

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA welcomes mobile-truck initiative by Department of Home Affairs in KwaZulu-Natal to bring services to remote areas
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the mobile-truck initiative by the Department of Home Affairs in KwaZulu-Natal, to bring services to remote areas of the province.

A total of 1 600 smart ID cards were processed during a three-day operation by the Department of Home Affairs in partnership with Richmond Municipality, which is aimed at bringing services closer to residents. This initiative began in Hopewell and concluded in Richmond, where elderly citizens and first-time applicants received assistance with applying for their smart ID cards, free of charge.

People who live in areas without a Department of Home Affairs office often face significant challenges in accessing essential services. Travelling to the nearest office can be time-consuming and costly when undertaken from rural areas. Such residents often have to revert to renting cars and travelling in groups be able to access these basic services. Residents have to travel some 39 km to get access to a Home Affairs office in Pietermaritzburg where they face long queues and sometimes have to visit the office twice to receive service. These obstacles often result in residents not having essential documents such as birth certificates, passports and ID. This hinders their access to education, employment, and government benefits such as social grants.

The PSA therefore welcomes this initiative as it offers convenience to residents who struggle to visit the Department's offices and who do not have finances to travel. It also assists the elderly and the disabled who find it challenging to reach offices. This initiative shows that government is responding to the needs of the general public. The PSA, however, advocates for establishment of permanent Home Affairs offices in remote areas as a permanent intervention and the continuation of the mobile truck initiative across KwaZulu-Natal.

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