latter option. It changed the working model to a so-called “shift-model”, whereby employees would work the same number of hours each week, but these hours would include Saturdays. It did not include any overtime payment. The Department did this without consulting with employees or their unions.

The effects on employees were immediate. Whereas employees previously had the freedom to choose to work on a Saturday, they now had to take leave to have an ordinary weekend. The problem was that the shift model often allowed for less than a day’s work on Saturdays (e.g. only five hours), but when an employee did not work on a Saturday, a full day’s leave was deducted.

Saturdays are also different from weekdays in many respects. Public transportation is less accessible on weekends than during the week, resulting in additional expenses.

Other expenses include childcare, as weekends are not included in ordinary day-care arrangements. In the past, these expenses were covered by overtime payments, which had now become unavailable to employees working on Saturdays. In addition, for many employees, weekends were the only days they were able to spend quality time with their families.

In 2013, the impact of this model became unbearable. And it was not legal. “*I signed a contract to work from Monday to Friday, with Saturdays being optional*”, says one of the affected members. “*I had a right to keep to that contract.*” Employees demanded copies of their contracts, but this request was ignored. New employees were, of course, required to sign a contract to work on Saturdays.

*The Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom.*

– *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: Bill of Rights*



However, Home Affairs employees were not alone. As soon as the illegal change of working conditions was implemented, the PSA stepped in. The Union represented its members, first in dialogue and then in litigation. The Department was, however, unrelenting and the case ended up in the Constitutional Court.

The PSA won. It is not legal for an employer to change the working conditions of employees without consultation.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE HEART OF PSA

Protecting and enforcing basic human rights have always been at the heart of the PSA's work: From ensuring fair salaries and wages to housing and medical assistance. Most of this work is done through dialogue and negotiations, but the Union does not hesitate to take a case to the highest court.

## THE RIGHT TO LIVE A HEALTHY LIFE

Long before South Africa made international history with the first heart transplant, before the first polio patient was saved, and in the same year penicillin was discovered, the PSA raised the issue of medical benefits for public servants.

In 1928, long before the *South African Constitution* declared this a human right, the PSA believed that every human had the right to live a healthy life.

Even earlier, on 9 February 1905, the Civil Service Medical Benefit Association was formed. This initially 332 member-strong association included members who also later became members of the PSA. Cover was initially limited to members in Pretoria and surrounding areas. In 1952, this was extended to the entire country.

In 1961, the then Public Service Commission appointed a committee to consider the introduction of a medical-aid scheme. This scheme would then be compulsory for all members. At the 1965 PSA congress, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs announced the official introduction of this medical-aid scheme. From 1 October 1967, all newly appointed public servants had to join the scheme.

*Everyone has the right to life.*

*– Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: Bill of Rights*







## STANDING UP TO AN AMBASSADOR

Personal safety is an important basic human right. No amount of power seated in an individual may compromise this right, as a South African Ambassador discovered.

In May 2003, Lara Swart, a female member of the PSA, lodged a grievance against the South African Ambassador in Indonesia. She approached the PSA for assistance and the Union appointed a legal representative. Even with the PSA's assistance, it was not an easy journey. Simply forcing the former Department of Foreign Affairs to investigate the matter and conduct a disciplinary hearing, proved to be a challenge. But the PSA succeeded. After a disciplinary hearing, the Ambassador was found guilty of sexual harassment. Yet, this was not the end.

The PSA and Lara were shocked to learn that the then Minister of Foreign Affairs “could not find sufficient evidence to confirm the outcome of the hearing”. The PSA, however, persisted and escalated the matter through legal proceedings to the High Court where it asked for the Minister’s finding to be set aside. The PSA asked for the appeal to be dismissed and requested for a confirmation of the findings of sexual harassment.

Success was achieved when, in December 2006, the Court ruled that the Minister’s appeal be dismissed and that the finding of guilt – on three charges of sexual harassment – and the sanction of dismissal be confirmed.

*Everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity.*

*– Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: Bill of Rights*







The victory is bittersweet. When a traumatic experience is exacerbated by having to fight for justice against powerful figures, the trauma is aggravated. But it is a victory, nonetheless. Public servants can rest assured in the knowledge that the PSA will ensure that nobody is above the law.

## FORCED TO WORK OVERTIME

Being a nurse is similar to being a teacher: It is a calling rather than an occupation. Such is the case with Khanyisile Khoza, Nhlanhla Jele and Sibusiso Maseko, three nurses at a public hospital in Mpumalanga. Burdened by budgetary constraints, the hospital is frequently understaffed, requiring medical staff to work overtime. Putting their patients first is second nature to these three nurses, resulting in many overtime hours.

The exorbitant hours of extra work, however, took a toll. The nurses had to sacrifice precious time with their families. They had to make sacrifices in terms of their own health and well-being. And they were not paid an additional cent.

This is when the PSA intervened. Forcing someone to work without compensation is a violation of their human rights. Through successful negotiations with the hospital, all three nurses were paid a substantial amount for their overtime work. When asked what they were going to spend the money on, the answer was instantaneous: "On our families, of course!"

## FAIR SALARIES

From its inception, the PSA has been committed to the improvement of public servants' salaries. This, for example, led to the 1944-Centlivres Commission of Investigation that, in turn, led to substantial improvements in salaries, as well as better terms and conditions of employment in the Public Service sector.

*No one may be subjected to slavery, servitude or forced labour.*

*– Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: Bill of Rights*

*Everyone has the right to fair labour practices.*

*– Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: Bill of Rights*

The pursuit of fair salaries for members is embedded in the PSA. Cases portraying this commitment are numerous.

PSCBC Resolution 3 of 2009, for example, made provision "... that Assistant Directors and Deputy Directors shall with effect from 1 July 2010 be on salary levels 9 and 11 respectively". This effectively meant that even if the posts in question were evaluated at salary levels 10 and 12, these employees were unfairly remunerated at salary levels 9 and 11 respectively.

The PSA vigorously opposed this matter and was eventually successful in ensuring that employees evaluated on salary levels 10 and 12 are remunerated on the correct levels. This culminated in the signing of PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2012, which amended Resolution 3 of 2009 to allow for employees whose posts are graded on salary level 10 and 12 to be appointed and remunerated on salary levels 10 and 12 respectively.

Another recent example involves negotiations with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) for an 8%-salary increase for employees in 2019. When negotiations reached a dead-end, PSA members embarked on a two-day strike, affecting 90% of SARS operations and closing almost all offices. The result was a salary increase of 3.8% above inflation.

In another example, Mpumalanga Treasury failed to implement the PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2012 on the upgrade of officials from level 9 to 10 and 11 to 12. The Member of the Executive Council in 2009 undertook job evaluations that were approved by the Department of Public Service and Administration, but the outcome was not implemented. The PSA declared a dispute, resulting in an award in favour of its members. The Resolution was finally implemented, and all affected officials benefitted, with a total budget amount of more than R55 million.

In a similar case, the former Department of Water and Sanitation failed to implement the rank designation requirements policy for construction workers. The PSA challenged this and the policy was implemented. Qualifying employees were promoted and members also received back-dated increases.



## BETTER WORKING HOURS AND LEAVE

The value of a decent salary is severely diminished when affected by unreasonable working hours and insufficient annual leave. For this reason, the PSA has always been committed to ensuring that working hours are reasonable.

In 1964, for example, the PSA succeeded in negotiating a five-day work week for all public servants. In 1971, the PSA also obtained better vacation and sick-leave benefits for all employees, including temporary and part-time public servants.

## SAFE PLACE TO LIVE

Housing is a basic human right, enshrined in the 1994 *Constitution of South Africa*. The PSA did not, however, wait for the *Constitution* to be drafted before it recognised the importance of proper housing to the wellbeing of public servants. Already in 1928, the PSA raised the issue of housing. After numerous recommendations to government, the Union finally succeeded in 1969, when state guarantees for housing were introduced. This enabled public servants to obtain property without deposits and assisted them with paying monthly bond instalments.

*Everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing.*

*– Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: Bill of Rights*

This was, however, only the beginning. Although negotiations with employers formed a crucial part of the PSA's strategy to obtain housing for its members, it was not the only mechanism. Through prudent financial management of membership fees, the Union was able to purchase its first Head Office building. This building also contained flats, a boarding establishment for single residents and even a restaurant, which opened in August 1951.

This was followed by the construction of four additional buildings in the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. These buildings provided affordable accommodation to PSA members and were eventually sold in the early 1990s. During the 1980s, the PSA initiated additional housing projects in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town. This was done in cooperation with the Department of Community Development and was aimed at promoting property ownership for young public servants, making housing more affordable.



### PSA LEGACY

*Human rights are never optional but can also not be assumed. The PSA continues its crusade to afford people the rights they are entitled to.*











## Children's rights: Gabisile's story

In Khumbula township, located in the Kabokweni area just outside Mbombela (Nelspruit), 150 children have just finished lunch. With their plates cleared, they gather in front of four caretakers to sing nursery rhymes and children's songs. The songs are both entertaining and educational, a crucial combination in early childhood development.

After a while, the group splits into smaller classes, moving into the buildings that make up Tentele Educare Centre. Although this activity seems elementary, this is not the case. Before today, children at Tentele were not able to take advantage of the 1:25 caretaker-child ratio. The reason? Space.

Founded in 1996, Tentele Educare Centre is the only registered Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD) in the community of Khumbula. It is registered with the Department of Health and the Department of Basic Education. It employs ten staff members and provides a crucial service to the community's most vulnerable: Children between the ages of two and five.

A 2016 report from the World Health Organisation estimated that 250 million, or 43%, of children in low- and middle-income countries were unable to realise their full development potential. This was largely ascribed to sub-optimal development of children up to the age of eight. *"The early years are critical"*, the report stated, *"because this is the period in life when the brain develops most rapidly and has a high capacity for change, and the foundation is laid for health and wellbeing throughout life"*.

In the grand scheme of statistics, it is easy to lose sight of the individual impact centres such as Tentele have on children. Children such as Gabisile<sup>1</sup>. Gabisile's mother works away from home and only sees her on weekends. She thus lives with her grandmother who is already struggling to make ends meet. At home, Gabisile's diet consists of meals of maize porridge and bread, something that is not optimal for a four-year-old. Fortunately, as a learner at Tentele, Gabisile's fate has changed.

Cooperating with a dietician at a local hospital and with ample food subsidies and sponsorships, children at Tentele enjoy healthy, nutrient-rich meals every weekday. Healthy meals have been identified as one of the most critical needs in early childhood development. Equally important is the ECD centre's role in cognitive and social development. Children at Tentele learn to socialise with other children and are prepared to be school-ready by the time they reach the age of six, giving them a distinct advantage.

This is a game changer for Gabisile, but she almost did not get this opportunity. Owing to a lack of space and subsequent safety requirements, the number of students that Tentele could accept was capped at a figure much lower than demand. Then the PSA stepped in.

In 2018, the PSA's Provincial office in Mpumalanga realised the urgency for a new classroom. Tentele's limited budget would never allow for capital expenditure of this magnitude, but the PSA made funds and expertise available and watched as the new classroom took shape. Thanks to this, Tentele could increase the number of children it accepted. A figure that now included Gabisile.

Although education is a basic human right, it is sadly not guaranteed. Especially where ECD is concerned, many children fall through the cracks. But hope and help are always available, even if it happens one classroom at a time.

*Every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services.*

*– Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: Bill of Rights*

<sup>1</sup> Pseudonym used





## *In service of workers*







## *Chapter 3*

# *Geared for service*





A large crowd of people is gathered in a city street, filling the lower half of the frame. The scene is overlaid with a solid blue tint. In the background, tall city buildings line the street, and a banner is visible among the crowd. The text "A movement is born" is written in a white, italicized serif font across the middle of the image.

*A movement is born*



# Geared for service

To serve its members for a century, a Union needs tenacity, persistence, continuous renewal and a strong commitment to its members and purpose. The PSA has displayed all these traits over the past 100 years. It became the Union of Choice for many public servants, leading to rapid expansion across South Africa. The result is a formidable Union and a labour force to be reckoned with, with a widespread grassroots presence.

### FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO A FORMIDABLE FORCE

With its first building smaller than an average house and a modest membership count, the PSA was founded in 1920. It came into being after the merging of the Public Service Union in Pretoria and the Civil Servants Association in Cape Town.

As membership numbers and the need for representation increased, so did the PSA's influence in the country. Over the years, the Union has established Provincial Offices in every province in the country. Membership numbers grew rapidly to make the PSA the largest non-politically affiliated union for public servants in the country.

The PSA's workforce also grew. The Union recruited well-experienced and qualified officials from the ranks of, amongst others, the Office of the Public Service Commission and the then Department of Labour to ensure its ability to respond to the demand for services from its growing membership.

#### *Pretoria: First office and head office*

In 1920, the PSA moved into a rented building at 425 Schoeman Street in Pretoria. In 1950, the PSA invested in the construction of its own building at 125 Vermeulen Street. Construction of the current Head Office building at 563 Belvedere Street in Arcadia, Pretoria, was completed in 1982.

### Western Cape

#### *Cape Town*

The PSA's historical link with the Civil Servants Association (which originated in Cape Town) and the number of members in the province, made the Cape Town a logical first choice for a Provincial Office. The Provincial Office was opened in 1972.

### Gauteng

#### *Johannesburg*

Owing to its proximity to Pretoria, the need for an office in Johannesburg was initially less urgent than representation in other provinces. The Johannesburg Office was opened in 1994 and has grown significantly since, bringing representation closer to thousands of public servants in one of the country's largest metropolitan areas.

### Free State

#### *Bloemfontein*

A few years after the opening of the Provincial Office in Cape Town, the PSA expanded its reach into another province, the Free State. It opened its second Provincial Office in Bloemfontein.



## KwaZulu-Natal

### Pietermaritzburg

Continuing its philosophy of “bringing the Union to the people”, the PSA opened its third Provincial Office in KwaZulu-Natal – in Pietermaritzburg. This resulted in the PSA having a footprint in all four the provinces of the country at the time.

### Durban

In 1995, a second PSA Provincial Office was opened in KwaZulu-Natal, this time in Durban. Similar to Johannesburg and Pretoria, this Office contributed significantly to serving more members closer to their workplace.

## Eastern Cape

### Port Elizabeth

With the advent of democracy in South Africa, the demarcation of South Africa’s new provinces was on the table. The PSA’s highest priority remained serving its members in the most effective way and Provincial Offices were established in the major cities of the new provinces. Port Elizabeth, as the industrial hub of the Eastern Cape, was one of these, with the PSA office opening in the city in 1994.

### Mthatha

Mthatha is almost 500 km North of Port Elizabeth, making visits from this area to the Port Elizabeth offices a long journey. Owing to growing numbers and to bring the Union closer to its members throughout the Eastern Cape, the PSA opened a Provincial Office in Mthatha in 1999.

## Limpopo

### Polokwane

As soon as Polokwane (formerly known as Pietersburg) was identified as the capital city of the newly created Limpopo Province, the PSA established its Provincial Office in the city. The Limpopo Provincial Office was established in 1995.

*“One thing I am particularly proud of is the PSA’s persistent unqualified audits – in the 21 years I have been involved [in finance] we’ve never had a qualified audit.”*

*– Madelain Muller,  
PSA Assistant General  
Manager: Finance*

## Northern Cape

### Kimberley

With the smallest population of all provinces spread over a vast area, the Northern Cape provides a geographical challenge for representation. The PSA has, however, never shied away from challenges and opened a Provincial Office in Kimberley in 1995.

## Mpumalanga

Shortly after the first democratic election in South Africa, the PSA’s Mpumalanga Provincial Office was opened in 1995. This Office in Mbombela (Nelspruit) serves members from Emalahleni to as far as the borders with Eswatini.

## North West

### Mafikeng

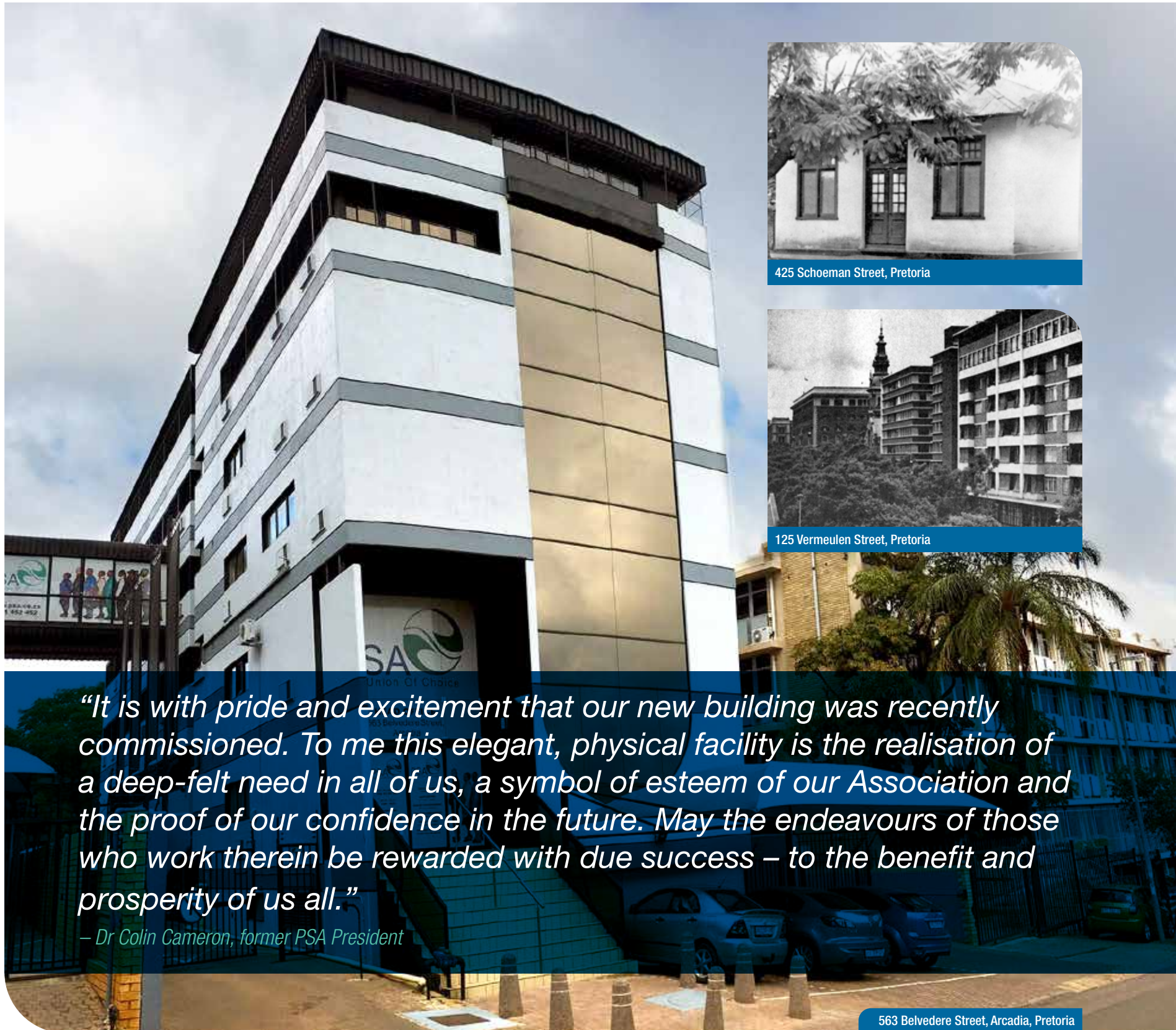
A Provincial Office was opened in Mafikeng in 1995, finally providing the PSA with a presence in all nine provinces of the country.

In 1993, public servants gained labour rights with the promulgation of the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*. The PSA now had “teeth” and could assist members with more efficient and expedited dispute resolution. The disciplinary procedure contained in the Public Service Act was deformed and aligned with that of the private sector. Public servants were no longer tried in Magistrate’s Courts during disciplinary hearings and PSA officials and shop stewards could now represent members in disciplinary hearings. Public servants also now had access to expedited dispute resolution of grievances processes through conciliation and arbitration as opposed to the previous expensive and time-consuming administrative reviews in courts.

*“One just has to look at the case law since 1999 to realise that the PSA has contributed significantly to the development of labour law in South Africa to the benefit of all workers.”*

*– Koos Kruger, PSA  
Provincial Manager*





425 Schoeman Street, Pretoria



125 Vermeulen Street, Pretoria

*“It is with pride and excitement that our new building was recently commissioned. To me this elegant, physical facility is the realisation of a deep-felt need in all of us, a symbol of esteem of our Association and the proof of our confidence in the future. May the endeavours of those who work therein be rewarded with due success – to the benefit and prosperity of us all.”*

*– Dr Colin Cameron, former PSA President*

563 Belvedere Street, Arcadia, Pretoria







## PUBLIC SERVICE COORDINATING BARGAINING COUNCIL

The PSA was a founding member of the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) in 1995. This legislated structure was established in terms of the *Labour Relations Act* to create a platform for collective bargaining. Being one of the founding members of the PSCBC provided the PSA with a stronger presence in negotiation processes.

In congratulating the PSA on its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, the PSCBC's General Secretary, Frikkie de Bruin, writes:

*The PSCBC is pleased to convey congratulations to the Public Servants Association (PSA) on the celebration of its centenary. Since its inception in the year 1920, the PSA has developed a strong reputation by persistently keeping its vision alive and relevant for the past 100 years.*

*“The PSA has become one of the thought leaders in the management of employer and labour relations.”*

*– Frikkie de Bruin,  
PSCBC General Secretary*

*The PSA has become one of the thought leaders in the management of employer and labour relations. It has positioned itself as a solution-oriented organisation that upholds good labour practices enshrined by the Constitution. Over the years, through innovative leadership and agenda-setting debates, the PSA has embarked on important initiatives that have added value to the employment conditions of public servants.*

*As one of the key trade unions affiliated to the PSCBC, the PSA has been the voice of many public servants, effectively representing its members and ensuring that their rights and interests are protected. Through its active participation in collective bargaining, the PSA has contributed greatly to the conclusion and signing of a number of collective agreements.*

*Recognising your accomplishments attained this far, it is our hope that through vehement collaborative effort and in partnership with strategic stakeholders in the labour sector, the PSA will continue to flourish and add value to the future advancement of collective bargaining and social justice in the Public Service.*

*Once again, on behalf of the leadership of the PSCBC, congratulations and best wishes for a prosperous future.*





## FEDERATION OF UNIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA

The PSA is a founding member and also the biggest affiliate of the Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa), a federation of 27 trade unions, making it one of the most powerful groups of unions in South Africa. Riefdah Ajam, Fedusa's General Secretary, congratulated the PSA on its 100th birthday with the following message:

*"To celebrate 100 years is a golden milestone but not a privilege available to everyone in the trade union movement. It is a signpost marked by an extraordinary will to secure and protect legitimate workers' interests in the face of relentless opposition by employers, including determined efforts to weaken and divide organised labour. Fedusa is proud that the PSA could find the staying power to reach the coveted milestone and grow into a 240 000 strong giant that has set a fine example for other affiliates to emulate. A milestone that embraces a new chapter by breaking new ground through tenacity and endurance that epitomises the PSA brand of being the "Union of Choice". The PSA leadership, through its affiliation to Fedusa, has transcended these boundaries to ensure that its collective membership remains a formidable force to be reckoned with. So truly significant then, that the PSA again formed part of the Fedusa delegation to the momentous 2019 ILO Centenary Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, to follow then in the footsteps of giants as it hosted its own centenary celebrations thereafter in 2020. On behalf of the Fedusa leadership, executive and entire membership, our heartfelt congratulations. May there be 100 more!"*

*"Fedusa is proud that the PSA could find the staying power to reach the coveted milestone and grow into a 240 000 strong giant."*

*– Riefdah Ajam, Fedusa General Secretary*

### PSA LEGACY

*The PSA has steadily evolved from a small organisation, to a large and influential Union with a presence across South Africa, and even internationally. Whether the founders envisioned this growth is not known, but even if they did, they would probably be astonished by the growth that stemmed from the seeds they planted 100 years ago.*











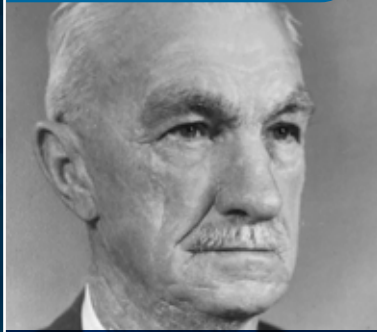




## ***PSA Provincial Offices***



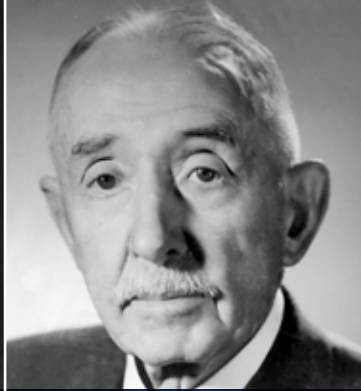
### PSA General Managers



L G H Albertyn  
(1927 to 1929)



Colonel G D Gray  
(1929 to 1931)



J P Botha  
(1931 to 1934)

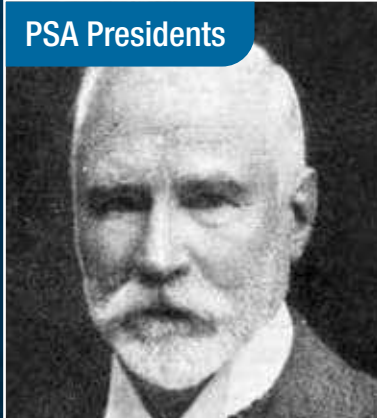


L Rautenbach  
(1934 to 1946)



J Basson  
(1946 to 1972)

### PSA Presidents



Sir J G Graham  
(1920 to 1922)



R G Russouw  
(1922 to 1923; 1926 to 1928; 1930)



J M Lavoipierre  
(1924 to 1926)



A E Hayward  
(1930 to 1932)



P M van der Lingen  
(1932 to 1934)



Dr J G Louw  
(1954 to 1961)



Dr J F Enslin  
(1961 to 1971)



R B J Gouws  
(1971 to 1973)



S D de K Venter  
(1973 to 1979)



Dr C M Cameron  
(1979 to 1990)





## *PSA leadership over the years*















*In service of workers*







## *Chapter 4*

# *Securing a better life*







*Working for prosperity*



# Securing a better life

Over the course of a career, the average employee will spend at least 70 000 hours at work. The PSA is therefore committed to ensure that its members are compensated fairly for their services: The PSA has achieved numerous successes in ensuring decent remuneration for public servants, but this is not the only employment aspect the PSA pursues.

### WORKING TO LIVE, OR LIVING TO WORK?

The fact that a free telephone connection, an indemnity insurance policy or funeral benefits generally do not reach the news headlines, does not make these benefits less important. In the long term, such benefits make a major difference to the general standard of living. A fair salary is severely diminished when an employee works in a hostile environment, or if a large proportion of a salary is absorbed by irresponsible (and sometimes unauthorised) debt deductions. Merely balancing the budget is not the same as being prosperous. Being happy and satisfied at work increases productivity and health.

Small things make a big difference. The PSA has persistently been working to create well-deserved prosperity for its members through various initiatives and, when necessary, even legal action.

### HOUSING ALLOWANCE – DISCRIMINATION ERADICATED

PSCBC Resolution 2/2004 made provision for the payment of a Housing Allowance to all permanent employees in the Public Service, dictating that the allowance was: “for one spouse only if both spouses are in the employ in the Public Service, unless for operational reasons they are stationed in different magisterial districts and maintain two separate homes”.

This provision resulted in married couples divorcing to ensure that they both received the housing allowance. The PSA vigorously pursued an amendment of the discriminatory agreement.

A new agreement was subsequently concluded in 2018, stipulating that: “Parties agree to the delinking of the payment of housing allowance of spouses...”. This ensured that both spouses who are permanent employees in the Public Service now qualify for the housing allowance. The PSA regards this as a major achievement in eradicating blatant discrimination.

### LEAVE BENEFITS

The *Basic Conditions of Employment Act* regulates employees' leave allocation. Whenever an employer violates these rules, the PSA defends members' rights in terms of the law or other contractual arrangements. This *Act* was only promulgated in 1997. Through the years, the PSA had to make use of various mechanisms, especially dialogue and negotiations, to ensure the necessary leave benefits for members.

In 1971, largely thanks to the PSA's efforts, leave benefits enjoyed by temporary employees in the Public Service were extended to part-time personnel. In 1975, improved vacation and sick-leave benefits for permanent, temporary and part-time positions were implemented.

In the early 1970s, the PSA also negotiated a variety of benefits related to leave gratuities for public servants. Gratuities were extended to female employees with at least five years of continued service. At retirement, members were paid gratuities of up to 365 days. In 1974, the five-year continued service requirement was also removed.



One of the PSA's particularly challenging battles was the improvement of vacation savings bonuses. In 1968, this amount was set at R260 and R130 (depending on marital status). The PSA's attempts to increase this amount were initially unsuccessful (owing, in part, to economic difficulties), but the Union persisted. In 1979, it submitted a memorandum and a year later, the then Prime Minister announced a service bonus, equal to one month's salary, to replace vacation savings bonuses. Thanks to the Union's efforts, this bonus was also paid out to public servants' widowers, widows, and divorcees.

## UPROOTED IN LINE OF DUTY

A promotion is normally good news. Promotions, however, sometimes come at a price, and often mean moving to a different location. Moving can be traumatic, having to adapt to a new environment, new community and local infrastructure. It also often means that children need to change schools, adapt to possible changes in the syllabus and find their place in a new subculture. The last thing a family needs to worry about during such a process, is the associated costs. Moving is expensive and the transportation of house contents is only one of many such expenses. The PSA has always been acutely aware of the hidden costs and has been advocating for the State as employer to carry these costs for public servants.

In 1975, a contribution of up to R700 towards transfer and relocation costs was announced. In 1983, largely owing to the Union's continued efforts, this amount more than doubled to R2 000. The PSA also secured reimbursement for depreciation of household content during relocation. The initial amount was set at a maximum of R100. The PSA did not consider this to be sufficient and continued its efforts to secure an increase. It was successful on two occasions: The amount was increased to R200 in 1976 and R400 in 1984. Insurance of items when moved to a location outside the country was proposed by the PSA and accepted in 1983, with a total insured amount set at R30 000.

In 1970, the former Department of Post and Telecommunications announced a charge of R20 for reconnection of telephone lines. Adapting to account for inflation, this figure would amount to R1 500 in 2020. The PSA proposed that the employer should pay this cost in case of transfer. The proposal was accepted and later also included the connection of water and electricity supply.

Mid-term transfers can be extremely disruptive for school-going children. Allowing them to stay at their current schools to finish a term would, however, incur additional costs.















In 1970, the PSA requested that government should cover these expenses. This led to a recommendation by the Commission to Treasury to extend covering cost-of-living expenses from two months to the end of an academic year.

## FUNERAL BENEFITS, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL PRODUCTS

An essential part of financial prosperity is protection against the things we fear the most. The death of a loved one is a traumatic event. The cost of a funeral should not place an extra burden on the bereaved. For this reason, funeral cover has been one of the PSA's priorities.

In 1999, the Union's Board of Directors approved funeral cover for all PSA members. This cover is still provided free of charge.

In the early 1970s, the PSA utilised its negotiating power to secure a group short-term insurance scheme for members, providing increased benefits at favourable premiums. The PSA also identified a need for special insurance for members working in certain high-risk areas. The Union also provides free professional indemnity insurance cover of up to R1 million per member per year for groupings of members in the Health sector.

In addition to these products, the PSA also provides a host of other financial services to members, including personal and study loans, consolidation of debt, as well as legal, emergency rescue and tax services negotiated with reputable business partners. The PSA's loyalty programme, *PSAClub* that was established in 2017, offers a wide variety of benefits for members.

### PSA LEGACY

#### *Working for prosperity*

*The PSA has a holistic approach to the wealth of members. The PSA has never been "just another union". It pursues what is right and fair. It will combat exploitation and the violation of laws, to serve its members' well-being. It shares in the sorrows of the bereaved. It rejoices when successes are achieved. Often the "little" things are, in fact, the things that truly matter.*





*In service of workers*







## *Chapter 5*

# *Protecting quality of life*







*Favete Emeritis*



# Protecting quality of life

The PSA is the only trade union in South Africa that accommodates pensioners as members and actively attends to their rights and their interests.

### SUPPORTING PENSIONERS IN TIME OF NEED

The PSA has a high regard for the rights of pensioners. This commitment resulted in the creation of a branch for pensioners to ensure continued support.

On 25 July 1962, after identifying a need to advance the interests of pensioners and particularly for the adjustment and improvement of their pensions, spouse's pensions, medical aid and fringe benefits, the PSA's Group Branch Associate Members: Public Service Pensioners, as it is known today, was established. The Group Branch has provincial committees in the Western Cape, Southern Cape, Free State and Limpopo.

Driven by the motto *"Favete Emiritus"* ("cherish the interests of the retired"), the Group Branch has made great strides in protecting the rights of its members. In fact, its performance was significant enough to earn the PSA Board of Directors' Award for Outstanding Achievement twice – in both 1999 and 2000.

Membership of the Group Branch is regulated by the *PSA Statute* and is limited to persons who receive a pension from the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF). In other words, any PSA member may, upon retirement, apply to join the Group Branch and enjoy the associated benefits.

The PSA has a member serving on the GEPF's Board of Trustees, enabling it to represent members directly at the Pension Fund. The Group Branch is therefore not only dedicated to protecting the interests of pensioners, but also suitably empowered to do so.

The mandate of the Group Branch is comprehensive. It is tasked with assisting and administering matters related to member enquiries, spouse's pension administration, procedures for the issuing of life certificates, medical matters, contributions for pension rule and law amendments, contributions in relation to litigations conducted in the interest of members, and related matters.

As a structure of a hands-on Union, the Group Branch's activities are, however, not limited to regulatory issues. It also assists pensioners in a much more personal way. "We had a case of an elderly beggar at a crossing one of our members frequented," says Gideon Serfontein, Chairperson of the Group Branch. "Our member started a conversation with the lady and discovered that her husband had been a public service employee and had passed away. This lady was completely unaware of the fact that she was entitled to her husband's pension pay-outs".

*"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."*

– Mother Theresa

The Group Branch assisted her in completing the necessary forms and changed her life. "This is why we love what we do," says Gideon. "When a pensioner's spouse passes away, it can be completely overwhelming". The Group Branch's relationship with its members is of such a nature that it is often the first entity contacted by the bereaved.



## Haven for pensioners

In Limpopo, just outside of Modimolle, with its warm summers and mild winters, lies a 90-hectare piece of bushveld paradise. Kokanje Retirement Resort is known for its location as much as it is for its facilities and sense of community. What is less known, is that this village originated as a project of the PSA.

Kokanje is now a not-for-profit company, owned and managed by its residents. It has 595 living units, which is substantial for any residential estate but significantly so for a retirement village. The sheer size of this project bears testimony to a Union that cares about its members even after their careers are completed. Most of all, it tells a story of a Union that takes care of some of the most vulnerable citizens in South Africa – the elderly.

The Kokanje dream started in 1984 when the PSA's Pensioners' section identified a need for the establishment of a retirement resort. An in-depth feasibility study was conducted and on 8 August 1984, the purchase of the initial 58 hectares of pristine bushveld at R60 000 and development of the retirement resort were approved by the PSA's Board of Directors.

Building commenced in 1986 and continued through an eleven-phase process. The initial 595 units were built with the aim of housing 950 residents.

Some of the facilities include a modern service centre, a fully equipped care facility, a kiosk, post office, hair salon, beauty parlour and sports facilities. Kokanje was officially opened on 21 October 1988 by the then Minister of Government and Housing. The first residents, Annetjie and Willie Moore, moved in almost two years prior, on 1 December 1986.

On 3 October 1996, the Kokanje Board was established and the Resort was registered as an Article 21 (not-for-profit) company.

Kokanje means “land of leisure” and stands as a symbol of a Union's commitment to allowing retired public servants to spend their retirement in dignity and peace, enjoying the fruits of decades of labour.



Kokanje Retirement Resort, Modimolle



They assist with everything: From advice on funeral arrangements and emotional support to applying for continuation of the deceased's pension for the benefit of the spouse. They help retirees to complete pension application forms and personally submit these forms to the relevant offices.

## PROTECTING PENSIONS

2020 was a difficult year for all South Africans. Many families lost loved ones to the COVID-19 pandemic. Job losses soared and the economy suffered severely. It is usually the most vulnerable people who suffer most during economic hardships. Pensioners were especially at risk. Their age increased their risk of complications should they contract the virus, but they were also more sensitive to negative changes in the country's economy. A third factor affecting pay-outs at resignation or other calculations where the actuarial interest of members of the Fund is involved, was a unilateral decision the GEPF board took in 2015. It made changes to the formula used to calculate members' actuarial interest, which is simply a member's accrued benefit payable by the GEPF.

The changes involved two variables in the formula for calculating this benefit. Two variables, referred to as F(Z) and A(X), have a significant impact on the final actuarial interest amount. The law states that these two variables can be changed by the GEPF board "after consultation with the Minister of Finance and the employee organisations". This did not happen. The GEPF board unilaterally changed the variables, which had a direct impact on pension pay-outs, without consulting with any employee organisation.

The importance of consultation cannot be over-emphasised. During consultation, parties must be provided with all relevant information to enable meaningful engagement. Since this change resulted in a reduction of more than a R100 000 for some pensioners, those mostly affected should have been given a voice.

The PSA, with the support of several other stakeholders, took the matter to court. The court ruled in favour of the GEPF board, but the PSA appealed. In the Supreme Court of Appeal, the change of the formula was set aside, the GEPF board was ordered to consult with the PSA and other employee organisations and pay all legal costs. This was a victory for accountability, consultation and, most of all, pensioners.



### Department of Correctional Services

Emotional and administrative support are not the only services the Group Branch provides to its members. Cases won by the Branch and the PSA abound. "Our Regulation-17 case against the Department of Correctional Services was a significant one," remembers Buks Jordaan, Secretary of the Branch. According to Regulation 17, pensioners and their dependents would be allowed to retain their medical aid after retirement, without having to pay for this. The Regulation was changed in June 2006 to exclude spouses if the pensioner remarried after retirement, as well as children born after retirement. The change was not, however, supposed to be applied to pensioners who had retired in 2006 or earlier. "We got calls from pensioners – medical benefits for certain spouses and children were suddenly revoked.

A sudden monthly expense of R8 000 has a significant effect on any person's budget, but for a pensioner who retired ages ago, this is devastating."

*"We got calls from pensioners – medical benefits for certain spouses and children were suddenly revoked. A sudden monthly expense of R8 000 has a significant effect on any person's budget, but for a pensioner who retired ages ago, this is devastating."*

*– Buks Jordaan,  
Branch Secretary*



When consultation with the Department of Correctional Services did not yield results, the PSA took the matter to court, obtaining an urgent court order prohibiting this practice. In 2020 the case was still ongoing, but the PSA will persist in its efforts to protect members.

### *Keeping up with inflation*

Another struggle involved pension increases. Through the years, pension payments did not keep up with inflation. During a first round of negotiations, the PSA secured an increase of 75% of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This annual increase was incorporated in legislation and remains a norm for pension increases.

Negotiations did not stop here, though. After the PSA managed to have a member elected as a trustee on the GEPF's board, it obtained significant bargaining power. After extensive bargaining, a decision was made in 2005 to increase all pensions to catch up with past inflation (at 100% of the inflation rate). To some pensioners who had been underpaid for many years, this increase was substantial. Continuous bargaining efforts also ensure that, despite the legal requirement of 75% of CPI, pensioners still receive an increase of 100% of the CPI rate annually.

### **GEPF REPRESENTATION**

The PSA is also involved in campaigns and cases to protect the rights of pensioners. For example, in 2000 the PSA formed part of a task team appointed by the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council to oversee the restructuring of the GEPF.







*In 2018, the PSA was part of a delegation that met with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance regarding the PIC and the GEPP.*



Over the years, the PSA has made submissions to pension funds for public servants, calling for a range of improvements. These included improvements in pension calculation formulae, regular adjustments and various tax exemptions.

For many years, the PSA has been advocating for a single scheme to address the needs of widows of pensioners, dependents of members who died in service and to ensure that pensioners could maintain their standard of living after retirement. This scheme came to effect in July 1973.

### STEINHOFF SAGA: WHEN PENSIONS ARE AT STAKE

When accounting irregularities at Steinhoff International Holdings emerged at the end of 2017, the PSA was one of the first unions to react. In January 2018, the PSA conducted an inspection at the company's head office in Stellenbosch in terms of section 26 of the *Companies Act, 2008*. This was followed by protest action at the Sun Met horse racing event on 27 January 2018, where horses belonging to the former Steinhoff CEO, Markus Jooste, were due to run. The PSA also participated in a picket outside the Cape Town International Convention Centre in April 2018, where the Steinhoff annual general meeting was being live streamed from the Netherlands.

The protest, in which the Group Branch participated, was aimed at pressurising Steinhoff shareholders to appoint a new board following allegations of accounting irregularities and fraud.

Why?

The GEPIF held 428 million shares in Steinhoff, with a pre-crash market value of R24 billion. Millions of pensioners were affected by the developments.

*The protest, in which the Group Branch participated, was aimed at pressurising Steinhoff shareholders to appoint a new board following allegations of accounting irregularities and fraud.*







The PSA made a presentation on the impact of these irregularities on GEPP members and pensioners to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in August 2018. Although there may be little chance of recovering funds from the company, the PSA believes that there are legal grounds for litigation and summonses to recover losses from the directors through their insurance companies. The PSA is considering being included in the planned class action by Steinhoff plaintiffs.

### WATCHDOG: KEEPING GUARD OVER PENSIONERS' MONEY

In 2019, the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) was under the spotlight because of controversial investment decisions. One of these was a R4.3 billion stake taken in Ayo Technologies in December 2017, even though the company's assets were estimated at R292 million. Furthermore, the PIC's mandate only allows it to invest a small portion of funds based on social responsibility. The PSA expressed concern that several irresponsible or politically motivated investments had been made under this guise.

The PSA has continuously raised its concern on, amongst others, the formation of the PIC Board and the *carte blanche* given to the PIC by the GEPP. In 2019, the PSA also submitted a High Court application in which it argued its significant interest in how GEPP assets were invested. More specifically, the Union complained about the lack of meaningful action by the Finance Ministry, the PIC and the GEPP about concerns that the PSA had raised.

The PSA therefore welcomed the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry into allegations of impropriety regarding the PIC in October 2018.

#### PSA LEGACY

*A lifetime of contributions deserves a lifetime of support*  
Pensioners are important to the PSA. Pensioners spent a lifetime contributing to the economy and society and should enjoy the highest possible quality of life after the end of their careers. The PSA remains vigilant to render support and protection to pensioners.





Saturday Citizen (KZN), 15 December 2018, pg 4

## PSA braces for pensions tiff

**Citizen reporter**

The Public Servants Association (PSA) said yesterday the organisation was “extremely disappointed” with the response it had received from the Government.







**TWO MIDWINTER**  
*Business Day, 11 July 2019, pg 1*

## Ramos stands out as PIC interim board is named

**Deputy Minister**  
The interim board of the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) has been named, with Deputy Minister of Finance, Tito Mboweni, standing out as a key figure.

**Board members**  
The board, which will oversee the PIC's operations, includes several prominent figures from the financial and business sectors.



Beeld, 8 June 2017, pg 4

## STAATSAMPTENARE SE FONDS

# Pensioen: Dawid wil Goliat pak

## Solidariteit, PSA beplan klasaksie

Jeanne-Marie Versluis

Dawid wil Goliat pak in 'n lofprenting oor staatsamptenare se pensioenvoordele.

Die vakbond Solidariteit se geskiedenis om 'n klasaksie namens staatsamptenare in te stel is gister deur die staatsamptenare se pensioendons (GEPF) in die hoogreghof in Pretoria bevestig.



by die hof ingedien en gevra dat die herberekening van pensioensvoordele afgedwing word.

Randings wou gister weet waarom Solidariteit en die PSA die saak "stokagewys" voorgelees van om dit saam te laat aanhoor.

ter van finansies se "seim" daarvoor gevra, terwyl die minister vooraf daaroor geraadpleeg moes wees het. "Hy moes dit oorweeg het, hy spreek 'n sleutelrol."

Ade, Vuyani Ngilwana SC, namens die GEPF, het gesê die "sommatel" van Solidariteit se saak is dat daar nie vooraf konsultasie was nie. Die vakbond is glad nie dat die besluit oordra.



**Business Day, 12 July 2019, pg 2**

## PIC proposal for debt-equity swap at Eskom in spotlight

■ There has been discussion for past two years, but has gained in importance after state of nation address

The Public Investment Corporation (PIC) has proposed a debt-equity swap at Eskom, a move that has gained significant attention in the financial sector.

The proposal involves the PIC providing capital to Eskom in exchange for shares, which would help to reduce Eskom's debt burden and improve its financial stability.

Mail & Guardian Business, 8 February 2019, pg 28

## Workers want say in PIC board

**Unions want greater transparency after revelations and allegations about impropriety**

**South African**  
The Public Investment Corporation (PIC) is facing criticism from unions for its handling of the debt-equity swap at Eskom.

Unions are demanding greater transparency and accountability from the PIC, particularly regarding the financial details of the swap and the potential conflicts of interest involved.







*In service of workers*







## *Chapter 6*

# *Breaking barriers*







*Ready to defend*



# Breaking barriers

Since the PSA's formation in 1920, women have contributed significantly to the Union's stature and growth.

### OPPOSING GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION

A woman's marital status does not and should not have an influence on her eligibility for full-time employment. This is a common understanding in the South African labour market today and the contrary is unthinkable. Yet, this level of equality has not always been the *status quo*. Section 14(7) of the *Public Service Act of 1957* made it possible to refuse married female public servants full-time employment. This, of course, deprived them of many benefits enjoyed by their male (married or single) counterparts.

The PSA's commitment to equal treatment of all workers changed this. The Union launched a campaign to ensure full-time employment for any employee, regardless of gender and marital status. Not only was this form of discrimination ended in 1971, but the entire *Public Service Act of 1957*, including section 14(7), was repealed in 1976.

*"It was a given, the way things were done,"* remembers Rita Bessinger (née Coetzee), a PSA member since 1959. *"When I got married in 1965, I was forced to resign. My pension was paid out and I was appointed as a temporary employee."* This reappointment was not automatic, though. Rita was fortunate to have a manager who supported her appointment, but for a manager with a personal grudge or even a trivial disagreement, marriage provided the perfect opportunity to get rid of a female staff member.

But, as absurd as this one-sided change in employment conditions sounds, it was not the worst. *"After working a while as a temporary staff member, I became pregnant. I had to resign again. This time, for good."* And so Rita Bessinger was, in effect, fired for wanting to be a mother.

Although the months without a salary and the temporary employment provided challenges of their own, possibly the most significant impact of this interrupted service was the loss of service years. The number of years of full-time service is an important factor in the calculation of pensions.

When Rita applied for a position in the Public Service again, things were different. Thanks to continued efforts by the PSA, this form of discrimination was no longer allowed. She was appointed as a full-time employee, regardless of her marital status. She continued to work for government until her retirement in 1995. Today, as part of the PSA's Group Branch Associate Members: Public Service Pensioners, Rita is still a member of the PSA and continues to make the lives of other pensioners – people like herself – better.

### SHATTERING THE GLASS CEILING

Any form of gender-based discrimination is illegal. This does not, however, mean that such abuse does not occur. It may not be in the form of legislation or company policy, but for many women, the glass ceiling is a reality. *"I come across various personalities,"* says Genevieve Simelane, PSA Chairperson in the Office of the Premier in Gauteng. *"Learning to manage these personalities is my biggest challenge. For example, sometimes my skills set gets undermined, mainly because I am a woman and because of other people's perceptions of how capable a woman in my line of work should be."*





The PSA is not afraid of facing cases of gender-based discrimination head-on, but changing perceptions requires a more holistic approach. Genevieve saw an opportunity to change perceptions in her immediate environment and decided to do something about it. She provides support to female colleagues during pregnancy and advises on care for new-borns. She is also advocating for more awareness of women's health. *"I would like to see sanitary towel dispensaries as much as I see other dispensers in female toilets and first-aid kits. This is a major challenge that women face, which is often overlooked in a male-dominated environment"*.

## EMPOWERING WOMEN

The PSA's track record in opposing discriminatory laws and practices is impressive, yet its role in empowering women extends much further. When the Motsepe Foundation's Women's Unit launched *The Precious Little Black Book: A resource guide for women across South Africa*, the PSA sponsored copies to be distributed to its female members. This easy-to-read resource is an all-in-one guide for women, ensuring that they are informed, assisted and, most of all, empowered. The book covers health and family matters, advice on education, women in the workplace, finance and banking. It also dedicates a section to explaining to readers what their rights, as women, entail.

The PSA boasts a strong female membership and annually hosts a National Women's Day event in honour and support of these members.

Women's Day 2019, for example, saw the PSA driving the message of creating women activists to oppose the scourge of gender-based violence and injustices in their communities. The event was hosted at the Walter Sisulu University in Mthatha in the Eastern Cape in August 2019, where 500 women – all PSA members – joined PSA leaders and several business partners to celebrate the strength of women.

The guest speaker, activist Alex Hotz, delivered a riveting message, calling on women to do more in their communities to educate and empower victims and turn them into survivors. The guests were dressed in traditional regalia bringing colour, warmth and soul to the event. The proceeds from ticket sales were used to purchase a freezer that was donated to a local orphanage in need. The guests were treated by the PSA with beautiful gifts and lunch as tokens of the Union of Choice's appreciation of its female members.

















During the Union's centenary in 2020, the PSA – in recognition of the crucial role of females in society – endeavoured to support women who are making a difference in their communities. The PSA, for example, supported Mrs Globe 2020, Lucia Ochan Simelane, Saartjie Baardman Centre for Abused Women and Children in the Western Cape, an emerging women farm business in KwaZulu-Natal, and Women-2-Women in the Northern Cape. Ms Teen 2020 finalist, Naledi Seloake, was supported to enable her to assist Give Them Hope Centre in Nelmapius in Gauteng. The PSA also supported Woman Against Woman and Child Abuse (WAWA) in Toekomsrus in Gauteng with food parcels and COVID-19 kits, bringing the message that the Union aims to empower women, supports them and understands the challenges they continue to face, including gender-based violence.

### PSA SUPPORTS #SPARWOMENSMONTH CAMPAIGN

The PSA, as part of the Union's Women's Month interventions and centenary commemorations, supported the #SPARWomensMonth campaign by procuring 2 020 awareness bracelets. SPAR, a national supermarket chain, in August 2020 pledged action against gender-based violence by offering tangible support to victims on a sustainable basis by selling bracelets at R5 in aid of the following non-profit organisations: Rape Crisis Centre in Port Elizabeth, Yellow for Survivors, the Greater Rape Intervention Programme (GRIP), Open Door Crisis Care Centre, Reach for Recovery Breast Cancer Support, and Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children. SPAR explained the project as follows: "We plan to help END gender-based violence by using our vast footprint and media reach to offer victims access to life-changing help. We have partnered with LifeLine, a highly established and resourceful trauma counselling call-centre, to provide immediate and professional support. It can happen to anyone – women, men or children and is never acceptable. If you are a victim or if you see someone being abused, please reach out."

*"We plan to help  
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being abused,  
please reach out."*

– #SPARWomensMonth



READY TO DEFEND

A century is a long time. In South Africa, the last 100 years included a time where separation, based on various reasons and categories, was enforced. It included a time when people did not enjoy the same rights and were victims of various levels of discrimination. It did, however, also include a time when these barriers were broken down – when people overcame prejudice and fear and opened themselves to tolerance and inclusivity.

PSA LEGACY

*The foundations of South Africa are based on inclusivity. When these principles are violated, the PSA is ready to assist those who are exploited.*









## The ladies from Kanyamazane

In the sweltering heat of Kanyamazane in the Mpumalanga Lowveld, in a building constructed of brick and corrugated iron, Lindokuhle Nhlabathi is creating graduation gowns for a local crèche. Completing Grade R is an important milestone in a child's life and is celebrated with a graduation ceremony. The gowns are an indispensable part of the event.

Lindokuhle is doing what she loves most. She designs and manufactures clothes for a thriving community. This is her community – she was born and raised in Kanyamazane, just outside Nelspruit. She loves her community as much as she loves fashion design. She hopes to inspire the youth with her story. *"I want to inspire young people in my community,"* she says. *"I want to bring fashion to Kanyamazane".*

Ten years earlier, Thandi Mokwena called her friends, a group of seamstresses working from home, together. They had needles, some fabric, and entrepreneurial spirits. Each worked from home and tried to fulfil the growing clothing needs of their community. Thandi believed that they would be much stronger together as a cooperative – *Tetta Women's Cooperative* was born.

The cooperative was, however, faced with an immediate challenge for resources. The women had sewing skills but did not have the necessary equipment to fulfil the increasing orders. Thandi then contacted the PSA Provincial Office in Mpumalanga, where another woman, PSA Provincial Manager, Phumzile Zulu, took her call to heart.

Empowering women is one of the PSA's highest priorities and the Union seized this opportunity. Inspired by Thandi's entrepreneurial spirit, the PSA provided *Tetta* with five sewing machines, an overlocker and an embroidery machine. The PSA also sent the members of the cooperative for skills training to ensure maximum benefit. In addition, the Union sponsored R10 000 worth of fabric.

The ladies were set. As their new-found knowledge and equipment drastically increased their productivity, they were able to accept orders for school uniforms, formal wear, casual clothes, corporate gifts and, of course, graduation gowns.

But that was not the PSA's only involvement. Believing in the women it had empowered, the Union added *Tetta* to its supplier list. Orders for aprons, bags and other branded items are placed with *Tetta* and Thandi takes pride in fulfilling these orders. The PSA's involvement in the cooperative goes beyond charity. It is business and real empowerment. *"We are not just seamstresses,"* says Thandi, *"We are business women"*.

*Tetta* is also the platform from which Lindokuhle designs and manufactures her products. When she arrived in Kanyamazane, they allowed her to use the facilities and equipment without charge, provided that she shared her turnover with the cooperative. This provided her with a risk-free opportunity to kick-start her business, perpetuating the empowerment started by Thandi, the PSA, and the women of *Tetta*.

*"I want to inspire young people in my community. I want to bring fashion to Kanyamazane."*

– *Lindokuhle Nhlabathi*

Asked whether she would ever consider returning to Gauteng, Lindokuhle doesn't hesitate. *"This is home,"* she says. *"I am staying"*.

And, proudly sporting their brand-new graduation gowns, the Grade R class of 2020 will be grateful for that.





*In service of workers*







## *Chapter 7*

# *In service of workers*







*Showing stature*



# In service of workers

The PSA ensures that the rights of its members are respected through a variety of mechanisms. These mostly include dialogue and negotiations. Many labour-related issues are resolved through respectful, professional discussions. There are times, however, when these options are exhausted. The PSA is then required to show its stature and defend its members' rights. Some of these battles are won quickly, others last decades. But the Union will persist until justice prevails.

### POWERFUL UNION

Working for government means serving the people of the country and comes with responsibilities. Stories about nurses working extended hours to save lives, teachers walking the extra mile for learners and police officers risking their lives for public safety, abound.

Government is a complex organisation, though, and not all its officials follow the rules. Over the last 100 years, PSA members were often the targets of unfair dismissals, abuse of power, deliberate reduced payments, changes in working conditions without consultation, sexual and other harassment and many other violations of labour laws and practices. Without proper support, these public servants would have been left vulnerable.

The PSA has taken the responsibility to address such cases. While standing up to powerful figures might be intimidating to an individual public servant, it is all in a day's work for the PSA. The Union utilises a variety of mechanisms to solve labour related problems affecting its members, including consultation and bargaining, but it will not hesitate to take a matter to the highest court if justified.

### PERSEVERING

Court cases are notorious for their duration. When court rulings are appealed, cases can drag on for years and even decades.

It takes a special kind of determination to persevere, to continue allocating resources and to continue believing in what is right. This is what the PSA has been doing over the past century. When others gave up, the Union continued to pursue justice.

In one example, a case spanned over two decades. The member, employed at the Department of Justice, approached the PSA for assistance in 1995. The case was finalised in 2015, 20 years later, and the member was awarded R1.3 million.

In 2010, the PSA litigated on behalf of a member at the Department of Home Affairs in the Northern Cape. The court overruled previous rulings by the chairperson as well as that of the Commissioner and the member was reinstated in 2018. Eight years in search of justice was not easy for the member, but thanks to the PSA's persistence, justice prevailed.

In another of many cases, the PSA assisted a member at the Department of Social Development. The matter related to a promotion. During the initial arbitration the case was dismissed, but the PSA took the matter to court. After a saga of eight years, the case was reverted to arbitration and, with the PSA's assistance, the member won and was awarded R795 000.



## Funmi's story



Funmi Ubogu

Health workers are an indispensable facet of hospitals. They work long hours to assist patients. One such dedicated health worker is Funmi Ubogu. Funmi received a promotion to the position of CEO of a district hospital of the Gauteng Department of Health, which she accepted. After working for four years at the new hospital, Funmi's husband became ill. When she was offered an opportunity to be transferred to a hospital closer to home, she accepted. The position was for a "clinical manager: medical", without a change to her salary.

Five years later, Funmi qualified for a grade progression. When she applied for this progression, management determined that the position she had been transferred to, was "incorrect". However, Funmi's responsibilities did not change.

Funmi was completely unaware of what was happening. She only discovered the discrepancy when the employer decided to demote her to the "correct" position and deducted more than R30 000 from her salary. She had no idea what the deduction was for. When she realised that she had been demoted without warning and would be paying back several years' worth of what the employer regarded as "incorrect payments", Funmi contacted the PSA.

*"I had to re-mortgage my house. I had to refinance my car. This was the effect of what the Department did," says Funmi. "It took an interdict to stop the Department's action".*

An employer placed an employee in a position, expected her to do the work associated with the position, then demoted her because of its own administrative error, reduced her salary to the demoted position, never informed her of this decision, but still expected her to continue doing the same work.

The case finally ended in the Constitutional Court as one of most important cases the PSA has ever done". Sections 34 and 38 of the *Public Service Act* made provision for the employer to deduct money from an employee's salary, without consulting with the employee or obtaining written permission, should it be of the opinion that such money was due to it. The PSA believed that this was unconstitutional and took the matter to the Constitutional Court. The Court ruled in favour of the PSA and Funmi, labelling the practice as self-enrichment and prohibiting such deductions without a court order or the explicit permission of the employee.

During the entire litigation process, Funmi continued to do the same work. The PSA is still assisting her in fighting the one-sided demotion and getting Funmi the salary that matches the nature of her work. And Funmi remains positive. "My full name is Olufunmilayo. It means *God has given me joy*". This positivity, combined with the assistance of a brave and persistent Union, has carried her through a difficult time.



Funmi and her PSA support team



## DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

The 1996 *Constitution of South Africa* changed the labour landscape. For the first time, organised labour could embark on industrial action. When negotiations relating to salary disputes reached a deadlock, such action became inevitable. On 3 August 1999, the PSA embarked on its first strike. *“That was probably one of the most significant events in the PSA’s history,”* says Karen Vermaak, a Human Resources manager at the PSA. *“It was the first time the PSA could publicly show its teeth”.*

This was, however, not the last time. Only a few weeks later, on 24 August 1999, more than 300 000 public servants took to the streets, resulting in one of the biggest strikes in the history of the country. In Pretoria alone, 40 000 public servants participated.

The effects were significant. Despite initial employer opposition (and at times intimidation), the unity displayed by PSA members and also between unions, resulted in several concessions being made by the employer.

More strikes followed in 2004 and 2007 when Public Service salary negotiations deadlocked. Along with other unions, the PSA took to the streets. More significantly, the PSA went on a solo strike in 2010, establishing it as a force to be reckoned with.

In February 2017, unions representing members at the National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS) tabled their wage demands. Despite continued negotiations, the employer “pleaded poverty” and rejected all demands with a financial implication, offering a 0% increase. The negotiation process was already complicated by the NHLS’s failure to fully implement certain clauses of the 2016/17-wage agreement.

Thousands of NHLS employees went on strike in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal for six days. The strike crippled NHLS services, severely impacting service delivery. The PSA represents 45% of the NHLS workforce. Given the importance of these public servants in the health industry, the Union believes that they should be adequately appreciated and remunerated.

A favourable agreement was reached and the strike ended. The agreement provided for a 7.3%-salary increase, increases in medical-aid subsidies, paternity leave and various other provisions.













In 2019, the PSA successfully defended the right to strike for grant administrators and senior grant administrators at the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) Essential Services Committee. In another case, the PSA's KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Office organised a strike of SASSA employees. This was a contributing factor to the PSA becoming the dominant Union in SASSA in the province.

Embarking on a strike is a powerful weapon. For the PSA this mechanism, however, represents a last resort – when all other attempts at reaching an agreement have failed. Most of the PSA's work starts with conversations, attempting to resolve issues at the earliest possible stage. At times legal action is necessary. But when no other option is available, the Union will not hesitate to embark on legal strike action to raise awareness of the pleas of its members and exert pressure on the employer.

## CHANGING LAWS AND STRUCTURES

The PSA follows a proactive approach towards labour matters. It has representation on the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), is part of trade-union affiliations and assists with inquiries, investigations and policy making.

Prior to the promulgation of labour legislation specifically for the Public Service in South Africa, “staff associations” such as the PSA could only advise members on rights and procedures. The Union, however, became a key player in the formalisation of labour relations for public servants. In 1993, the *Public Service Labour Relations Act* was promulgated. This changed the labour landscape for public servants. The law now provided for collective bargaining, representation during disciplinary hearings and assistance in opposing unfair labour practices affecting public servants.

The PSA was, for example, an important role player and founding member in the drafting of the statute of Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council. In this Council, terms and conditions of employment for public servants are negotiated directly with the state as employer.

The Union also played a crucial part in the establishment of the GEPF Fund in 1996, providing public servants with control over their pensions. In 2007, the PSA was a founding member of the Independent Labour Caucus, which collectively represented at least 40% of unionised public servants.

## NOTABLE CASES

### Whistleblower

In 2004, matriculants in Mpumalanga saw their National Examination results being withheld after widespread cheating was discovered. This is a standard, but significant, consequence of exam irregularities. Any official interfering with the exam process could be criminally prosecuted. When a teacher in Mpumalanga discovered some discrepancies in the matric exams, she was faced with a difficult choice: Speak up and suffer the consequences or stay silent and face her own conscience. She chose to speak up and became a whistleblower. The resulting investigations and media coverage, however, led to her employer, the Department of Education, initiating a probe into her conduct. The PSA stepped in and, during a late-night settlement, ensured that no disciplinary steps were taken against the teacher.

### Pro-life doctor

An important human right of South African citizens is the right to freedom of speech. When we do not agree, the Constitution and various laws make it possible for us to engage in debate and demonstrations to air our views. This may involve sensitive topics, such as the termination of pregnancies.

In 2006, a doctor at a Free State government hospital was involved in protest action and campaigns against the Free State Department of Health's decision to provide for termination of pregnancies at government hospitals. Doctors who did not want to perform these procedures were not given a choice, something the member was opposed to. In 2009, he was dismissed. His participation in the 2006 protests, which were done outside working hours, was provided as a reason. The PSA supported the doctor during arbitration and his dismissal was found to be substantially unfair. His involvement in protest actions was not a violation of any law – a fact that was made clear during arbitration. Whether or not his employer agreed with his views, the doctor had a right to freedom of speech.

### State prosecutor

A senior prosecutor was employed at the Randburg Magistrate's Court since 1988. When she was suspended in 1998 for alleged fraud, she denied the allegations. The PSA became involved and assisted the member for more than a decade. Nine years after being suspended, the prosecutor received a letter of dismissal.











No warning or disciplinary hearing preceded the dismissal. By nature, the National Prosecuting Authority's (NPA) core purpose is to uphold the law.

Not surprisingly, an arbitrator ordered the member's immediate reinstatement. The NPA, however, decided to oppose the ruling by taking the matter on review. On 9 July 2010, the Labour Court upheld the arbitrator's decision and ordered the prosecutor's reinstatement. After twelve years, justice prevailed.

### Senior Family Advocates

Senior Family Advocates at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development play a crucial role in the protection of children in the country. They intervene in family disputes, addressing conflicts and issues faced by a family and investigating reasons and repercussions. To retain these highly skilled professionals, the government and unions representing public servants signed an occupational-specific dispensation collective agreement. According to this agreement, Senior Family Advocates would be translated to job level LP9. Instead, the Department translated the members to LP8, which was a contravention of the agreement.

The PSA assisted its members to initiate a grievance procedure and referred the matter to the General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council. The dispute was arbitrated and the PSA successfully obtained an award in favour of nine Senior Family Advocates. The Department lodged a review application to the Labour Court, but the Labour Court dismissed the application. The PSA members had to be translated to LP9 retrospectively.



Johan Crouse

### Registrar of Labour

Johan Crouse had been working at the Department of Labour's Registrar's Office for more than 30 years. Instead of being rewarded for his loyalty, however, he was removed from his position as Registrar of Labour by the former Minister of Labour. The Minister relieved him of his responsibilities as Registrar in July 2015. This was owing to Mr Crouse's intention to place the Chemical Energy Paper Printing Wood and Allied Workers Union under administration in terms of the provisions of section 103(1)(c) of the Labour Relations Act, 1995.

The PSA stepped in for its member and the matter was heard on 24 August 2015 at Labour Court. Judgement was delivered on 5 October 2015. In summary the judge found the following:

- i) The impugned decision constitutes administrative action and that a PAJA review is thus available to Mr Crouse; alternatively, the impugned decision constitutes the exercise of a public power and is subject to legality review;
- ii) In arriving at the impugned decision, the Minister ignored materially relevant facts, namely the ministerial submission of 15/ 16 July 2015;
- iii) The consequence of this is that the impugned decision was unreasonable, alternatively irrational; and procedurally unfair; and
- iv) The impugned decision thus falls to be set aside on review, and Mr Crouse reinstated into the position of the Registrar of Labour Relations."

The judgement was in favour of the PSA and the Court ordered Mr Crouse's immediate reinstatement to his position as the Registrar of Labour Relations, with costs. The PSA regarded this as victory not just for the Union and its member but also for the independence of the office of the Registrar.

*"Fortunately, I had the Union to turn to. I wish to publicly state my appreciation for the support the Union gave me. I will always recommend the PSA as a Union of Choice, based on service delivery to its members,"* says Mr Crouse.

Learning what his loyalty meant to his employer might have been a disillusionment, but his loyalty to a Union that cares had been well-placed.

### PSA LEGACY

#### Strong Union

*The PSA is determined. It does not flinch in the sight of adversity. It has been in service of workers for 100 years and will continue to do so. Even a summary of a century's labour actions would fill several books. For every dispute resolved, every job protected, every case won and every battle fought, there is a public servant whose life was changed.*





**BUSINESS DAY**

Business Day, 7 November 2018

## Public servants must benefit from medical schemes merging, PSA says

Gems principal officer Guni Goolab has expressed caution about the state's plans to merge Gems with other medical schemes for public servants

07 NOVEMBER 2018 - 16:04 TAMAR KAHN



Diamond Fields Advertiser, 1 July 2016, pg 8

## Union to fight suspensions

SANDI KYON HOD  
STAFF REPORTER

PORR officials employed at the Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison have been suspended on charges of leaking information, colluding with outside forces and bringing the department into disrepute.

According to their union representative from the Public Servants Association (PSA), the officials, who were suspended on June 17, were never given any clarification regarding the charges.

Acting PSA provincial manager,

the department was using disciplinary processes to victimise individuals.

"The officials concerned were initially removed from their posts, upon instruction from the acting HOD's office while their 'transfers' were never explained. This was followed by a letter which was clearly to cover up the decision they already made to suspend the concerned employees."

"The PSA is concerned with the continuous atrocities taking place against officials in the department."

He added that the union had

MEC, but had not received any response.

"The precautionary suspension, as part of the disciplinary process, makes it difficult for the members to register grievances."

"The hearing suspensions put members under a lot of stress as it is unclear what the future holds. The members concerned are parents and have financial obligations, so the PSA views this as a serious infringement of their dignity."

Legitimate added.

He stated that it considered the suspensions to be an unfair labour practice. "The PSA" will explore

members because we believe that the procedure followed to suspend the employees was unfair."

Spokesperson for the Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison, Keitumotse Motlao, indicated that the department was unable to comment on specific internal employee-employee matters.

"The PSA has the right to represent its members during processes in the department and to liaise with any stakeholder outside or inside the department."

"There are no atrocities taking place in the department while it cannot allow any form of new."







Tonga, Verulam & Phoenix Sun, 25 March 2015, pg 20

## Paramedics demand answers

Hundreds of EMBS paramedics have downed their tools and carried placards to demonstrate their concerns and grievances that they have faced over three decades outside the Westworth EMBS building, recently.



Hundreds of paramedics protest outside the Westworth EMBS building.

been grow frustrated over time and their anger mounted against their employers. It is alleged that the money owed to the paramedics is a whopping R14 million. In an email received

from the Labour Relations Officer at PI stated that according to the acting manager of the Department of Health Mngeni, the employees who qualify for grade progression in terms of the OGE have been identified, verification and costing, etc had been done. It was further stated that the financial constraints, implementation has been delayed and payments will be made in the new financial year. It was confirmed that the cost implications are around R14 million. Another paramedic who is 65 years old and suffers with ill health said that he was expected to continue with normal operations despite his poor health and through many years of service he has never seen salary without any increase.



The Star, 30 November 2020, pg 13

## Whistle-blowers must be protected

THE PUBLIC Servants Association is extremely concerned that whistle-blowers are not receiving the required protection, as contemplated in the Protected Disclosure Act.

The act is aimed at ensuring that employees who expose wrongdoing are not subjected to victimisation or discrimination by their employers.

Recent reports have, however, shown that this is often not the case.



The New Age, 22 January 2015, pg 2

## State, public servants talk again

LEWIS MCHESHE

THE government will go back to the negotiating table today in an effort to find a solution to the wage demands tabled by public servants in September last year.

The Public Servants Association (PSA) deputy general secretary Mthembu de Chery said they were demanding a 10% wage increase while the state has proposed a three-year 5.5% agreement and has offered to increase salaries only with the projected consumer price index (CPI) for the period.

"We can't accept an increase linked to the CPI because that would mean that for the next three years there would be no real growth in our public servants' salaries," De Chery said.

The PSA's other demands include the regularisation of the medical subsidy for open schemes, an improved maternity scheme, the collapsing of salary



HOT TOPIC: The PSA is arguing for a 10% wage increase for public servants, instead of one linked to inflation rates. (SIPA)

regularity and maternity leave. The fact that the wage lock-out included in the Public Service Coordinating

Administration's lack of seriousness. "This would have allowed the state as employer to align its budgeting process with the outcomes of the negotiations and avoid delays in the implementation of the agreement," De Chery said.

"The government needs to be serious because we don't want to go to the streets. In fact we are not even close to downing tools just yet."

The PSA, representing more than 200,000 public servants, said it was hoping for "real progress" in today's negotiations at the PSOC in Centurion, Pretoria.

"We want the parties to meet closer to one another in trying to find a solution to the impasse," De Chery said.

In a text message, PSA spokesperson Brent Shosha said "negotiations are progressing smoothly. As we respect the negotiations, we will not discuss the government's offer in the media."









# Hours: PSA wins case against Home Affairs

THE PUBLIC Servants Association has won a Labour Court case against the Department of Home Affairs in a dispute over a proposed amendment to working hours.

The judgment was delivered by the court this week. "The judge agreed with the PSA that members can strike if parties are not able to reach consensus on working hours to make Saturdays off."

The dispute arose after the department failed to reach an agreement with unions on a proposal to change their work hours to make Saturdays off.



# Home affairs staff reject Saturday shift

**CONDITIONS** | Despite a bargaining council ruling that the Department of Home Affairs had the right to regulate the working hours of its staff, the Public Servants Association is taking legal advice on the decision. This means there is potential for industrial action.

Yesterday, home affairs welcomed the ruling by the General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council. It has begun implementing the new working hours, which would not change the 40-hour week but would require staff to work two Saturday mornings a month. The new hours were designed to improve public access to home affairs offices and to improve service delivery. Public Servants Association acting assistant GM Leon Gilbert said it was "meeting with our lawyers to discuss the matter."



# Mkhwebane accused of purging whistle-blowers

JUNIOR KHUKALO

City Press (Western Cape), 16 August 2020, pg 4

The Public Servants Association (PSA), the majority union in the office of the Public Protector, has accused the office of "purging their senior staff members, who have been key in exposing maladministration."

According to the PSA, the office of the Public Protector is adopting it is "integrated disciplinary proceedings in an attempt to silence it."

Acting PSA general manager Andrew Makhosini says the trade union is "perturbed by the apparent purging of the union's shop stewards in the office of the Public Protector," after one such shop steward, Tlisoeng Khakama, was charged with violating the public



information of the then chief executive officer (CEO) Vuyo Mkhwebane, which had previously been sent to him by email, and disclosed it to the public."

Makhosini has also since been fired from the Public Protector's office.

Makhosini says that, last year, the PSA exposed irregularities that had led to Mkhwebane's departure from the office of the Public Protector in December.

City Press statements that the irregularities related to the trade union information, which allegedly showed, which revealed that Mkhwebane had received financial advances for trips.

Mkhwebane had been appointed by Public Protector Busiso Mkhwebane and resigned abruptly in January, citing the desire to "pursue other opportunities" as his reason for leaving.

Mkhwebane mentions co-ordinating

during his disciplinary process. Mkhwebane's office has yet to announce whether he will be fired.

"Mkhwebane's resignation, says Senhale, declined to comment on the matter.

Busiso Khakama, the PSA has pointed to the dismissal of Mkhwebane last year and the ongoing disciplinary process of several other public servants, as being indicative of an onslaught targeting its members.







*In service of workers*







## *Chapter 8*

# *Union with a soul*







*Inspired to give*



# Union with a soul

South Africa is a country that faces many challenges, making it difficult to select the most deserving projects for assistance. For this reason, the PSA has laid out criteria for prioritising its social responsibility projects: Projects that are creative, sustainable, self-empowering and hands-on with clear, long-term benefits. The Union also prioritises projects aimed at targeting skills development, contributing to income generation and improving the standard of living of beneficiaries and their communities.

### UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL NEEDS

The PSA's social responsibility initiatives are almost as old as the Union itself. The Benevolent Fund, created in 1925, came under the control of the PSA in 1958 and provided numerous members and their families with financial and material assistance. The Fund was dissolved in 1996 as the PSA started to follow a more holistic approach to such interventions.

In 1957, the PSA created a bursary and study loan scheme to enable children of members to study at any South African university. It also included the Dirk Steyn Study Bursary for post-graduate studies. Dirk Steyn was a former chairperson of the Public Service Commission. Education has always been and continues to be an important aspect of the Union's approach to corporate social investment.

In 2006, the PSA adopted a more strategic approach in this regard and a designated section was established at the PSA head office. This section became responsible for coordinating the national social responsibility strategy with due consideration of the important contributions made by the Provincial Offices and other stakeholders.

The PSA serves members from all walks of life, from various geographical locations all over South Africa and from vastly diverse communities.

The needs for social assistance are as diverse as the communities and locations, making it a challenge to select projects for maximum social impact.

For this reason, the PSA does not randomly allocate funds and other assistance. Instead, it follows a structured, strategic approach to ensure that the maximum number of individuals are assisted in an impactful and sustainable way.

To ensure this, the Union adopted objectives to develop meaningful and sustainable corporate social responsibility initiatives and directs its projects to create awareness of the PSA's understanding of social needs, which also impact on members in their work environment. Member structures are furthermore encouraged to identify needs in their communities and to participate in projects.

### CHILDREN: SHAPING FUTURES

In December 2007, children at Olievenhoutbosch in Gauteng were looking forward to a special Christmas. Through various donations, the *Tshwane Child Welfare* organisation managed to obtain gifts for children of the community. This was bound to be a joyful festive season to children who otherwise had very little. Unfortunately, not everyone shared the dedication of the staff at this organisation.



Shortly before the gifts were to be distributed, the parcels were stolen by burglars. The staff members were devastated. The incident drew the PSA's attention. The Union donated R10 000 to replace the stolen gifts and made Christmas merry again.

This is only one example of numerous PSA-supported projects assisting children. The Union in 2007 also launched a project where nutritional porridge sachets were distributed to children and adults in areas where severe food shortages were identified. The project affected, and possibly saved, the lives of thousands of people in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

The PSA Care Bear project was launched to address the emotional needs of traumatised children. A thousand special teddy bears were distributed to children affected by illness, accidents and crime.

Co-sponsored by business partner AIG, these fluffy encouragements were distributed to hospitals all over the country. As part of the *Glenrand MIB Police Station Renovation* project, some of these bears were also distributed to Naledi Police Station's trauma centre in Soweto.

*Early childhood is possibly the most important period of a child's life.*

Early childhood is possibly the most important period of a child's life. For this reason the Early Childhood Development (ECD) initiative was launched by the Department of Social Development in 2013. EDC centres provide meals and early childhood education to children in a safe environment. The public, business community and other organisations were urged to assist these centres. The PSA rose to the occasion.

Since 2013, it has supported numerous ECD centres in various ways. One example is the *Lindokuhle Centre* near Heidelberg. This ECD centre supports 56 children between the ages of two and six years. The PSA provided a permanent classroom structure, training to create and maintain a food garden to ensure a sustainable supply of nutritious food, as well as trees and maintenance tools. These trees now provide the children with shade and fruit. This project was undertaken in partnership with *Food and Trees for Africa*. The PSA also provided a jungle gym to assist with the children's physical development.

The PSA's involvement in projects benefitting children is substantial. Examples include:

- Donations made to the *Nelson Mandela Children's Fund*.
- Support to a cooperative that manufactured 90 steel baby cots, which were donated to hospitals in Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape and Gauteng.
- Blankets donated and distributed to orphans and at-risk adults.
- Two incubators, donated to the former Gordon Hospital in Upington and Mahadi Hospital in Port Elizabeth, saving the lives of numerous babies. This was done in cooperation with the *New Born Trust*.
- Easter eggs were provided to children in communities where chocolate is a luxury, to celebrate the magic of an Easter egg hunt.
- Numerous Christmas gifts to children in many communities to celebrate a season of sharing.









## EDUCATION: SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

Former President Nelson Mandela famously mentioned the power of education as a means to change the world. Obtaining an education is possibly the most effective and sustainable way of changing one's destiny. The PSA therefore places a high premium on projects supporting education. Bursary schemes, such as the *Stiglingh Memorial Bursary*, assist with removing the financial barrier to higher education for many deserving students. Often, needs are much more elementary. Many schools in South Africa still lack basic classroom furniture and stationery. The PSA launched initiatives to provide materials that support education. This includes 3 000 lap desks donated to 20 schools, as well as thousands of school bags donated to learners across the country. It also provided security and classroom structures to enable a safer learning environment. The Union further provides thousands of school jerseys to learners on an annual basis.

Effective learning cannot take place if children's basic needs are not met. The grim reality is that many students do not receive sufficient nutrition and many are suffering from hunger. The PSA established food gardens across the country and also pledged support to the *No Hungry Student* initiative at the University of the Free State, founded by Prof Jonathan Jansen in 2011.

In 2020, the PSA Provincial Office in Mthatha used the proceeds from ticket sales for a National Women's Day event to purchase a freezer for Mzomtsha Children's Home. This home provides shelter to 80 abandoned children. Also, in the Eastern Cape, the Provincial Office in Port Elizabeth provided bedding, schoolbags, giftbags and a fridge to Sinethemba Children's Home. The home houses 30 children.

In a major project, the PSA in 2020 launched the School Safety Awareness project, which is aimed at reducing violence, bullying, harassment and substance abuse in schools. It also creates awareness of human trafficking, including detection and precautionary measures. These interventions, in cooperation with the South African Police Service, the Department of Basic Education and *Old Mutual*, seek to create an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

Thousands of children still walk long distances to school every day. This loss of time could have been better spent on learning, extra-curricular activities or other development. In 2020, the PSA Provincial Office in Pietermaritzburg provided 18 bicycles to assist such learners at various schools in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

Other initiatives funded or supported by the PSA include:

- A classroom structure at Itsoneng Clinic, based at the University of Pretoria's Mamelodi campus. The clinic serves children who are bearing the brunt of economic and social hardships.
- Back-to-school hampers, including stationery and school uniforms, were distributed to schools. This project was a partnership between the PSA and *Ackermans*.
- A library for the community and school was donated to Moedwil Combined School on a farm in Swartruggens, near Rustenburg in North West.
- Thousands of money boxes were distributed to learners in a drive to encourage saving from a young age, in partnership with *Old Mutual*.

## GROWING ENTREPRENEURS

The PSA promotes entrepreneurship by providing support to numerous business ventures, especially those with the potential of changing communities. Several clothing cooperatives are thriving because of the initial investment of funds and training sponsored by the PSA. These centres now provide affordable clothing to communities and create jobs, thus stimulating economic growth. Some of these sewing centres have since been contracted to provide the PSA with branded merchandise, indicative of the trust the Union places in the ventures it supports.

*The PSA promotes entrepreneurship by providing support to numerous business ventures, especially those with the potential of changing communities.*

In 2006, Letta Maganyane identified a need in her community amongst young, unemployed talented women. To develop this potential, Letta founded *Jelentref Trading (JT)* in 2006. *JT* is registered as a textile art enterprise, manufacturing a variety of products, including gazebos, patio covers, truck covers, shoe holders and suit covers, as well as school, camping and travel bags.











In 2017, *JT* partnered with the PSA. The PSA provided sewing machines to increase production. Being a Union that believes in those it empowers, the PSA also became one of *JT*'s largest customers.

Another commodity that will always be in demand is food. The PSA invested in the acquisition of food trolleys for several informal traders across the country. Two of these beneficiaries were also assisted in obtaining trade licences for their operations. Not only did their new ventures make freshly prepared food available to numerous customers, but it also provided a critical income stream for two mothers supporting their extended families.

### EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FOOD GARDENS

No society can function if the basic needs of its members are not met. Yet, many South Africans are still without basic services and experience hunger and cold. Food scarcity is a reality for many communities. The PSA therefore invested in the creation of food gardens, training and tools to address this need. These food gardens, however, do more than just providing vegetables – they are a lifeline to many child-headed families, unemployed persons and orphans.

The gardens provide participants with a sense of pride – they take responsibility for the maintenance of the food gardens and can see the impact of their work on others.

### ASSISTING THE VULNERABLE

In 2020, the lives of two residents of the Zamokuhle Disabled Centre in Machadodorp in Mpumalanga were changed when the PSA's Provincial Office donated two wheelchairs to the centre. The residents, who were dependent on others to move around, were given much more than mere wheelchairs: They were empowered with independence and dignity. The PSA in Mpumalanga also provided furniture to the centre in partnership with *Esaaks Office Furniture*.

Also in 2020, PSA employees and members collaborated to collect thousands of plastic bottle caps and bread-bag clips for recycling in exchange for wheelchairs. These small acts added up and made a small but significant impact on the environment. This project secured 13 wheelchairs, which the Union provided to beneficiaries across the country.

### Sunshine artist

Phillip Nhlanhla is a gifted artist. He creates sculptures featuring the faces of prominent South Africans. His work caught the PSA's attention, which led to some of his sculptures being procured as prizes at a PSA event. Through this interaction it was discovered that Phillip's greatest obstacle to his work was the weather: He was dependent on the sun to dry his sculptures. This caused delays during periods with adverse weather conditions. The PSA assisted Phillip by providing him with a mini oven to dry his creations. This enabled him to fulfil his orders much quicker.





## PLANTING A LEGACY

As a responsible Union, the PSA cares for the environment. It has launched several environmentally focused projects aimed at recycling and supporting the environment. One of its most ambitious projects was launched in 2020.

Planting trees is a particularly effective and a relatively inexpensive way of capturing harmful carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and removing this from the atmosphere. CO<sub>2</sub> is one of the greenhouse gasses responsible for global warming. The PSA's #100 Trees Project aimed to plant 100 trees in each of South Africa's nine provinces. All the PSA's Provincial Offices accepted the challenge and planted trees as part of community awareness projects.

The #100 Trees Project is symbolic. If cared for properly, trees can – like the PSA – grow to be 100 years old, becoming living beacons that celebrate the legacy of a responsible Union, enjoyed by future generations.

### PSA LEGACY

*The PSA is a Union. It protects the rights of employees in the Public Service. While it cares for its members and their families, it also dreams of a South Africa where every child has an opportunity to thrive, no citizen goes hungry or cold, and where innovation and creativity are rewarded. It is an ambitious dream that the PSA continues to pursue.*

## Supporting givers

The PSA teamed up with the SA Police Service (SAPS) in Cradock in the Eastern Cape and the K9 unit to raise awareness with learners about crime and also distributed 500 pairs of school shoes in five areas in the Province.

The project started in August 2020 at Solomon Akena Primary School in Cradock with due regard of COVID-19 regulations. Learners were also sensitised about drug abuse and its consequences after which the K9 unit gave an astounding demonstration on the purpose of explosive dogs in the SAPS. String bags donated by *Old Mutual* were also handed to the learners.

This worthy initiative was sparked by Sergeant Frank Pieterse (pictured) when he personally started donating school shoes to Cradock's children. The PSA decided to support this commendable project as part of the Union's centenary programmes.

















## Changing lives



Veronica Skosana

Veronica Skosana had a long association with the PSA. She became a member in 1987, when she was employed in Human Resources at the Department of Education as well as the Department of Health. In 2005, after more than 19 years' experience in Human Resource Management, she moved to the PSA as a full-time employee. Two years later, Veronica ended up in possibly one of the most challenging, exciting and rewarding

positions in the Union as its first Social Responsibility Officer. She spearheaded these projects until her retirement in 2017.

"The process of identifying a project starts at grassroot level," Veronica explains. A PSA Provincial Office identifies a project in a community and brings this to her attention.

The project is evaluated (Veronica would visit the initiative in person), balancing the needs of the community with available resources. Veronica remembers how much she enjoyed informing an organisation that the PSA had decided to invest in the community. "At first, they wouldn't believe me. 'Is this really true? Are they really going to give us a library?'" The disbelief quickly turned to joy and excitement when the PSA delivered on its promises. "That's the part I liked the most," says Veronica.

Veronica also emphasises the PSA's focus on impacting the lives of children. "Development needs to start at the youngest age – this is where the ECDs also play an important role."

As a public servant with many years' experience in the Department of Education, the classroom and library projects were the most significant to her. "Seeing the libraries still standing at schools, knowing that young learners can still benefit from them. These are available to generations and will change generations. We don't just want to create better lives now," she smiles. "We want to create better futures."











Mahikeng Mail, 12 June 2020, pg 1



## ONAMANDLA DAY CARE CENTRE

REG.NO : 095-081-MPO

PHYSICAL ADDRESS

APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION  
BASIL HEAD

POSTAL ADDRESS

P.O. 35  
TSOLO  
5270

CONTACT DETAILS : MRS FINCA # 083 4457 635

REGISTERED DATE : 18/10/2011

THE MANAGER  
PSA  
PORT ELIZABETH

Sir/Madam

This is to confirm that Onamandla day care Centre received a donation of R1850.00.

We want to thank you for the support, caring and love you showed us. You really rescued us as we are dealing with orphans, and vulnerable children in Tsole area



PSA donates school bags to Kwezi

Isolomzi Express, 9 March 2017, pg 1



Corridor Gazette, 11 December 2014, pg 6

## Stakeholders unite for children

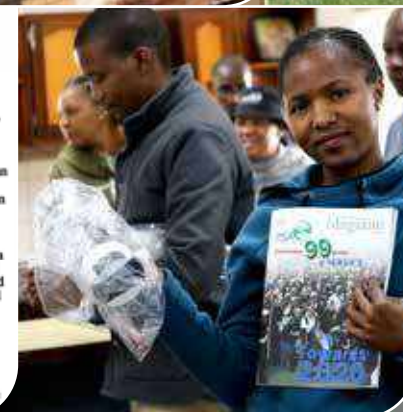
Daluxolo Sibiyi

NTUNDA - The love of and passion for children expressed by South Africa's late statesman, Nelson Mandela, was commemorated on the very same day of his passing.

This happened on Friday when the Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) donated a mobile classroom unit and furniture to the Thabekani Day-Care Centre in Ntunda. This formed part of the national development agency's (NDA) Adopt-an-Early Childhood Development (ECD) campaign launched in November 2013, and introduced to provincial stakeholders by the PSA earlier in March this year. The campaign

government, because alone it will not be able cater for everything. We are here to say to other unions, companies, businesses, and our friends, let us unite in the early education of our children, because this is a massive undertaking. And if we all pull together in this undertaking, great things can and will be achieved. There will be a huge change and difference in the early education of our children, and we know how Tata Madiba loved the little ones, so today is really a special day for us."

The MEC for social development, Nomia Mtsheni, said R1 million had been collected towards the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital. "Today we commemorate the passing



H.S. Ebrahim School  
thanks  
PSA and Food Gardens  
Foundation





**Pretoria Skool**  
for Gender & Public Learning

**Pretoria School**  
for Gender & Public Learning

Phone: 011 461 1111  
Fax: 011 461 1111  
Email: info@pretoria-skool.co.za  
Website: www.pretoria-skool.co.za

10 February 1946

Dear PSA team,

Thank you for the gift of going without the experience of taking a bus to school.

Pretoria School would like to thank you for sending the schoolbags and school for over 100 years of education.

Thank you for the gift of going without the experience of taking a bus to school.

Happy 100th birthday!

Sincerely,  
Pretoria School



Daily Sun (Free State / Northern Cape), 10 February 2017, pg 9



**Now kids won't lose their books!**

By MATSENG RAMOTHEA

A LIBRARIAN brought happiness to kids who needed schoolbags. Merriam Selane from Botshabelo realised there were needy kids who did not have any bags. She has been working with children for almost 20 years in the library at E section, Botshabelo.

"Many young pupils come here who are eager to learn. Some told me they were unable to buy proper school bags and ended up losing their school text books."

She and colleagues Theminkosi Mchabe and Kalleho Matjelemane decided to ask for help. Merriam, who is a member of the Public Servants Association, said she wrote to the union's head office last year.

She was overjoyed when she received a positive answer. With the help of the principals of five local primary schools, she identified about 50 pupils from disadvantaged families.

And finally, on Wednesday, the pupils accompanied by their teachers were given the donated schoolbags.

"Only 36 kids arrived to fetch their bags, but I will keep the remaining bags until their owners come for them," she said.

Botshabelo Mchabe (9) said she was grateful for her new bag. "My old one was in bad shape and as my mother is unemployed, she could not afford to buy me a new one."







*In service of workers*







## *Chapter 9*

# *Ensuring workers' health and safety*







*Compliance is law*



# Ensuring workers' health and safety

The PSA is continuously monitoring the working conditions of public servants. When the health and safety of these workers are jeopardised, the Union will do whatever is necessary to protect workers against such dangers.

### NO EXCUSE FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

Industrialisation changed the world forever. It introduced humanity to machines, which increased productivity to previously unimaginable levels. It can perhaps be argued that the industrial revolution also improved the standard of living, making previously unaffordable products readily available.

The industrial revolution did, however, have some drawbacks. The most notorious of these were the dangers factory work posed to workers. Accidents were commonplace. Many factory workers, including children, were killed, maimed or injured in factory accidents, without any form of compensation.

This eventually led to an awareness of the plea of factory workers and, over time, health and safety regulations were introduced. This was common practice around the world and South Africa is no exception. The modern workplace is a much safer environment than its 17th century counterpart.

Given the fact that the first industrial revolution ended in the mid-1800s, one may be forgiven for assuming that the battle for health and safety compliance is over. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Even in South Africa, the same institution that issues health and safety regulations – the government – often does not comply with these regulations.

### HOSPITAL WITHOUT WORKING ELEVATORS

Zamile Msomi is a resident of Lindelani, north of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. Her daughter is disabled and needs frequent physiotherapy. For this reason, Zamile often visits Addington Hospital, a government hospital in Durban. Zamile's trips to Addington are, however, usually exhausting and humiliating. Given the fact that only two of the ten elevators in the hospital are operational, Zamile is required to carry her child to the sixth floor of the building, using the stairs.

An ordinary building without an elevator would be discriminatory to anyone with limited mobility. In a hospital, this is a disgrace. Climbing stairs could be too strenuous for some patients. To prevent these patients from risking their health, medical staff are sometimes required to carry patients between different floors.

The Hospital's excuse was that the parts required to repair the elevators had to be imported. A valid excuse for a single broken elevator, but eight out-of-order elevators relate to a more wide-spread issue. Indeed, patients complain about supply-chain inefficiencies, resulting in life-saving medicine not being available, and staff complain about being intimidated when questioning the state of affairs.

The PSA has, however, never been deterred by intimidation when it comes to protecting its members. The Union spoke out against the situation at the Hospital. In November 2020, numerous employees at the Hospital, including PSA members, embarked on industrial action in the form of a slow strike. The matter also drew the attention of political parties and civil rights groups, leading to a complaint at the South African Human Rights Commission.



## FIRE

In August 2019, a fire broke out at the office of the Department of Rural Development in Polokwane, Limpopo. The PSA stepped in, requiring an assurance that the building was safe before employees were allowed to occupy the building again. Another fire erupted on 6 January 2020 and the PSA insisted on an inspection by a Labour Inspector from the Department of Labour and Employment, as well as temporary accommodation for employees. Following the inspection, the Labour Inspector issued a contravention and prohibition notice. Electrical and air conditioning issues were highlighted as potential dangers and employees were moved to a different office until the safety issues had been resolved.

## AIR-CONDITIONING

Air-conditioning could be regarded as a luxury, but in a town such as Musina in Limpopo, where average temperatures exceed 30°C in most months, it becomes a necessity. An extremely hot working environment is not only uncomfortable but poses health risks to employees. For this reason, the PSA took action when the air-conditioners of the Musina Magistrate's Court were out of order for an extended period of time. The PSA's efforts resulted in the matter being referred to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. The PSA, however, did not consider the matter closed and provided the employer with a seven-day deadline to comply with occupational health and safety legislation.

In January 2020, the PSA received similar complaints from members working at the Department of Home Affairs' uMngeni office in KwaZulu-Natal. The PSA met with the Office Manager and, in part thanks to the PSA's efforts, the air-conditioners were repaired.

## UNSAFE BUILDINGS

In May 2019, public servants working in the Department of Health's Civitas and Poyntons buildings in Pretoria, expressed concern about the condition of these buildings. Most concerns related to inadequate maintenance of the building, including non-functional fire-extinguishers, building defects and security issues.

The PSA, in collaboration with another union, embarked on demonstrations to highlight the plea of these workers. Workers refused to move past the foyer of the buildings.

Employees' concerns were not unwarranted. In 2018, a fire broke out at the Bank of Lisbon Building in Johannesburg – also housing employees from the Department of Health – killing three firemen. The PSA took the matter to the Labour Court, asking it to order the Department of Health to evacuate the building until workers' safety could be guaranteed. The Court had to reject the order based on its lack of jurisdiction in the matter. The PSA will continue its actions to ensure that workers can perform their duties in a safe environment.

## PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AT WORK

Serving one's country may require sacrifices and hard work. Some occupations such as security officials, police officers and correctional officials hold inherent safety risks. Minimising these risks should always be a priority and all measures should be taken to ensure workers' safety. When workers' lives are threatened as a result of fraud, corruption, poor management, overcrowding in prisons and staff shortages, alarm bells ring.

This is the case in South African correctional facilities. In 2020, two PSA members at the Goedemoed Correctional Centre in the Free State were stabbed by inmates. Similar incidents took place at the Kroonstad and St Albans Correctional Centres. The Department of Correctional Services' (DCS) own policy document determines that one warden should be available for every 40 inmates. During the time of the attacks, only three wardens were monitoring 231 inmates.

*When workers' lives are threatened as a result of fraud, corruption, poor management, overcrowding in prisons and staff shortages, alarm bells ring.*

This is only one risk employees at the DCS face. Overcrowding in correctional facilities promotes the spreading of highly contagious diseases. The *Labour Relations Act* prevents DCS employees from embarking on industrial action as a remedy to address labour-related grievances.



# Set for scrapheap?

*Speculation that the Bank of Lisbon building will be demolished*

**SIBONGILE MASHABA**

sibongile.mashaba@inl.co.za

A GOVERNMENT building, which was engulfed by a fire that killed three firefighters, may be demolished by mid-2019.

Workers from Jet Demolition were seen outside the Bank of Lisbon building yesterday morning, and their vehicles remained parked there for most of the day.

Gauteng government spokesperson Thabo Masebe yesterday said the building was badly damaged but would not confirm whether it will be demolished.

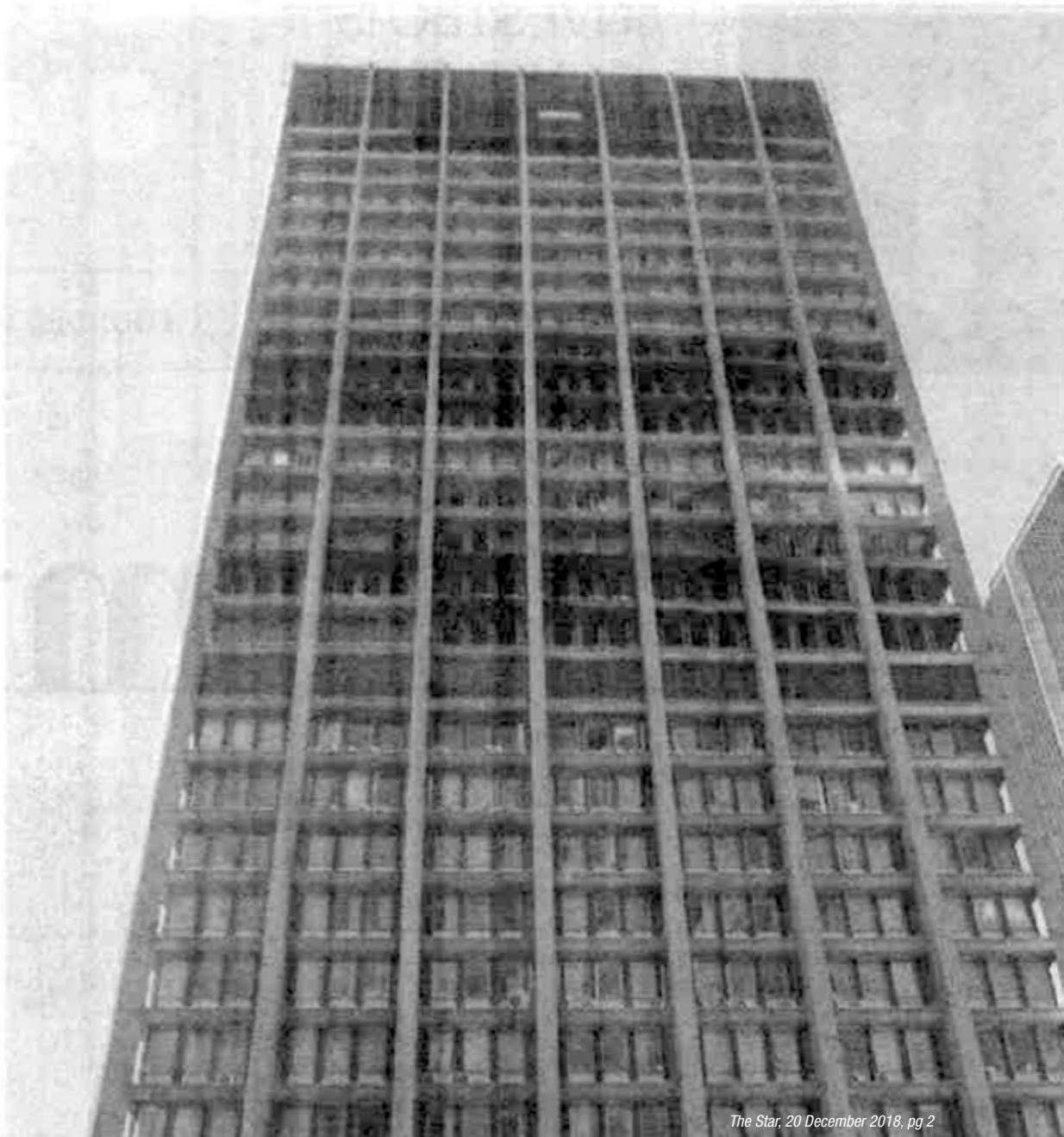
"The building sustained quite serious structural damage. We are still busy looking at a number of options. Once we arrive at a point of deciding what happens, we will notify the public," Masebe said.

He said Jet Demolition staff may have been there to do an assessment.

There was a lot of activity outside the building yesterday, with workers installing fencing around it.

Jet Demolition's Tia Haydock said: "Unfortunately we are not at liberty to discuss any details of the project at this stage. You are welcome to contact us in mid-January."

Workers on site said they had been



*The Star, 20 December 2018, pg 2*









The PSA intervened by raising the issue and demanding change on various forums, including the Departmental Bargaining Chamber, the Ministerial Consultative Forum, Regional and National Bargaining Forums and even the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee. The full extent of the DCS crisis became public during the Zondo Commission State Capture Inquiry, revealing extraordinary cases of fraud, corruption and mismanagement amounting to R1.6 billion. This led to several officials being arrested.

## PROTECTION DURING A PANDEMIC

Throughout 2020, health workers and other essential services workers were at the forefront of the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of these were public servants, working extended hours and often risking their lives in service of others. In July 2020, for example, the PSA expressed concern about the high number of staff members at clinics in the Tshwane metropolitan area being infected by the virus. Between two and eight staff members were infected every day. Being close to its members, the PSA learned about numerous cases where frontline staff were not adequately protected. The Union took decisive action through conversations, awareness and, where necessary, litigation.

The PSA stepped in when the dire working environments of the most critical members of society came to light. More than 70 clinics in Limpopo were found to be without running water, a critical requirement in health care. Clinics also faced a severe shortage of gloves, masks and hand sanitisers – the three most effective components to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The PSA expressed grave concern about the state of clinics and the effects on workers and patients.

In addition, the PSA in KwaZulu-Natal became aware of nurses being forced to screen patients without having the necessary personal protective equipment. When the PSA warned the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health about possible industrial action should the conditions not improve, the Department opened channels for dialogue through an invitation to a video conference with all parties concerned.

The PSA also called on the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services to act on reports of grossly understaffed prisons and a lack of protective gear for employees. The Union warned the Minister about the devastating effects of a COVID-19 outbreak in South Africa's overcrowded correctional facilities.



Another example of dangerous ignorance about COVID-19 health and safety requirements involves the Military Hospital in Cape Town. Some of the issues brought under the PSA's attention involved non-military staff not being provided with personal protective equipment, infected areas not being properly cleaned after a COVID-19 infection was reported, an infected member not being placed under quarantine, and no contact tracing being done after at least 16 employees tested positive for COVID-19.

Attempts by the PSA's shop steward and Western Cape Chairperson for the Department of Defence to schedule a meeting with the Commanding Officer were ignored. The PSA then requested the Department of Employment and Labour to investigate. The Department's Chief Inspector, accompanied by a task team including PSA representatives, attempted to obtain access to the premises, but were met by armed soldiers denying them entry. The matter was escalated to the relevant Ministers. The PSA's interventions also created awareness, which led to some much-needed changes in working conditions at the Hospital.

During the COVID-19 state of emergency, many government offices failed to comply with safety regulations. Whenever the safety of public servants was threatened, the PSA stepped in. In several cases, unsafe offices were closed. Even after Labour Inspectors ordered closures, some offices failed to comply. One example is the Department of Home Affairs' office in Vredenburg in the Western Cape. Despite a prohibition notice, the Department still attempted to re-open the office. Several courts also attempted to reopen after prohibition notices were served. The PSA not only ensured the closure of unsafe offices, but also compliance with prohibition notices.

## THE BATTLE CONTINUES

The PSA acts when workers' safety is threatened. Non-compliant buildings subjected to PSA interventions in 2020 include Mathatha Magistrate's Court, KD Building in Mathatha, Sulenkana Hospital in Qumbu, Department of Home Affairs Refugee Centre in Cape Town, and the offices in Vredendal, Wynberg, Cape Town, Atlantis, Giyani and Malamulele, the Magistrate's Court in Khayelitsha, 2 Military Hospital, Tygerberg Hospital, and Karl Bremmer Hospital in Cape Town, Oudtshoorn Magistrate's Court, Limpopo Department of Education (Mogodumo District and Hlanganani South Circuit Office), the Department of Employment and Labour in Pretoria, Musina Magistrate's Court, the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (Khumbe Office), WF Knobel Hospital in Limpopo, Vioolsdrif Port of Entry and several schools in the Eastern Cape.

### PSA LEGACY

#### Safety first

*It has been more than 100 years since workplace health and safety became a priority. It is regrettable that workers still face this scourge. The PSA remains on high alert, ensuring that its members and other public servants will not be harmed whilst fulfilling their duties as servants of the people.*





Photo: Department of Employment and Labour



Record (Mamelodi), 2 November 2018, pg 5

## Illnesses from health offices cause building to be declared unsafe for human habitation

**'This decision exonerates the PSA and members following a protracted struggle to declare the building unsafe.'**

**Reitumetse Mahepe**

After numerous reports and doctor visits by health department employees working in the Civitas building, it has finally been closed.

This was done by order of the department of labour after an inspection found the building was not safe to work in.

Public servants and with union members have been protesting for months to have the building declared unsafe.

Ernest Saita, who works at the Civitas building, said he had been suffering from severe sinus infection and high cardiac enzymes, which led to loss of breath and feeling weak when walking.

Saita said these illnesses led to a five-week hospital stay.

"I am lucky that I am still alive," Saita stressed. He said he had been ill for months, which led to him being absent from work.

However, when he reported the illnesses to his employer, he claims to have been harassed by his superiors.

Saita said it had come to a point where the workplace had not become conducive and "things were getting unbearable for me".

He said he was happy to see the building being shut down, as this meant that steps were being taken to safeguard employee health.

A colleague, Patrick Ngubeni, said: "When I [started working] at the department, I was strong and had never been hospitalised since birth".

He said that it all changed once the department moved to the Civitas building. After some time, he started to feel ill.

"I was constantly tired and losing focus and becoming sleepy when I was at this building."

Ngubeni said he was not aware of what was happening to him.

He said at the beginning of the year while working in the building, he started having immense chest pains and a loss of breath, which led to him collapsing.

Ngubeni said he was subsequently hospitalised for two weeks.

He said that according to his medical report, he had suffered from a minor stroke due to the lack of oxygen.

Ngubeni said since the collapse he had been struggling at work with frequent chest pains, dizziness, coughing up blood and nosebleeds.

"Most of my time at work was spent outside the office as I needed fresh air constantly."

Ngubeni said his time at Civitas

"I am the breadwinner in my family. My parents are on pension, my brothers and sisters do not work. I am the only person with a little bit of a strong income [at home]."

Ngubeni added that his medical aid was already exhausted.

A contract worker at the building, who wanted to remain anonymous, said she also started feeling ill around the beginning of the year.

She said that like most of the employees, she had severe sinus and regular nosebleeds, headaches and bloody coughs.

"I also did not understand what was going on with me."

She visited a doctor only in September when her symptoms became more severe.

She said the doctor confirmed she had been suffering from a sinus infection.

Last week Friday, Nkomo 911 attended to an emergency where a woman had collapsed at the building.

This was confirmed by spokesperson Nic Dullman, who said he could not give more information regarding the matter.

The building was found to lack adequate air conditioning systems, had non-working sprinklers, important structural repairs were not done and there was no waterproofing to leaking areas, which had fungus that was airborne and affected servants.

The health department instructed workers to vacate the premises on Tuesday.

In the notice, employees were told that they could only return to work once maintenance was fixed at the building.

Public Servants Association (PSA) spokesperson Tahir Moepa said the association welcomed the

closure of the Civitas building following the prohibition order issued by inspectors.

"This decision exonerates the PSA and its members following a protracted struggle to declare the building unsafe."

Moepa said they hoped that this would put a closure to the chapter of uncertainty surrounding the building and the servants occupying it.

"The death trap is finally under arrest."

The health department had not provided comment by the time of print.

Patrick Ngubeni, a health employee.



enCA, 24 January 2019



Uvo Lwethu Express, 11 May 2017, pg 5

## March to hand over taxi violence memo

**BARAKWA NOLANTYA**

Members of the Public Servants Association (PSA) of South Africa (PSA) marched to the Department of Transport, Safety and

Law: Mawanda Bhebe, who was met by the department's MEC, Kwame Tshepo.

Before embarking on the march, the members of the PSA, who came from Cape

Provinc, Durban, Johannesburg, and Pietermaritzburg, gathered at the City Centre in Mthatha to release

the violence has resulted in the death of passengers and taxi drivers.

They handed over the memorandum to

the Deputy Director General of the provincial Department of Transport, Safety and

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DISPUTE

Cape Times, 18 October 2018, pg 9

## Civitas row heating up

**LOYISO SIDIMBA**

loyiso.sidimba@capetown.co.za

HUNDREDS of national Health Department employees have referred their dispute over an unsafe working environment at its head office in the city to the chief inspector of occupational health and safety.

The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents about 800 workers at Civitas Building, told the chief inspector's office this week that employees have complained about health issues ranging from air quality, noise levels, dirty tap water and carpets to fire hydrant challenges.

The union has warned that its concerns over the Civitas Building needed to be addressed urgently as lives could be lost as in last month's tragedy at the Bank of Lisbon Building, where three firefighters died and several Gauteng provincial government employees were injured.

A request has been made for an inspector to be appointed, as the Department of Labour had done investigations and failed to effect the

inspector's intervention is needed as a very urgent basis.

The PSA's move follows the Labour Court's decision dismissing its bid to have the Civitas Building declared unsafe and that they must be paid for not reporting for duty due to health and safety concerns.

On Friday, the PSA was unsuccessful in its Labour Court application to enforce findings of an inspection by the Department of Labour in May that directed the Health Department to assess noise levels and air quality.

Another National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) survey found that noise levels were excessive in two of the four measured areas and that on different floors air velocity and relative humidity did not conform to the recommended standards.

The PSA accused the Health Department of intentionally refusing to comply with its statutory duties to ensure a safe working environment at Civitas Building but Judge Andre van Niekerk found that there was no evidence to support the union's claims.

Instead, Judge Van Niekerk told the PSA to approach the Labour Dis-

ONE  
DEATH  
IS TOO  
MANY

Daily News, 11 February 2014, pg 8

## Hospital in hot water over boiler

### Patients, staff 'inconvenienced'

**ZAINUL DAWOOD**

**P**ATIENTS at Clairwood Hospital have had to bath with cold water since December when a boiler stopped working, a staff union revealed yesterday.

The Public Servants Associ-

electric pots in the catering department.

"The already demoralised (and) demotivated nursing personnel work under difficult circumstances," Govender added.

**Improvise**

The auxiliary staff mem-

ing used for the transportation twice a week to Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital," he said.

Govender claimed the problem had affected the hospital's Ward C3, which was to have reopened last week after being closed years ago.

The rectification has now be-







Grocott's Mail, 2 November 2018

## Ambulance services set for shutdown

BY SUE MACLENNAN ON NOVEMBER 2, 2018/NEWS



EMS staff protest at the Makhanda (Grahamstown) base on Friday 2 November. EMS managers have been warned to prepare for a possible shutdown on Monday 5 November. Photo: Sue Macleannan

The Department of Health says they have received no notification from unions of a strike by the Province's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staff and that there would be consequences for staff who failed to report for duty. This comes amid protest action by EMS staff on Friday 2 November and warnings to prepare for a possible shutdown of the service on Monday 5 November.

LABOUR

The Star (Country Edition), 18 October 2018, pg 4

## PSA back in court over safety

LOYISO SIDIMBA

THE battle over health and safety concerns at yet another government department building has been referred to the Department of Labour again.

Polokwane Review Bonus, 25 June 2020, pg 2

## 'No compliance at Seshego High'

Natlie Erasmus

THE Public Servants Association (PSA) maintains that Seshego High School is not adhering to Covid-19 protocol and regulations and the lives of employees and learners are at risk.

The association is of the view that learners and teachers are already infected, so they can be any asymptomatic. After receiving complaints from a concerned parent regarding non-compliance, the Department of Education's Spokesperson told a local radio station on Monday that they were not aware of any problems at the school.

The Spokesperson further stated that they have standard operating procedures and weekly reporting by the school, which showed that protocol was being observed.

PSA Spokesperson, John Tello, however, told BONUS that the weekly reports by the department stating there were no reports of non-compliance is not only a lie, but dangerous because the department does not follow the rules of lockdown and learners

They were told the matter could be dealt with, including failure to wear learner's temperatures. On 15 June, the PSA issued a media statement reiterating the same recurring problems and that nothing had been done.

"It is sad that water and sanitation problems have not been addressed, learners are still not screened and even

access school without masks.

"No social distancing is kept and learners are even sharing textbooks while the department reported that all is well, according to them."

"It is either the spokesperson does not know what is happening in her own department or she chose to deliberately lie to the nation and we call upon the MEC to ensure accountability in her department," Tello said.

Spokesperson for Education, Yekiso Chane told BONUS on Monday that further investigations will be done to determine whether problems at the school

Department of Education MEC, Polly Sosiane.

The Star (Country Edition), 19 March 2020, pg 4

## Call to revisit protection plan

PSA tells members it wants a redraft as matters raised in government circular are of 'a punitive nature'

Several years after a R250m revamp project at Nkomo Hospital at Bulawayo, near Harare, was implemented, it is set to be completed. Construction companies either abandoned or found their movements restricted because of poor workmanship. In written replies to DA MP, late Cowley on July 24, the provincial health department outlined a string of problems encountered in the course of the project. The initial contract, for upgrading the existing building and replacing a large part of the hospital, was awarded to Khawana Construction at R27.6m. The contract was cancelled because of poor performance. A second contract was awarded to a replacement contractor to complete the main hospital in an estimated cost of R41.4m. Work is set to start in November. This week the public pro-

Daily Dispatch, 13 August 2020, pg 2



DILAPIDATED The dilapidated state of the Nkomo Hospital in Bulawayo near Harare, is a 'traumatic' institution. Photo: @Shamukoko

## Years and millions wasted on hospital

SANDISO PHALISO

Seven years after a R250m revamp project at Nkomo Hospital at Bulawayo, near Harare, was implemented, it is set to be completed.

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abandoned in the early stages of the project. MBL was paid R488,000.

Cableway Trading was contracted at a cost of R36m to construct where SCB left off, but the project was halted when the health department decided to build a staff housing complex at the hospital.

Construction of the staff cottages at a cost of R100.5m was halted after complaints arose over untidy appointments of projects, managers, discovery of medical waste, delayed removal of faeces and lime cement to construction.

The R100m for staff cottages was paid to Amara Almond. Progress in this project was 50% complete at the end of July. However, Cowley's firm was raised by the procurement of a replacement contractor to complete the main hospital in an estimated cost of R41.4m. Work is set to start in November.

This week the public pro-

posed in a dilapidated building, among other matters.

The Dispatch called the building and construction work being entrusted with the Secretary of Health as a 'disaster'.

During a visit to the hospital last week, Deputy Public Protector Khawana Gwala said the hospital building was not a good environment for staff to provide efficient service.

Gwala's spokesperson, Dupe Legasse, said her observations included paint peeling off corridors walls, broken washing machines, overgrown and abandoned facilities shared by men and women.

He said staff at the facility 'reported PPE, post-vehicle and water shortages'.

Legasse said all departments responsible for the hospital would be contacted during the investigation.

Thandi Mahomed, Eastern Cape manager for the Public Servants Association, said the

"There was clearly no proper due diligence on the side of hospital management, despite being entrusted with the Secretary of Health as a 'disaster'."

"It is really unacceptable that this blatant abuse of budget is being undertaken by the public finance," Mahomed said. Cowley and the health department needed to be held accountable.

"It is really unacceptable that this blatant abuse of budget is being undertaken by the public finance," Mahomed said. Cowley and the health department needed to be held accountable.

The public works department's assistant director of communications, Alphekazi Nwanya, told the Dispatch a contractor was on site "to do refurbishments at the main ward, female ward, TB ward and children's building".

eNCA, 2 December 2020

## Addington Hospital accused of victimising workers

Wednesday 2 December 2020 - 6:20pm



Mlungisi Ndlovu, PSA's KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Chairperson, spoke with eNCA's Shahan Ramkissoon. Courtesy of #DStv403

Sunday Independent, 5 April 2020

## 'Doctors must buy own PPE'

LOYISO SIDIMBA

HEALTH professionals at the forefront of the government's fight against the Covid-19 pandemic have been forced to buy their own personal protective equipment (PPE).

This shocking revelation was made by National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) general secretary Zola Saphetha in an affidavit filed at the Labour Court in Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

"Nehawu is aware that in many of the health facilities, employees, especially doctors and nurses supplement the inadequate government-issued PPE with PPE procured at (their) own cost," reads Saphetha's affidavit.

The country's biggest public sector union has taken Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize, Employment and Labour Minister Thulas Nxesi and the nine provincial health MECs to the





*In service of workers*







## *Chapter 10*

# *Cementing the legacy*





gaining under **ATTACK**

*Beyond measure*

**100 YEARS**

In KwaZulu-Natal, Siyaphambile Qondile, Jozini community members and a home for abandoned HIV/Aids babies were assisted as well as the communities from Amajuba, uMzi-nyath, uThukela, uMgungundlovu, and Harry Gwala. Food hampers were distributed to indigent families in Sekhukhune Villages in Limpopo.

Groundbreaking | Life changing | Growth

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# Cementing the legacy

The year 2020 will be remembered globally for the worst pandemic since the 1918 Spanish flu. Economies worldwide crashed and many workers suffered, often because of unreasonable, and sometimes illegal actions taken by their employers. During this dark year, the PSA remained a beacon of light: A protector of the vulnerable and a helping hand for those who were devastated. It continued its battle for justice under very difficult circumstances and still obtained many victories. Perhaps it is fitting that 2020 was also the year during which this caring, powerful Union commemorated its centenary.

### 2020: NEW CHALLENGES

Towards the end of 2019, medical practitioners became aware of a cluster of cases of pneumonia in Wuhan City, China. The World Health Organisation was officially notified of this on 31 December 2019 and a week later, the novel Coronavirus was isolated. By November 2020, this virus had infected more than 50 million people worldwide, caused the deaths of more than 1.25 million and continued to spread.

The virus spread rapidly to Italy and the rest of Europe and was declared an international pandemic. When the first case of local transmission was reported in South Africa, the government was faced with a difficult choice. A complete lockdown of the country, halting all but essential economic activity, would have devastating effects on the already struggling economy. On the other hand, such a lockdown would pause the spread of the virus, providing private and public hospitals with valuable time to prepare for the inevitable spike in infections. The government chose the lockdown.

At the end of March 2020, South Africa came to a standstill. A state of emergency was declared. Citizens were not allowed to leave their homes, except for food purchases or to perform essential services. Shops, restaurants and many other businesses had to either close their doors, or where possible, enable employees to work from home. The effect on the economy was immediate.

Companies with less than stable financial situations had to retrench employees or shut down. Many South Africans were left unemployed.

South Africa's COVID-19 infection rate became the fifth highest in the world before declining. The mortality rate, however, was lower than that of many other countries. Given the delay in infections, South African medical practitioners were able to learn from the experiences of their European counterparts.

When, towards the end of 2020 most of the restrictions were lifted, South Africans had to come to terms with the economic impact. Budgets had to be readjusted and the government was no exception. The first year of the pandemic was over, but the PSA's work had just begun.

### COVID-19: HEIGHTENED ALERT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, PSA staff worked under unusual and extremely challenging circumstances. Given the nature of the Union's work, service delivery continued. At the same time, all safety protocols had to be followed, placing substantial strain on staff. Yet, the dedicated employees of the PSA continued their service diligently.







## MORE THAN A UNION

Many communities were devastated by the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With its grassroots presence, the PSA quickly became aware of these needs and expanded its focus to those needs. During June and July 2020, the Union distributed food hampers, hygiene and toiletry hampers, as well as blankets and winter clothing to communities across the country. Relief amounting to hundreds of thousands of Rands was extended.

### Gauteng

The PSA Provincial Office in Pretoria provided assistance to Tshwaranang Children's Home and Relebogile Care Centre in Hammanskraal, as well as Jehovah Jirah Orphanage in Soshanguwe and Boikhutsong Safety Home in Atteridgeville.

The Johannesburg Provincial Office provided relief packs to women and children who were victims of gender-based violence.

### KwaZulu-Natal

In Durban, food hampers were distributed in Syaphambile Qondile and to community members in Jozini. In addition, a home for abandoned babies, mostly those affected by HIV, was painted. In Pietermaritzburg, several families in Amajuba, uMzinyathi, uThukela, uMgungunglovu, and Harry Gwala received food vouchers.

### Mpumalanga

The Mpumalanga PSA Provincial Office distributed food hampers to families in the Bela-Dona and Matsulu communities.

### Eastern Cape

The Eastern Cape PSA Provincial Office in Mthatha distributed food parcels to communities in Matatiele, Lady Frere, Flagstaff, Thombo, Port St. Johns, Willowvale, and Mthatha. The Port Elizabeth Provincial Office assisted 40 households in Madiba Village, near Lorraine.

### Northern Cape

The Provincial Office in Kimberley identified two homes and several households in Kimberley and Upington that were in dire need. Blankets, clothing and food vouchers were provided.

### Free State

The Free State Provincial Office in Bloemfontein provided winter clothing and blankets to identified families.

### North West

The community in Ratlou District was provided with food parcels.

### Western Cape

The Western Cape Provincial Office in Cape Town assisted 24 organisations and communities. These included organisations already involved in serving communities through relief programmes.

### Limpopo

The Limpopo Provincial Office distributed food hampers to families in Sekhukhune Villages.





## STEINHOFF SAGA CONTINUES

The PSA, as a staunch protector of public servants' pension benefits, was dismayed when, in 2020, the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) fined Markus Jooste, former Chief Executive Officer of Steinhoff International Holdings for insider trading. The Union represents thousands of pensioners whose pensions were invested in the company through the Government Employees Pension Fund.

The PSA called for a criminal investigation stating that: *"Millions of Rands of the Government Employees Pension Fund were squandered owing to Mr Jooste's fraudulent activities at Steinhoff. This resulted in severe hardship for thousands of pensioners but only a mere fine was imposed on Mr Jooste. At the same time, employees involved in similar financial irregularities such as the VBS saga and the scandal surrounding Bosasa have been arrested and are awaiting trial for their fraudulent activities."*

## RELIEF FUND IRREGULARITIES

During times of hardship and crisis, many ordinary citizens become heroes. They make sacrifices, help and support their communities and create awareness of the plight of the voiceless. Unfortunately, there are also those who exploit such circumstances for selfish, personal gain. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed several cases of fraud and abuse. It was therefore essential for the PSA to remain even more vigilant.

Disaster Management Regulations during the pandemic prevented many employers from commencing with operations. Many employers were also not able to make arrangements for vulnerable employees. To support these employees, a government relief fund, the Temporary Employer-Employee Relief Scheme, was established. The PSA was shocked when the Auditor-General found irregularities in the management of this fund. Employees who depended on these benefits to support their families and sustain themselves during the COVID-19 lockdown period were not paid. Wrongful payments went to non-designated recipients.

The PSA made its voice heard. It strongly condemned the mismanagement of the fund, welcomed the suspension of Unemployment Insurance Fund senior management and urged the Minister of Employment and Labour to expedite the forensic investigation.

## #DREAM PROJECT

The year 2020 was a disruptive and stressful year. Many South Africans were bombarded with economic, health and other challenges. Thinking about the future in such a time is difficult. Pursuing one's dreams becomes almost impossible.

This is one of the reasons the PSA launched the #Dream Project. In commemoration of its centenary year, the PSA undertook random acts of kindness, reaching out to members and communities and showing support to workers – the pillars of society. PSA employees and members collected plastic bottle caps and bread clips to be recycled and, in exchange, wheelchairs were donated to those in need.

As part of this project, each Provincial Office donated a wheelchair to a deserving recipient. The President of the PSA, Dr Lufuno Mulaudzi, in partnership with Chief Mudimeli and the Traditional Council, donated the last of these wheelchairs in Mudimeli Village in Limpopo.

Other acts of kindness included support for members with outstanding study fees, vouchers towards home improvements and various other dreams as well as donations to SAPS victim-friendly rooms. In addition, the PSA reached out to nurses, educators and emergency service workers as pillars of society.

Sometimes, a random act of kindness is all that is needed to ignite a dream.







Gansbaai Courant, 14 February 2020, pg 3

## Silwerjare geseë met 'n droom

Roger Breet se droom om 'n jaar se kinderensiwazee vir Silwerjare Dierensentrum te bekome, het waar geword en die sentrumbestuur juig.

Roger, 'n lid van die Vereniging van Staatsamptenare (VSA) en ook in sy vroeë tyd die tesourier van Silwerjare, het die geleentheid raakgesien toe die VSA die 'Droomprojek' geleëds het as deel van hulle 100ste bestaanjaar vierjaar. Die VSA, deesdae bekend as die PSA (Public Servants Association) is 'n staatsdiens



Die VSA Provinsiale Bestuurder in die Riet-Kaai, Kees Kruger (regs), het die goeie nuus van 'n droom wat bewaarheid is.

onafneembare inbreng is wat 24 uur versorgingsdienste en aktiwiteite aan inwonende verwaarde bejaardes, asook bejaarde dag-besoekers lewer, maar dat hulle geheel en al van daardies afhanklik is," het Kruger gesê.

"Dit is vir die VSA 'n nedrige voorreg om in ons feesdye na ons bejaardes, wat nie groeie-lyke toegang tot die middele en sorg het wat ons almal as so vinnigspreekend amsaai



Capricorn Voice, 28 October 2020, pg 7

## Wheelchair to make her life easier

SILAS NDUVHINI

THE PUBLIC Servants Association last Monday donated a brand new wheelchair to a young woman at the Uthmaniyah Centre. Tshidzi Mabisa (23) is a learner at the centre in Tzaneen near Tlokweng and was born with only one leg. Her family has been struggling to get her a wheelchair, and is very grateful for the donation. With the wheelchair Tshidzi will be able to move around easily and it will help her take part in sporting activities suitable for people with disabilities. Her mother, Ester Mabisa said Tshidzi has had to use crutches, which would often break and had to be replaced regularly. According to Ester, her daughter's disability makes it difficult to travel with the

family to shopping centres, going to church, clinic and hospital among others. She said she was recently informed by someone that PSA in its centenary celebration this year, is giving away one wheelchair in each of the nine provinces countrywide.

"I was lucky to be called by the PSA provincial office informing me that my daughter was selected to receive a wheelchair. I jumped for joy and thanked the Lord for the blessing. May God bless PSA for their kind and generous donation," said Mabisa. PSA Limpopo Provincial Manager, John Tefu confirmed that the wheelchair donation was part of the organisation's centenary celebrations. The Manager of the Uthmaniyah Day Care Centre, Gledys Sengweni said she was over the moon to learn that her organisation chose a learner from their centre. They admitted Mabisa in 2015, she said. "Now, she will be able to play with other learners, participate in sport such as basketball, which she can play in her wheelchair," said Sengweni. capricornvoice@mgmgroup.co.za

"May God bless PSA for the kind donation."

ESTER MABISA, MOTHER



Tshidzi Mabisa is excited about her new wheelchair. With her are PSA Limpopo officials, her mother, Ester Mabisa, and some learners and staff members of the Uthmaniyah Daycare Centre.









## EDUCATION UNDER FIRE

One of the PSA's most significant endeavours of 2020 involved the protection of teachers and learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Primary and secondary schools typically accommodate hundreds of learners, which can fuel the spread of the virus. In April 2020, for example, when administrative staff at schools in the Northern Cape were instructed to return to work, the Union expressed its concern about the fact that this included non-essential workers, unnecessarily exposing them to infection.

The safety of learners and teachers was non-negotiable for the PSA. It insisted that schools remained closed until all the logistics and other arrangements were in place to comply with regulations. These included the provision of sanitisers, masks and gloves to teachers and learners. The Union also expressed concern about practicalities involved with social distancing.

The nation-wide lockdown and closing of schools presented yet another problem at schools: Looting and vandalism. During the closure, numerous schools were vandalised. The Union spoke out against these acts in the strongest terms, publicly calling attacks on schools "violence intentionally targeting civilians". It insisted that these attacks should therefore be treated as acts of terrorism.

## PUBLIC SECTOR WAGE FREEZE AND THREATS OF JOB CUTS

In an attempt to save money, the South African government took the unilateral decision not to implement negotiated salary increases in April 2020. This was done despite an agreement being in place for the increases and without any consultation with unions. The PSA's efforts to resolve the situation did not yield the desired outcome. The Union, however, remained determined to enforce compliance with the agreement, making use of all available mechanisms, including litigation.

The employer requested a renegotiation of the relevant clause in the collective agreement. The PSA denied this request and instructed its lawyers to approach the Labour Court to enforce the agreement. The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated the case. Owing to the Labour Court being closed for all but urgent applications during lockdown level 4, the Union was unable to obtain a case number.

It expressed its dissatisfaction with the employer's unwillingness to comply with an agreement: *"It is unfortunate that we will have to wait for the reopening of the Labour Court to obtain a case number"*, the Union's Collective Bargaining Unit reported in the PSA's 2019/20 integrated annual report. It does, however, believe *"that members have a contractual right to have their salaries increased as stipulated in the PSCBC Collective Agreement..."*.

A subsequent Labour Appeal Court judgement was not in the PSA's favour and the Union lodged an appeal application to the Constitutional Court in January 2021. The Labour Appeal Court's judgement has far-reaching implications for the future of collective bargaining and the ability of the State to enter in collective agreements and abide by these. Whilst awaiting the outcome, the PSA is optimistic that the Constitutional Court will provide answers. The PSA will persist in its efforts in the interest of workers.

## THE FUTURE: MUCH HAS CHANGED. NOTHING HAS CHANGED

Much has changed over the last 100 years. The world is a different place. South Africa is a different country. It became a self-governing union in 1931, a republic in 1961 and in 1994 it became a true democracy. Many organisations came into being and many ceased to exist during the same period. The same is true for political parties and government organisations.

### PSA: THE FUTURE

*The PSA remains a constant force. For a century, its sole purpose has been to serve public servants and their interests. It has fought many battles. It has changed many lives. The future will not be different. The PSA will continue to adapt, change and make sense of an ever-changing environment. But its purpose will remain the same: Protecting the rights and promoting the interests of public servants: Individually and collectively.*

*Here's to another century in service of workers.*









Citizen (KZN), 11 January 2021, pg 2

## Workers haul state to court

UNIONS: TO APPEAL LABOUR COURT JUDGMENT

Employers could use ruling to renege on agreements.

Slaviklwa Hlatshani

**C**an an employer simply back out of a collective bargaining agreement by trying poverty? Fourteen South African unions federations want the Constitutional Court to say this in *their* case and are taking their battle with the biggest employer in the land – the state – to the highest court in the land.

Secretary-General of the SA Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtul) Mphahle said the appeal would be based on three main arguments:

- That government's argument that the increases were unenforceable couldn't stand because it waited two years before acting to correct this;

- That the court did not consider all of the relevant circumstances between the employer and unions following the agreement; and

- That government did not even try to find a middle ground upon realising there wasn't enough money

the bargaining agreements. Employers should be held to these agreements and in the case of financial impediments, should at least meet workers half way or find alternatives to original agreement.

"The court didn't instruct the parties to go and find an alternative implementation of the agreement. They just said that it is unenforceable," he said.

"A blanket judgement, to us, would give employers in the private sector and in government entities to use it to renege from bargaining collective agreements in the future, inste-

Government didn't even try to find middle ground



Polokwane Observer, 25 June 2020, pg 4

## 100% overtime for EMS officials: PSA

NELIE ERASMUS  
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**P**ublic Service and Administration Minister, Senzo Mchunu in March issued a circular which made provision for the deviation of and approval of overtime compensation that exceeds the 30% threshold of employees' monthly salary for certain departments. This was meant as compensation for employees who worked significantly more

>> "It's in the employer's interest to have harmony in the workplace"

"The nature of EMS work is as such that they respond to calls which can inadvertently result in unplanned overtime and the employees cannot be







Dr L J P Mulaudzi  
President



C Mntwini  
Vice-President



P Snyman  
Chairperson



M Seealamo  
Vice-Chairperson

## 2020 PSA leadership



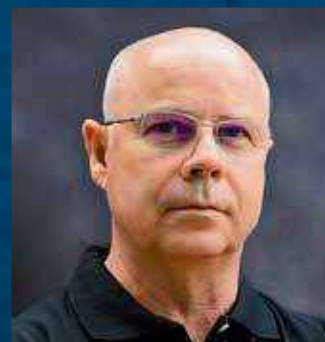
A Y Coetzee  
Director



D D King  
Director



I T Monyane  
Director



L A Gilbert  
Acting General Manager



R M Maleka  
Acting Deputy General Manager:  
Members' Affairs



M A Ramakgale  
Director



M J Shiburi  
Director



N C Silinyana  
Director



M Muller  
Acting Deputy General Manager:  
Management Services









*The PSA has come a long way since its foundation in 1920. Throughout the years the PSA's mission was to advocate for better employment conditions for South African public servants. The PSA's participation in collective bargaining ensured that public servants' terms and conditions of employment improved. In doing so, the PSA never compromised on its founding principles of promoting and protecting the rights and interests of public-sector employees. These principles remain even today.*

*– Dr Lufuno Mulaudzi, PSA President*



*Surrounded by negativity, it is easy to focus only on the negative and lose hope. The PSA, however, believes in the people of this country. When people stand together, good things start happening. When the culture is one of caring for each other, for the country, and for the world we live in, positive change is possible.*

*– Leon Gilbert, PSA Acting General Manager*



*The year 2020 will go down in history for the sacrifices by workers at the frontline of the battle against the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. In this battle essential service workers, mainly public servants, are at the frontline of combatting the outbreak in South Africa. The PSA pays tribute to all workers whose efforts are carrying the country. Those who have already paid the highest price in the execution of their duties will be remembered as heroes.*

*– Reuben Maleka, PSA Acting Deputy General Manager: Members' Affairs*



*The success of the PSA for the past 100 years, apart from consistently advancing workers' interests and protecting their rights throughout, was its ability to remain independent and divorced from political interference. The ability to adapt to a constantly changing environment will not just ensure future sustainability, but also create unimaginable expansion of the brand, both national and internationally.*

*– Pierré Snyman, PSA Chairperson*









*Congratulations on the PSA's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This remarkable milestone is truly inspirational and bears testament to the PSA's unswerving pursuit of a progressive labour sector. The PSA's commitment to serve its members and its active participation in the Public Sector Bargaining Councils are highly valued.*

*– Frikkie de Bruin: PSCBC General Secretary*

*Fedusa is proud that the PSA could find the staying power to reach the coveted milestone and grow into a giant that has set a fine example for other affiliates to emulate. A milestone that embraces a new chapter by breaking new ground through tenacity and endurance that epitomises the PSA brand of being the "Union of Choice".*

*– Riefdah Ajam: Fedusa General Secretary*