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FOR PSA MEMBERS: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT (DPWI)

20-09-2023

Feedback: Departmental Bargaining Chamber meeting – 14 September 2023

Conditions of employment: Security Officials, workshops, and Call-Centre employees

The employer reported that the inputs from labour were received and incorporated. It further reported that labour is afforded another opportunity to finalise consultation with their constituencies. Labour has until 13 October 2023 to submit any additional inputs or comments on the Draft Recognition Agreement. The PSA acknowledged the report.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

The employer reported that there is progress at the wastewater care treatment plant. It reported that the following are the concerns raised by labour and progress reports:

Lack of or total absence of supervisors

Progress: The issue has been addressed by the transfer of the Chemical, Water Care, and Hydrology Directorate to Facilities management. The heads of Facilities management are now overseeing the function of the Directorate in regions. Employees who were appointed under the Project Management Officer were part of the supervisory structure for the water care facilities and when their contracts expired, no replacements were made.

Regional Management in one case refused to meet with labour to address challenges on the ground

Progress: The Chief Director for the Water Care and Hydraulic Directorate is willing to engage the region that was reluctant to work with labour. The Directorate is also encouraged by the progress made in addressing collaboration between the Head Office and regions as this will ultimately address misunderstandings.

Lack of or no PPE, tools, and equipment

Progress: PPEs and tools have been procured and in areas where there are delays, this is because of procurement processes.

Grass and other vegetation remain overgrown for months

Progress: The employer reported that a service provider has been outsourced to various Water Care Treatment Plants to cut grass and other vegetation.

Lack of proper fencing

Progress: Regions have been sensitized on the issue and follow-up projects and procurement processes will involve installation of fences.

Polokwane: Matashe Prison - Dangerous reptiles, crocodiles, and pythons (large crocodile was removed by relevant tourism and parks authorities. Other crocodiles remain at facility)

Progress: The wildlife conservation team visited the Matashe sewage plant but could not remove the animals owing to winter hibernation and advised that they will return in summer to catch the animals.

Barberton plant: Crocodiles and pythons

Progress: Huge reptiles that posed a danger to workers were removed by wildlife conservation and only a small crocodile remains and is earmarked for removal soon.

Fence enclosing facility needs to be upgraded or replaced

Progress: Follow-up projects will involve the installation of fences and upgrading of facilities, where needed.

Lack of appreciation or care for safety of DPWI staff by SANDF (e.g., employee at Lohatla (and who stays at the plant in the evenings), on occasions when he must walk home, military activity of shooting mortars and other projectiles endangers his life)

Progress: This is one of the plants earmarked for urgent installation of park homes but unfortunately the Department of Defence has put a moratorium on all water care facilities projects until further notice.

No telephone or PPE at Lohatla and employee at plant is left alone and told to give missed calls when in need of something

Progress: PPE has been procured for plant personnel.

No supervision at Zonstraal Military, Macadamia Military Base, Oshoek Border and Barberton prison, yet DPWI has a qualified official who is not utilised adequately

Progress: The Directorate has intervened, and a qualified official has been appointed as an interim Supervisor until the vacant post is advertised/filled. The post was also upgraded to match the associated tasks and responsibilities, after consultation with Organisational Development officials.

The PSA welcomed the report and will continue monitoring developments.

Departmental houses

The PSA tabled the matter following complaints from members that most houses belonging to the Department are illegally occupied, whereas others are unoccupied. It indicated that for houses that are illegally occupied, the Department should ensure that such people are removed and that houses that are unoccupied should be given to employees for rental to avoid dilapidation. The employer responded that the matter will be discussed with the Facilities Management Directorate and feedback will be provided in the next meeting.

Bereavement policy

The PSA tabled the matter following complaints from members that the implementation of the policy in the Department is inconsistent in that there were funerals recently in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo (Bela Bela). Employees who attended the funeral in the Eastern Cape were not provided with accommodation, whereas those who attended the funeral in Bela Bela were provided with accommodation paid for by the employer. The employer responded that the policy has not been reviewed for the past 15 years and further indicated that the Department is currently being reviewed and that as soon as the internal process is finalised the policy will be shared with labour for input.

Policies

- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Job Evaluation Policy
- Employees' Health and Wellness Policy

The employer reported that these policies were discussed in Policy Task Team meetings and the proposed amendments and inputs from labour were received for consideration. It reported that the final version of the policies will be shared with labour soonest. The PSA noted the report.

Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website (www.psa.co.za), send an email to ask@psa.co.za or contact a PSA Provincial Office.

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GENERAL MANAGER