

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	<b>PSA concerned about cost-containment strategy and freezing of posts in Mpumalanga</b>
<b>DATE</b>	30 October 2023
<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about delays in discussions and consultations with labour in Mpumalanga regarding the recent directive on cost containment in the Public Service, issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration.

The PSA is alarmed that these cost-containment measures are only now being discussed, two months after the directive was issued in August 2023. This delay in dialogue and consultation raises concerns about transparency and inclusive decision-making processes that should be integral to public policy changes. The freezing of critical posts is an equally concerning aspect of the directive, especially in a province grappling with high unemployment. Departments are already operating with staff shortages, and this decision may exacerbate the problem. It is crucial to recognise that lower-level public servants who directly provide essential services to communities should not be regarded as non-critical positions. Neglecting these roles could significantly affect the quality of service delivery.

The Mpumalanga Government's approach to defining critical positions seems to prioritise management roles, potentially to the detriment of those delivering services on the ground. It is of utmost importance that government ensure an equitable distribution of critical positions, aligning these with actual service needs of communities. Whilst the PSA understands the need for financial prudence, the Union calls on Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane and her administration to lead by example. This should involve improving internal control systems to ensure the efficient functioning of critical departments and, in doing so, setting a standard for other departments to follow.

The PSA acknowledges the importance of cost containment but emphasises that such measures should not disproportionately affect the working conditions and livelihoods of public servants. The PSA advocates for a comprehensive approach that takes into consideration broader implications and prioritises the well-being of dedicated public servants.

The PSA encourages the use of virtual platforms for meetings and government facilities, when possible, as well as the responsible use of overseas trips, subject to approval by the Provincial Treasury. It is crucial that these cost-saving measures are applied equitably to all employees, regardless of their position in the Public Service. The PSA remains committed to constructive dialogue with government to address these concerns and ensure that public servants can continue to provide vital services to communities. An inclusive and consultative approach will result in more effective and equitable decision-making.

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