

Feedback: Departmental Bargaining Chamber meeting (DBC) - 27 March 2024

Organisational structure

The employer reported that the structure was finally approved by the Minister and that there are 209 additional or new positions. The PSA noted the employer's submission and requested a copy of the approved structure. The employer responded that it is unfortunately unable to share a copy with labour as the copy of the approved structure is on the hardware drive that it is unable to access owing to the ICT disruptions faced by GPAA. The employer committed to sharing a copy with labour as soon as the ICT disruption is resolved.

Absorption of contract workers

The employer indicated that after the approval of the organisational structure it moved swiftly to appoint 34 contract workers permanently. These are employees who were appointed in compliance with GPSSBC Resolution 1/2017 and whose contracts were ending on 31 March 2024. The PSA noted the employer's submission and enquired about the employer's plan regarding other contract workers appointed by GPAA who are not covered by GPSSBC Resolution 1/2017. The employer responded that it would provide a plan on how to deal with or accommodate other contract workers in the next DBC meeting. The PSA is delighted that the employer acceded to its demand to employ contract workers permanently. The approved structure will also allow for the absorption of other contract workers into permanent positions.

GPAA ransomware attack and ICT disruptions

The PSA indicated that there was a ransomware attack on GPAA systems around 16 February 2024, which led to ICT disruptions. The PSA submitted that the current situation caused anxiety and apprehension to GPAA employees as they must face or deal with angry and frustrated clients who have not received their pension benefits. The employer noted the PSA's submission and committed to organise a meeting with labour and provide a full report from ICT and plans to deal with this matter within seven days.

Water shortage/interruptions at GPAA offices

The employer indicated that this matter remains a challenge because of constant water supply interruptions throughout the country. The employer indicated that it has installed a backup water supply (tanks) in most of its offices across the country. The PSA raised a concern that most offices have a

backup water supply (tanks) and that places the health of employees at risk. The PSA further indicated that employees are often left frustrated when there are water supply interruptions without clear guidance from the employer. Parties agreed to engage further on this matter in the OHS meeting and to revisit the business continuity guidelines with the view to include water supply interruption situations. The PSA will request that employees work remotely as a permanent solution to water supply interruptions at GPAA offices.

GPAA implementation of Resolution 5/2014 (improved qualifications)

The employer reported that of the 27 employees who applied in 2023, 18 met the requirements and were paid on 31 October 2023. The employer further reported that it has approved five applications for the 2024-academic year. The PSA is delighted that GPAA is finally implementing GPSSBC Resolution 5/2014 and urges members to utilise this benefit.

Debt management policy

The PSA tabled this policy for review in the last meeting to address complaints received from members, alleging unlawful methods used by the employer to recover money from employees. The employer acceded to the PSA's request and indicated that the policy was due for review in June 2024. Parties agreed to engage further on this policy in a task team to be arranged by the employer.

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 PSA Provincial Offices.

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GENERAL MANAGER