

MEDIA RELEASE PSA warns: Information Regulator employees' wellbeing at risk

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) strongly condemns the Information Regulator's (IR) reckless and irrational decision to compel employees to return to offices in Woodmead offices, despite an unresolved prohibition notice issued by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL).

The PSA formally requested that the IR should suspend a return-to-office directive until clarity was provided on the prohibition notice and commitments made to employees regarding relocation were honoured. This request was summarily rejected without any legal justification or evidence that the prohibition notice has been revoked or complied with.

The prohibition notice explicitly states that revocation will only be considered once an inspector is satisfied that the threat has been eliminated or substantially reduced. Despite this, the IR arrogantly relied on its own unilateral claim of compliance, disregarding the statutory authority of the DEL. Reporting remedial work is not equivalent to the DEL exercising its powers to revoke or amend a prohibition notice. By forcing employees back into a workplace under prohibition, the IR is displaying a flagrant disregard for occupational health and safety enforcement measures. This reckless conduct undermines the purpose of statutory protections and places employees directly harm's way.

Equally unacceptable is the IR's attempt to dismiss the transport stipend as irrelevant. This stipend was a binding commitment to mitigate the additional costs of relocation from Braamfontein to Woodmead. To compel employees to shoulder the financial burden of relocation whilst reneging on this commitment is exploitative and indefensible. The IR cannot expect employees to risk their health and safety, nor absorb the financial consequences of relocation, whilst it disregards statutory enforcement and dishonours its obligations.

The PSA demands the immediate suspension of the return-to-office directive until the DEL has formally clarified the status of the prohibition notice and the IR fulfils its commitment regarding the transport stipend. The PSA will pursue all available legal remedies, including escalation to the DEL and other competent authorities, should the IR persist in this unlawful course of action.

END

