



FOR PSA MEMBERS: **DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION (DWS)**

26-05-2025

Feedback: DWS facilitation meeting - Remote work arrangements

Request for reinstatement of rotational system in DWS: Work both from home and office

The PSA recently participated in a facilitation meeting with the employer following the invocation of Clause 17 of the GPSSBC Governance Rules. This was in response to the employer's decision to terminate remote work arrangements that had been in place during the COVID-19 lockdown period. The PSA raised concerns about the unilateral withdrawal of these arrangements and advocated for the reinstatement of a rotational system that would allow employees to work both from home and the office. The PSA highlighted the numerous benefits associated with remote work, including improved work-life balance, increased productivity, reduced commuting time and costs, and greater flexibility. It was emphasised that during the lockdown, the DWS successfully met its performance targets with employees working from home, indicating that remote work did not compromise service delivery. Furthermore, the PSA pointed out that remote work is increasingly being adopted as a permanent feature in several government departments, supported by formal policies.

In response, the employer stated that the remote work arrangement during the lockdown was implemented under exceptional circumstances and should not be regarded as a standard practice. It further noted that the nature of operations at the DWS differs from other departments, particularly because some employees work in operational environments such as dams, where remote work is not feasible. The employer also expressed concerns about the financial implications of rolling out a remote work system, including the need to procure laptops and related equipment for all employees. However, the employer acknowledged the shifting nature of work environments and confirmed that the Department's Business continuity Directorate had recently conducted a survey to assess the viability of remote work without affecting service delivery. The results of this survey are still being analysed. The employer undertook to share the outcome of the survey once available.

After discussions, it was agreed that the matter be referred to the Departmental Bargaining Chamber (DBC). The employer will provide feedback on the survey results at the next DBC meeting, where further engagement on the proposal to reinstate a rotational remote work system will take place.

The PSA will continue to monitor this issue and keep members informed of developments. Employees who wish to join the PSA are encouraged to visit the PSA's website or contact the nearest PSA Provincial Office.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER