

MEDIA RELEASE: **Public Service: PSA prepares for strike action**

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EMBARGO: None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is preparing for industrial action in the Public Service after the majority of its members rejected government's salary-increase offer.

The PSA declared a dispute when government made a final offer of 2%, which prompted government to improve the offer to a 3% pensionable salary adjustment and continued payment of the cash gratuity until 31 March 2023. The PSA requested a mandate from its members to accept or reject the offer, resulting in a rejection of the offer by the majority of members who provided a mandate.

Section 69(4) of the *Labour Relations Act* stipulates that unless there is a collective agreement binding on the trade union that regulates picketing, the commissioner conciliating the dispute must attempt to secure an agreement between parties to the dispute on rules that should apply to any picket in relation to that strike. It is therefore important for the PSA to comply with the *Labour Relations Act* and have picketing rules in place before filing a notice of a strike. The PSA attended a meeting today where constructive engagement took place on the proposed draft picketing rules. The PSA proposed some amendments to the rules and government requested time to apply its mind to the proposed amendments. Parties agreed that government will provide a written response on 14 October 2022 to which the PSA will reply. Parties will convene on 17 October 2022 to conclude on the rules, failing which, the commissioner will issue picketing rules in line with section 69 of the *Labour Relations Act*. The PSA will thereafter issue a notice to strike and commence with lunch-time pickets in support of a strike.

Despite government indicating that the offer is now "off the table" and that it will not re-open negotiations on the current offer, the PSA maintains that the pending massive strike action will prompt government to reconsider its position. The PSA remains committed to serve the interests of the Union's members and is convinced that a strike is unavoidable if government remains arrogant. It has been more than three years since public servants have received a salary increase whilst the costs of food, electricity, petrol, and transport have escalated. In addition, increases to the repo rate have worsened the lives of public servants.

The PSA, however, remains willing to engage government to resolve the impasse.

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