

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

28-02-2023

## Feedback: Special Departmental Bargaining Chamber (DBC) meeting - 24 February 2023

### Watercare Treatment Plants

Members will recall that after the task team conducted roadshows in various regions to check the conditions of employees at Watercare Treatment Plants, the employer deployed its team to go and confirm the report. The report from the employer's deployed team confirmed the challenges that were identified by the task team. Issues that were identified are:

- Overtime was not paid in time by regions in the Department and this was mainly because employees perform more overtime work than what is regulated by the Public Service Regulations. This is caused by the fact they are understaffed and operations require 24-hour surveillance.
- Personal protective equipment was still a problem because it was not provided and, in some instances, if provided, is either of poor quality or not the right size.
- Manpower is invariably a problem and the positions they occupy were never job evaluated. 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 that grass is cut so that it is safe to walk, snakes or crocodiles cannot hide, globes are not replaced to enable them to work at night, ablution facilities, where provided, are kept clean and many others.
- Training was done ten years ago and medical surveillance was never performed, which is contrary to health-policy provisions,

In the previous DBC, labour requested that the Departmental acting Director-General (ADG) be invited to the meeting for high-level interventions. The special DBC was held on 24 February 2023 with the ADG, the Human Resource component, and Facility Management Team. The Director-General confirmed to have gone through the report, which paints a dire state of Watercare Treatment Plants. In his response, however, he presented a three-phase plan to address the Watercare Treatment Plants' challenges.

### Phase 1

This phase will be implemented between 30 to 60 days, and includes the following:

- Directive will be issued for the procurement of PPE
- Installing fences for the six highest areas of priority
- Grass cutting at plants, look at key critical components relating to water and electricity
- Facility management branch will do the temporary assignment of duty, skills will be required for capacitation from different regions to capacitate facility management
- The ADG further indicated that he will approve a deviation from the normal process as these matters are urgent.

## **Phase 2**

This phase will run for 24 months and includes the following:

- The issue of salary disparity
- Appointment of a service provider for soft maintenance at plants
- Recruitment of qualified officials and skills transfer
- Replacement of appliances and improvement of roads for easy access and transportation

## **Phase 3**

This is a long-term phase and includes the devolution of some functions as these fall within municipal responsibilities.

There was a commitment made by the ADG that constant bi-lateral meetings with labour will be held to provide feedback. The ADG further requested to meet unions separately in the next few days. The PSA noted the report, however, requested that the implementation of Phase 1 should be a priority and that the installation of the fence should be extended to other plants and not only six prioritised areas.

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 a PSA Provincial Office.

GENERAL MANAGER