

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA demands that Mpumalanga Premier prioritises existing forums to address public-sector skills crisis
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The Public Servants Association (PSA), as representative Union of thousands of employees in government departments in Mpumalanga, noted the announcement by the Premier of Mpumalanga regarding the launch of the Mpumalanga Provincial Human Resource Council (MPHRC).

Whilst the PSA welcomes initiatives to address human-resource challenges, the Premier must guard against duplicating existing forums and structures already tasked with addressing chronic skills gaps and shortages across the public sector. These shortages have severely undermined service delivery across all departments.

The skills-development drive in Mpumalanga's public sector has sharply declined. Public servants are increasingly disengaged owing to poor coordination of learning, training, and career progression. Critical professionals, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, educators, engineers, human resources, financial, supply chain, and project management personnel, remain unemployed despite being qualified. Public servants are denied career progression owing to austerity measures, ongoing moratoriums on filling funded posts, and weak implementation of skills development strategies. The PSA has observed that senior and junior managers across departments lack essential leadership capabilities. Many are unable to perform basic supervisory duties, mentor staff, or implement coaching programs. Outdated digital skills amongst managers have left departments unable to harness modern technology to improve productivity, efficiency, and service delivery.

The PSA calls on the Premier to fully embrace existing collective forums for public sector human resource development, including the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council and departmental task teams, to avoid duplication and inefficiency. All funded vacant posts urgently should be filled as a matter of urgency, particularly in critical service-delivery areas. The PSA also calls for the implementation of radical leadership development programs to enhance managerial capabilities and accountability. The Premier must ensure structured and coordinated skills development programs across all levels of government to retain and advance critical talent. There MPHRC should be directed to complement, not replace, existing structures, focusing on real outcomes for workers and citizens.

The PSA will monitor the MPHRC's implementation closely and hold the provincial leadership accountable. The PSA will not accept half-measures or superficial structures whilst public servants remain underutilised, disengaged, and overworked, and service delivery continues to suffer. The Premier must act decisively to address skills shortages, strengthen public-sector capacity, and empower workers through meaningful learning, progression, and leadership development.

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