

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA outraged by high vacancy rate at Department of Water and Sanitation
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged by media reports indicating that the Department of Water and Sanitation has the highest rate of vacancies in the Public Service.

It is unacceptable for the Department of Water and Sanitation to have a high vacancy rate amidst rampant unemployment in the country and service-delivery demands. According to media reports, government departments have nearly 100 000 job vacancies, with the Department of Water and Sanitation having a 23.89% vacancy rate. It is deplorable for this Department to have such a high vacancy rate whilst its battling with service delivery challenges. The 23.89% vacancy rate far exceeds the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) vacancy target of 8%.

In a written parliamentary response, the Department indicated that it spent R500 million on consultants since the 2023/24-financial year. It justified this expense owing to a lack of the required expertise in the Department. The reality faced by many communities is that taps are dry and many areas have water challenges despite the Department having spent such an astronomical amount of taxpayers' money on consultants.

The vacancy report submitted by the Minister of the DPSA to parliament for the financial year 2024/25, indicated that the Department of Water and Sanitation has 1 333 vacancies amongst the nearly 100 000 vacancies in the Public Service across national and provincial departments. The non-filling of vacancies undermines government efforts to reduce unemployment and puts strain on limited resources of departments and negatively affects service delivery.

The PSA calls on the President to hold all Ministers and Premiers accountable by filling vacancies and keeping the vacancy rate at not more than 8% as per the DPSA target. Government departments must play their part in tackling the unemployment crisis in the country by filling vacancies in departments. It is unacceptable for the Department of Water and Sanitation to have triple the vacancy rate set by DPSA and still use R500 million on consultants whilst failing to meet its mandate of ensuring that South Africans have access to clean, drinkable water. Money spent on consultants could have been used to fill some of the vacancies in the Department.

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