

## Update: Departmental Bargaining Chamber (DBC)

A Departmental Bargaining Chamber was held on 25 July 2022 and the following matters were discussed:

### Vote weights

PSA - 2 745 (62.20%)

Nehawu - 1 486 (33.67)

Popcru - 182 (4.12)

The PSA appreciates shop stewards who continuously recruit and provide services to members to ensure that PSA retains majority status.

### OHS compliance and COVID-19 regulations

The employer appreciated all efforts and contributions of all members of the COVID-19 National Steering Committee and regional Sub-Committees that impacted positively on the Department's efforts to reduce the risk of transmission in the workplace. The National State of Disaster was terminated on 5 April 2022 and some COVID-19 regulations were amended. The remaining three COVID-19 regulations were also repealed on 22 June 2022. Consequently, (1) It is no longer mandatory for a person to wear a face mask that covers their nose and mouth in public spaces; (2) There is no limitation in terms of capacity of a venue for gatherings; and (3) It is no longer required to provide a negative PCR test result upon entering the Republic of South Africa.

Therefore, since the National State of Disaster was terminated and the remaining National Regulations were repealed, there is no legislative framework or directives in place to regulate the health and safety of individuals owing to the risk of transmission of the corona virus. Consequently, at the last meeting of the DPWI National Steering Committee, it was resolved to repeal all COVID-19 protocols and to issue a Circular in this regard for the implementation in the DPWI. Furthermore, it was resolved that the National Steering Committee and Regional Sub-Committees be dissolved. The monitoring and management of COVID-19 in the workplace will now form part of the OHS and wellness monitoring. In line with DPSA Circular 38 of 2022, the acting Director-General of the DPWI issued Circular 215 of 2022, which effectively repealed all COVID-19 protocols in the Department. All officials are expected to physically return to work. Labour noted the report.

## Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Task Team resolved to undergo roadshows following complaints from members at Water Care Treatment Plants falling within the DPWI. The following regions were visited in May and June 2022:

- Polokwane (Soekmekaar, Matache Prison, Hoedspruit Military Base)
- Nelspruit (Lembombo Boarder Gate, Barberton Prison, Macadamia Military Base, Oshoek Port of Entry, and Zonstraal Military Base)
- The Bloemfontein trip was aborted owing to fact that there are no DPWI employees located at the treatment plants and dates to visit other regions will be communicated in due course.

The assessment by the Task Team is that most of the challenges were identified by the previous task team and facilities management was also presented with the same presentation but no decisive action taken. The focus was on Water Treatment Plants, and it was observed that all the plants have common challenges and findings are as follows:

- Overtime was not paid in time by the regions in the Department and this was mainly owing to the fact that employees will perform overtime more than what is regulated by the Public Service Regulations.
- Personal protective equipment was still a problem because it is not provided for and in some instances if provided, it is either of a poor quality or not the right size.
- Manpower is invariably a problem and positions which they occupy were never job evaluated and some are, in terms of the job description, called operators, tradesman aid and water processors at different salary levels whilst doing the same job.
- There are no working tools and equipment to perform certain jobs, for example, grass cutters to ensure the place is safe to walk and snakes or crocodiles cannot hide.
- Training was done ten years ago and medical surveillance is never performed, which is contrary to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

The PSA noted the report but requested that a special DBC be convened, and all relevant stakeholders be invited as a matter of urgency, to mitigate conditions that water treatment plant employees find themselves in. Parties agreed that the date for special DBC will be pronounce by Friday, 29 July 2022.

## Insourcing of Security Personnel at regions

The employer indicated that the *status quo* remains in that it does not have enough budget to insource security personnel but committed that it will see if in the next financial year funds will be available to insource these employees.

## Organisational Culture Diagnosis and Change Management Strategy Implementation

The employer reported that it embarked on the implementation of change management strategies. It further reported that other employees who work in remote offices such as cleaners, horticulture, and security still need to be given training on the project. There is a continuous online training (e-training) that can be downloaded to reach out to those who are at remote facilities. The Task Team for developing change management activity plans is being finalised and activities planned aligned to the Change Management strategy will be implemented and monitored. Managers are continuously urged to prioritise the roll-out of the Change Management Strategy amongst other critical projects. All employees are encouraged to take ownership and monitor any change management activities in their respective

Branches and Units. Corporate Services will continue to support all culture-change initiatives to ensure that change is realised successfully. Labour noted the report.

### **Failure to implement non-Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD) and those covered by OSD**

The PSA tabled the matter following complaints from members that the employer failed to implement non-OSD and those covered by OSD in line with the 2017-Incentive Framework for OSD and non-OSD employees. The employer reported that there is a comprehensive report with developments, however indicated that Directorate responsible for that were not available for the meeting. Parties agreed that this matter should be included in the proposed special DBC scheduled to take place shortly

Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website ([www.psa.co.za](http://www.psa.co.za)), send an email to [ask@psa.co.za](mailto:ask@psa.co.za) or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

GENERAL MANAGER