

MEDIA RELEASE

PSA calls for KZN Social Development and SASSA to pay outstanding electricity bill for its Richards Bay Office

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is disturbed by the failure of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency(SASSA) to pay their electricity account totalling R4 million, for the Departments Richards Bay office, that led to the disconnection of electricity by King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

The PSA, as the largest union in the KwaZulu-Natal Chamber of the Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC), was alerted to the situation after a member in the Richards Bay area began experiencing immense difficulty in performing their duties. They advised the PSA that they had their electricity supply disconnected as they had failed to pay their electricity account. This is outrageous and the PSA demands that answers be provided, and consequence management be applied. Employees cannot perform their duties let alone serve the public.

Previously, the PSA became aware that the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), indicated that Cabinet had decided on the establishment of a special unit in the DPME to investigate cases of late or non-payment of accounts within 30 days. This unit would work closely with National Treasury and the Department of Public Service and Administration, and they would report on a quarterly basis to Cabinet on departments' compliance with the 30-day period and would make recommendations regarding possible disciplinary action, where needed. Given the non-payment of the electricity bills of the mentioned departments, it is evident that these departments did not monitor their payment processes effectively. The *Public Finance Management Act (PFMA)* is clear that payment of accounts must be done within 30 days, and those who are ignoring this, are simply guilty of misconduct. It is clear that what was lacking was accountability from the director generals in government and the REM of SASSA, yet they received bonuses at the end of every year.

At the time of the release of this press statement, it has been found that this is widespread issue including where Landlords have not been paid rent. The PSA calls on the Premier and the Director-General in the Premiers Office to investigate this crisis and resolve this impasse urgently. The PSA will be raising this within both the KwaZulu-Natal Chambers of the Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council(PHSDSBC) and General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council(GPSSBC).

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