

3/2026

FREE TO PSA MEMBERS

Unity in Action

**Towards 2030 with resilience,
endurance, and GROWTH**



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inside



Editorial: **Towards 2030 with resilience, endurance, and GROWTH**

PSA remains Union of Choice

Stronger Union starts with staying connected

Legacy of leadership: PSA advancing public service

PSA shop stewards rise through education and leadership

**PSA member recruitment:
How *YOU* benefit!**

**Constitution 30 years on: Democratic foundation
for workers' rights and union progress**

**GEMS contribution increase REDUCED:
PSA secures relief for members**

3

4

7

8

10

16

22

28



VISION

Be the leading politically non-aligned, professional trade union of choice, in the public sector and globally.

MISSION

Ensure the sustainability of the PSA through dynamic stakeholder management to protect the rights and to promote the interest of members. The following values guide our conduct aimed at achieving the PSA's mission:

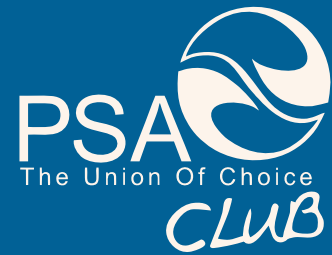
**Loyalty, transparency, respect,
ethical conduct, consistency,
and service excellence**



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HOW TO LOG IN:

First-time user?

Enter your Loyalty Number as both your Username and Password, then select "Submit."

You'll find your Loyalty Number in your welcome SMS or email.

Secure your account

Update your password after logging in to keep your account safe.

Can't find your Loyalty Number?

Scroll down and enter your ID Number. Your login details will automatically populate in the fields.

Welcome

PSA The Union Of Choice CLUB

Login

Username

Password

First Time Users: Use your loyalty no. as both username & password. Remember to update your password under Profile to keep your account secure. [Problems?](#)

Login

Forgot Password

Don't have your loyalty no?

ID No.

Submit

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Welcome SMS Example:

Welcome to PSACLUB

#8800000057 use it as login and password.

Go to www.psaclub.mobi
info 0860 021 076

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Coupons are updated regularly, so log in often to view the latest offers and maximise your savings.

STORE ALL YOUR LOYALTY CARDS.

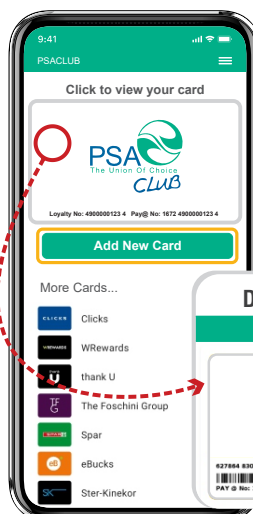
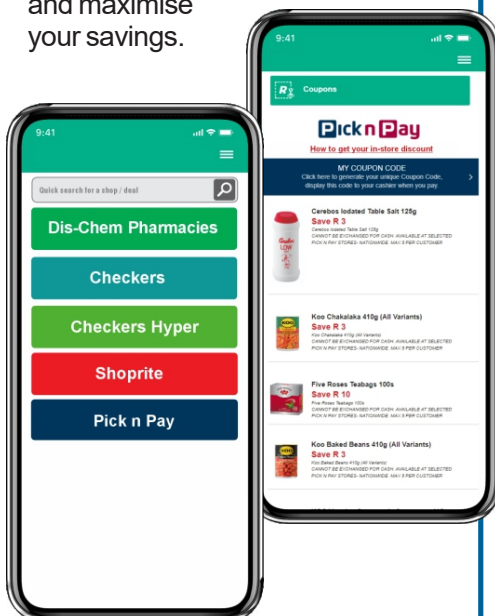
Select "Add New Card."

Choose a card from the list or add your own.

Enter your card number and select "Submit."

Tap any card to view the barcode.

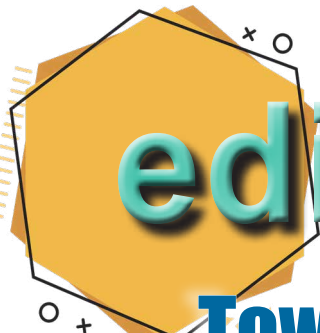
Present your barcode in-store to collect your rewards.



LOST YOUR LOYALTY NO?

Simply enter your ID number under the "Can't find your Loyalty Number?" section to retrieve your Loyalty Number instantly.





editorial

Towards 2030 with resilience, endurance, and GROWTH



The PSA enters mid-2026 at a critical point that will shape the Union's trajectory in pursuit of realising strategic priorities. Marked by the commemoration of PSA Day on 7 July, this period serves to remind members of the Union's proud history and hard-won gains, whilst reinforcing a shared responsibility to sustain momentum, sharpen focus, and act with purpose.

For an organisation protecting a 106-year legacy, this is not a passive moment. It demands resilience and endurance in support of sustained growth. This milestone anniversary is more than symbolic - it speaks to the resilience and enduring relevance of the PSA, whilst underscoring the obligation to protect and strengthen the Union in service of future generations of public-sector employees. A legacy of this magnitude cannot be sustained through complacency. It requires active participation, vigilance, and a collective commitment to uphold the integrity and independence that define the PSA's credibility.

In this context, the PSA recently called on government to act with urgency in securing adequate funding for the Madlanga Commission, which faces the risk of suspending operations owing to financial constraints. Such a scenario is not viable. The Commission has demonstrated measurable progress in exposing corruption and maladministration, strengthening accountability, and reinforcing governance. Its continued work is critical for restoring public trust, safeguarding the integrity of public institutions, and the working environments of public servants. Any disruption of the Commission's operations will impact negatively on the battle against corruption and erode confidence in government's commitment to ethical governance.

At a time when workers are confronted by intensifying economic pressures, the PSA continues to act in defence of public-sector employees.

Sustained PSA pressure, for example, forced the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) to reverse its decision to implement a 9.5% weighted membership contribution increase to a revised increase of 7.5% from 1 July 2026 (read the article on page 10).

Rising fuel costs are driving increases in public-transport fares, placing further strain on workers who already allocate a significant portion of their income to commuting. This is compounded by higher food prices linked to transport costs, as well as recent electricity tariff increases and higher medical-aid costs. The cumulative impact is a deepening cost-of-living crisis that threatens household stability, productivity, and service delivery.

This reality requires a decisive government response. Interventions must include targeted support for the transport industry to stabilise fares, a reconsideration of fuel-levy increases, and the exploration of temporary tax-relief measures. Accelerating affordable public-transport solutions, such as revitalised rail services and expanded subsidised bus routes is equally critical. In parallel, employers should, where possible, reinstate hybrid and remote-working arrangements, alongside flexible working hours, to reduce commuting costs and ease pressure on transport systems.

The PSA moves into the second half of the year along with important national commemorations such as Mandela Day, Women's Day, and Heritage Day. These occasions serve to reinforce the Union's responsibility to advance equality, promote inclusion, and celebrate the diversity that strengthens the PSA and the broader public service. These occasions further serve as a reminder that values must be actively lived, not simply articulated.

At the same time, the PSA must remain vigilant against distractions that undermine organisational effectiveness. Division, wild ambitions amongst leaders, misinformation, and unfounded narratives weaken and detract from the PSA's core mandate. Maintaining focus, discipline, and a commitment to constructive engagement is essential.

The PSA's mandate remains clear: Serve members effectively, grow the PSA, and uphold the Union's position as a credible and authoritative voice for public-sector employees. Delivering on this mandate requires the consistent application of the Union's core values of loyalty, transparency, respect, ethical conduct, consistency, and service excellence. These operational imperatives sustain trust, unity, and credibility. The months ahead will require focused effort and collective accountability. Each PSA member has a role to play in strengthening and protecting the Union of Choice.

The PSA's future will be determined by the Union's ability to remain grounded, act with integrity, and execute operations with discipline towards 2030 with resilience, endurance, and growth.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER



In service of public-sector employees



PSA remains Union of Choice

For 106 years, the PSA has been a pillar of strength for South African public-sector employees. Since the Union's establishment on 7 July 1920, the PSA has walked alongside workers through changing political landscapes, economic uncertainty, labour struggles, and the transformation of the Country into a democracy.

For generations of public servants, the PSA has been a trusted voice of advancement, protection, representation, and stability. Through every challenge faced by public-sector employees, the PSA has consistently defended labour rights, negotiated improved conditions of service, and ensured that workers are treated with dignity, fairness, and respect. In 2026, 106 years later, the PSA continues to stand firm as the Union of Choice for hundreds of thousands of public-sector employees across South Africa.

Recent rumours emanating from proceedings before the Labour Appeal Court unfortunately fuelled speculation regarding the PSA's legal standing and registration status. There were attempts to misrepresent the matter, spreading false claims that the PSA has lost its legitimacy or has been deregistered as a trade union.

These claims are entirely false. The PSA remains a fully registered and recognised trade union with all organisational rights intact. It is important to understand the issue before the Court. The matter before the Labour Appeal Court was never about whether the PSA is a legitimate trade union, nor was it about deregistration. Proceedings related specifically to procedural concerns regarding amendments submitted to the Union's constitution and whether the Registrar of Labour Relations was entitled to refuse the registration of those amendments.

Similar to many long-standing organisations, the PSA periodically reviews and updates the Union's constitution to remain aligned with changing operational requirements, revolving governance needs, and legal developments. The case before the Court therefore dealt with procedural and administrative concerns regarding the submission and format of those proposed amendments only.

Importantly, the Labour Appeal Court expressly confirmed the PSA's standing as a registered trade union in terms section 95 of the *Labour Relations Act* and that the PSA has been recognised by the Registrar as a genuine and independent trade union since its original registration in 1993. The Court did not rule that the PSA was illegitimate, nor did the judgement affect the Union's ability to represent members, participate in bargaining councils, or continue operating in government structures. The PSA therefore continues to negotiate, litigate, organise, and advocate for members across the public service.

The PSA's history reflects a legacy of resilience, credibility, and service to workers. In November 1922, the PSA gained official recognition, strengthening its role as a representative body for public servants. In August 1942, the PSA was incorporated as a not-for-profit entity under the *Companies Act*. In June 1993, the PSA formally registered as a trade union under the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*, before registering under the *Labour Relations Act* in November 1996.

These milestones reflect the continued growth and evolution of the PSA through generations whilst remaining committed to protecting workers and strengthening the public service. Throughout its history, the PSA has consistently stood at the forefront of issues affecting public servants.



Unity in Action

Whether challenging unfair labour practices, opposing unsafe working conditions, addressing staff shortages, defending workers against exploitation and injustice, or advocating for fair salaries and benefits, the PSA has maintained the Union's focus on improving the lives of workers. This commitment remains unchanged.

Following recent engagements between the PSA and the Registrar of Labour Relations, it was again confirmed that the PSA remains a genuine and registered trade union. The only outstanding matter relates to the procedural refinement and resubmission of amendments to the Union's constitution. The revised PSA constitution was submitted to the Registrar of Labour Relations in compliance with procedural requirements.

The PSA condemns opportunistic misinformation spread regarding the Court ruling. At a time when public-sector employees are facing enormous pressure from rising living costs, increasing workloads, unaffordable medical schemes, staff shortages, and difficult working conditions, they deserve leadership and unity rather than political point-scoring and false propaganda.

The PSA refuses to be distracted from the Union's core mission. The PSA remains focused on defending workers, advancing labour rights, strengthening service delivery, and ensuring that the concerns of public-sector employees continue to be heard loud and clear.

For more than a century, the PSA has weathered political change, economic hardship, and workplace challenges by remaining steadfast in the Union's commitment to workers. That legacy cannot be erased by misinformation or distorted narratives. The PSA's strength has always been rooted in the Union's members, values, and unwavering dedication to public-sector employees across South Africa. Moving forward, the message remains clear: The PSA is here to stay, and work on behalf of public-sector employees continues uninterrupted. The PSA proudly is the Union of Choice and the workers' voice!

Source
PSA Interests





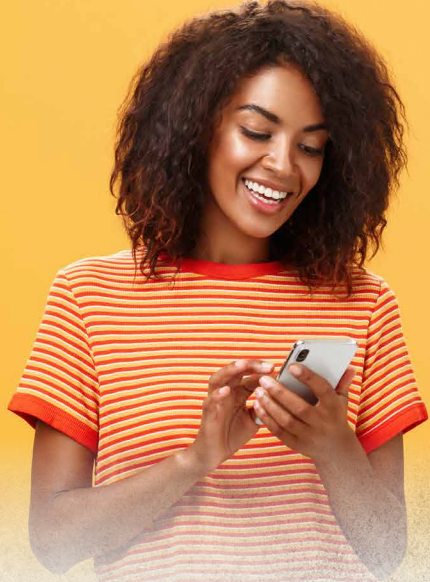
#Update Your Details



Scan.Update.Connect!

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Stronger Union starts with staying CONNECTED

In today's fast-moving work environment, staying informed is not a luxury - it is essential. Whether it is a workplace dispute, salary negotiations, benefit updates, industrial action, legal support, training opportunities, or important campaigns, members rely on the PSA to keep them informed, protected, and empowered.

But there is one critical factor that determines whether members receive this important information: Their contact details must be correct and up to date.

To strengthen communication and improve member engagement, the PSA has launched the **Update Your Details** campaign, a focused initiative aimed at encouraging members to verify and update their information. The campaign forms part of the PSA's commitment to improving member service and ensuring that every member remains informed, represented, and connected.

Through this campaign, members are encouraged to update:

- Cell phone numbers
- Email addresses
- Employment details

The campaign also highlights the importance of accurate member data in enabling the PSA to provide faster assistance, targeted communication, and improved service delivery.

When your cell phone number, email address, or workplace changes and the PSA is not informed, communication breaks down. This can result in members missing out on critical updates that directly affect their employment, benefits, and representation.

Accurate details help the PSA to:

- Communicate urgent workplace developments quickly
- Provide members with important labour updates
- Share newsletters, campaigns, and announcements
- Ensure members receive information about benefits and services
- Contact members during disputes, grievances, or disciplinary matters
- Improve service delivery and member support

Without updated details, members may unknowingly disconnect themselves from important Union communication.

The strength of the PSA lies in the Union's members. Effective communication allows the PSA to mobilise quickly, respond efficiently, and advocate powerfully on behalf of workers. When members keep their details updated, they strengthen their own connection to the Union and the PSA's ability to represent and protect workers effectively. **In a time where information is critical, staying connected ensures that no member is left behind.**

Members are encouraged to participate in the PSA's *Update Your Details* campaign and ensure their information is accurate and up to date. Do not miss important updates, workplace information, benefits, campaigns, and newsletters that are designed to protect, support, and empower you!

Scan. Update. Connect!



Legacy of leadership: PSA advancing public service

Established in 1920, the PSA on 7 July 2026 proudly marks 106 years of committed service to South African public-sector employees. This milestone in longevity reflects endurance, resilience, and a continued impact in advancing fairness, dignity, and justice in the workplace.

For more than a century, the PSA has stood firm through political, social, and economic change. It has remained committed to protecting workers' rights, improving conditions of service, and promoting a capable, ethical, and well-resourced public service. As the PSA commemorates the Union's 106th anniversary, it honours the leaders, members, and officials who over the years contributed to the gains enjoyed today, whilst also recommitting to the continued pursuit of decent work, fair wages, and service excellence.

The PSA's role remains critical in promoting the rights, interests, and welfare of public-sector employees as the Union continues to shape the future of work in South Africa.

Legacy of achievement

Since its establishment, the PSA has grown to become the largest politically non-affiliated Union in the South African public service. The PSA represents more than 250 000 members, including pensioner members. Over decades, the PSA secured important victories that have shaped the public service. Key achievements include the introduction of essential employee benefits, including early advocacy for a public service medical-aid scheme, housing subsidies, and improved conditions of employment. The PSA also played a critical role in advancing fair working conditions, leave provisions, safety standards, and more humane workplaces for public servants.

The PSA further contributed to gender transformation, including a successful campaign for women to be permanently appointed in the public service in 1970. In collective bargaining, the PSA has been a key player in structures such as the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council, where wages, benefits, and working conditions are negotiated. Beyond bargaining, the PSA continues to provide professional legal representation and dispute-resolution support to members. The Union remains a leader in ongoing campaigns to eliminate unsafe workplaces, deteriorating infrastructure, and address the need for employers to comply with occupational health and safety requirements.

The PSA's contribution, however, extends beyond labour issues. Through ongoing social responsibility initiatives such as the *#SchoolSafety* and *#Clinic* projects, the Union has demonstrated a commitment to supporting communities.

Onwards

In recent years, the PSA continued to secure meaningful gains for public servants despite a difficult economic environment. The Union's role in concluding wage agreements as well as improvements to housing and medical subsidies provided much-needed relief to workers. The PSA continued to pursue above-inflation increases in several semi-state institutions.

The current environment remains complex. Fiscal constraints, slow economic growth, inflation, and austerity measures continue to place immense pressure on public servants. Corruption, poor governance, unfilled vacancies, and deteriorating infrastructure further weaken service delivery and workplace morale.



As older workers exit the public service and younger workers enter, the PSA recognises that youth engagement is critical. The PSA thus continues modernising the Union's approach in this regard in an effort to serve this important group effectively.

Technological change requires a forward-looking response. Automation, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and artificial intelligence are changing the nature of work and skills required in the public service. Resistance to technological advancement is not sustainable. The PSA will continue to advocate for re-skilling, job-transition support, and fair implementation of new technologies.

The rising cost of living, including fuel increases and the broader impact on workers, remains another major concern. The PSA has consistently advocated for remote work where practical. The COVID-19 period proved that quality service delivery can continue outside traditional office settings. This is even more relevant where many government buildings remain unsafe or non-compliant with occupational health and safety standards.

Members: Union's strength

At the heart of the PSA's progress is the Union's membership. The PSA's strength lies in dedicated public servants who place their trust in the Union of Choice whilst in service of South Africans. As the PSA moves towards 2030, investing in the Union's members is critical. This includes promoting continuous learning, strengthening workplace representation, encouraging active participation in union structures, and supporting innovation and adaptability.

Advocacy and activism often attract criticism. The role of a trade union is, however, not to appease detractors. Its mandate is to defend the rights, dignity, and livelihoods of workers. The PSA makes no apology for standing firm. The Union will continue to challenge unfair labour practices, oppose policies that undermine workers, hold employers accountable, whilst advocating for a capable, ethical, and well-resourced public service. Trade unions remain vital in balancing employer authority with employee rights and the PSA will continue to ensure that fairness and justice are not compromised.

The PSA's legacy is strong, but the future responsibility is even greater. The Union of Choice is committed to protecting public servants, strengthening the public service, and advancing the dignity of work in South Africa.



In service of public-sector employees



The PSA offers *financial assistance* with funeral costs at the death of a member, provided that the application is received within six months of death



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PSA shop stewards **RISE** through education and leadership

The PSA's commitment to empowerment reached another proud milestone on 5 May 2026, when 14 dedicated PSA shop stewards graduated from the Industrial Working Life Programme (IWLP). Their achievement represents far more than the completion of a qualification. It stands as a powerful reflection of perseverance, worker empowerment, and the PSA's ongoing investment in developing informed, capable, and resilient leaders in the public service.

For many of these graduates, the journey began several years ago with a shared determination to strengthen their futures and ability to serve workers and communities more effectively. Through discipline, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment, these shop stewards successfully completed a demanding academic programme whilst continuing to fulfill their responsibilities as employees, union representatives, parents, community members, and activists.

The IWLP, jointly offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the Workers' College of South Africa, is a five-year, part-time Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. The programme focuses on Sociology, Industrial Organisation, and Labour Studies, equipping unionists and workers with critical analytical, organisational, and leadership skills. Combining semester-based learning with winter-school sessions, the programme creates an accessible pathway for workers seeking higher education whilst remaining active in the workplace. The recent graduation ceremony was therefore not merely an academic event. It was a celebration of resilience, growth, and collective achievement.

The PSA consistently prioritises education and lifelong learning as part of the Union's broader mission of strengthening worker representation and advancing the interests of public servants. Through strategic partnerships with sector education and training authorities, higher-education institutions, government agencies, and worker-education organisations, the PSA has opened doors to meaningful opportunities for members. These partnerships include collaborations with organisations such as the Workers' College of South Africa, Ditsela Workers Education Institute, Workers World Media Productions, and the International Labour Resource and Information Group. Through these initiatives, PSA shop stewards have gained access to short courses, leadership development programmes, certificates, and full academic qualifications that continue to enhance the Union's capacity. In 2025, ten PSA members successfully completed a Higher Certificate in Project Management through a partnership between the PSA, the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA), and Mancosa.



Additional programmes supported through SETAs such as the ETDP SETA, EWSETA, and FASSET further expanded learning opportunities for shop stewards across South Africa.

The success of the IWLP graduates highlights the value of these investments. The group's educational journey began in 2018 and culminated in 2025. It saw members successfully completing a range of short courses, a Higher Certificate qualification, and ultimately the IWLP degree. Throughout this demanding period, the graduates demonstrated remarkable commitment as they balanced professional duties, union activism, family responsibilities, and academic challenges whilst remaining determined to obtain their qualifications. Their success did not come without challenges. Through solidarity, encouragement, and determination, the group supported one another throughout the programme.

The graduates acknowledged the important role played by mentors and supporters who helped sustain them through difficult moments. Special appreciation was extended to the PSA's Dr Mphutlane Bofelo, whose academic, logistical, and personal mentorship provided crucial support throughout the five-year journey. Graduates also recognised the contributions of the PSA's Angelica Jacobson and Claude Naiker for their encouragement and guidance during the programme. The group further highlighted the exceptional support provided by Aubrey Nappie, PSA Provincial Manager in the Free State, whose efforts in negotiating study leave, arranging early workplace releases, and assisting with resources helped strengthen the group's ability to succeed academically whilst remaining active in the workplace.

What makes this achievement particularly inspiring is that these graduates pursued their studies whilst remaining committed to serving workers. Shop stewards often operate at the frontline of labour relations, assisting members with grievances, disciplinary matters, workplace challenges, and advocacy for fair treatment. Completing a demanding degree programme whilst carrying these responsibilities required extraordinary discipline and sacrifice.

The graduates have now emerged with academic qualifications and enhanced skills that will strengthen the PSA's work in collective bargaining, labour relations, worker education, organisational development, and leadership in the public service. The success of this group also created a strong foundation for future educational initiatives in the PSA. Graduates expressed their commitment to continuing to serve the PSA whilst encouraging the expansion of similar programmes to benefit more shop stewards. Their recommendations for the future include expanding educational opportunities for shop stewards, strengthening institutional support systems, and exploring post-graduate opportunities that would allow worker leaders to continue advancing academically and professionally. These graduates have demonstrated the transformative impact of education in the labour movement. Their journey illustrates how investing in worker development strengthens people, organisations, and communities.

In celebrating this milestone, the PSA also salutes the spirit embodied by these shop stewards, determination in the face of obstacles, commitment to worker empowerment, and belief in the power of education to transform lives. The accomplishments of the IWLP graduates is a reminder that shop stewards are more than workplace representatives - they are leaders, educators, organisers, and champions of social justice who continue to strengthen the labour movement through knowledge, resilience, and service.

The PSA would like to congratulate Alina Tshabalala (Free State), Mandla Mbenyane (Eastern Cape), Dwayne Christians (Western Cape), Phakamani Soldaka (Western Cape), and Jongisizwe Mkhosana (Northern Cape) on their exceptional achievements.

Source
PSA Human Resources: Learning and Development



Plea-bargain agreements

Is chairperson in disciplinary hearing bound by proposed lenient sanction in plea-bargain agreement?

On 8 January 2026, the Labour Appeal Court delivered judgement in *SAPS v Mkonto and Others (PA/28) [2026] ZALAC*, addressing an important question on whether a chairperson in a disciplinary hearing is bound by the sanction proposed in the plea-bargain agreement between an employer and employee. The Court also considered what the appropriate course of action should be in the event that a chairperson rejects the proposed lenient sanction in terms of the plea-bargain agreement.

In this particular case, the employee, Mr Mkonto, who was a South African Police Service (SAPS) employee was charged with allegations of serious misconduct for the unauthorised use of and parking of the motor vehicle of the SAPS. These charges were aggravated by dishonesty, which involved the falsification or manipulation of travel records. Initially the employee pleaded not guilty to the charges but later changed his plea to a plea of guilty after the employer had led its evidence. The employer and employee accordingly entered into a plea-bargain agreement where it was agreed that the employee would plead guilty to all five charges in exchange for a lenient sanction, being a suspended dismissal valid for six months and a R500 fine. Ultimately, the chairperson rejected this proposal and made an outcome of dismissal.

Arbitration proceedings

Unsatisfied with the chairperson's decision, the employee referred an unfair dismissal to the Safety and Security Sectoral Bargaining Council, arguing that the dismissal was procedurally and substantially unfair. The pre-arbitration minutes recorded that parties entered into a plea-bargain agreement as common cause. The arbitrator had to determine whether the chairperson was empowered to overturn the plea-bargain agreement. The employer argued that the chairperson of the disciplinary hearing was not bound by the plea-bargain agreement and that the SAPS Discipline Regulations, 2016 allow the chairperson to pronounce on a verdict after determining that the sanction was appropriate with the offence. In her testimony, the chairperson testified that in her view, the plea-bargain agreement was a proposal and the charges levelled against the employee were serious enough to warrant a sanction of dismissal. The arbitrator found that parties were bound by the pre-arbitration minutes and that the chairperson had no power to interfere with the plea-bargain agreement. He relied on the Labour Court judgement of *Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development v General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council and Others (2017) 38 ILJ 213 (LC)* to make this finding. His reasoning was that the SAPS, through the chairperson, interfered with the plea-bargain agreement and that the dismissal was procedurally and substantially unfair. The arbitrator subsequently ordered reinstatement with full back pay.

Labour Court proceedings

The employer sought to challenge and set aside the arbitration award at the Labour Court. It contended that the arbitrator misinterpreted the case law that was relied upon in support of his finding that the chairperson was bound to the plea-bargain agreement; that a contradictory award was rendered and that he did not come to a reasonable conclusion when he decided that dismissal was an appropriate sanction. In the end, the Labour Court upheld the arbitrator's finding that the chairperson was compelled to honour the plea-bargain agreement and to impose the lenient sanction. The Court was of the view that the award met the threshold of reasonableness and dismissed the SAPS review application.

Labour Appeal Court proceedings

The main issue at the Labour Appeal Court was whether the chairperson of the disciplinary hearing may reject a lenient sanction pursuant to the plea-bargain agreement. The Court made reference to plea-bargain agreements related to criminal cases and stated that a trial judge may reject a plea-bargain agreement if of the view that the proposed sentence is unjust.

By **Wandile Mphahlele** - PCM: Rights & Litigation

The Court thus confirmed that contention by the SAPS that the chairperson was not bound by the plea-bargain agreement and that reliance on the case of *Minister v Justice* was misconceived. However, the Court went on to say that the chairperson cannot pick and choose which part of the plea agreement to support. It stated that by rejecting the lenient sanction the chairperson collapsed the plea-bargain agreement and, as a result, there was no basis upon which to impose a sanction she considered appropriate, which is inconsistent with the *audi alterum partem* rule, which requires fairness before a material decision is made. Essentially what the Court is saying is that it is procedurally improper for a chairperson to reject the lenient sanction in the plea-bargain agreement, they must reject the whole agreement and allow the matter to proceed normally. They cannot keep the admission of guilt and impose a harsher sanction without giving an employee an opportunity to defend themselves. It was on this basis that the Court found that the dismissal of Mr Mkonto was procedurally unfair.

The Court provided the following guidelines for the procedure to be followed when the chairperson of a disciplinary enquiry has objections about the lenient sanction proposed in a plea-bargain agreement:

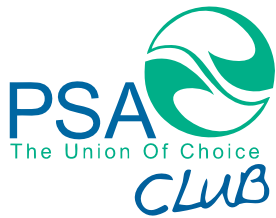
1. The chairperson must inform parties that they are disinclined to endorse the proposed lenient sanction and give reasons.
2. Parties must be allowed to review their positions and consider their options which may include:
 - 2.1 to reopen plea-bargain discussions to address the chairperson's concerns and propose another sanction, or
 - 2.2 alternatively, to terminate the plea-bargain agreement.
3. In the event parties decide to terminate the plea-bargain agreement, the accused employee must be allowed to withdraw the plea of guilty.
4. The disciplinary enquiry must commence *de novo* before a different chairperson, unless the accused employee has consented that the same chairperson may continue to preside over the disciplinary enquiry.

On the other hand, the Court had to determine whether procedural unfairness had an effect on outcome of substantive fairness. The Court found that the Court *quo* erred by finding that the employee's dismissal was substantially unfair. Instead of independently assessing the case in totality based on all evidence presented, the Court deferred to the Arbitrator's reasoning, which the Labour Appeal Court cautions against. The appeal succeeded on this part only.

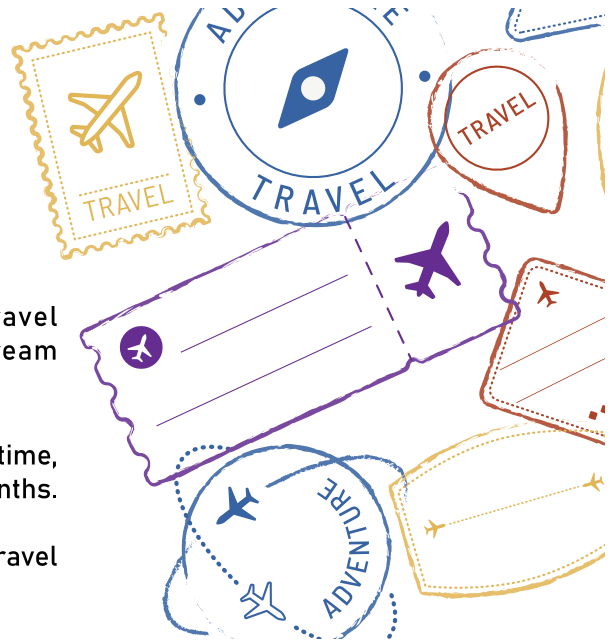
The Court ultimately set aside the Labour Court's order and ordered that the review application succeeded partly. The arbitration award was set aside, except for the finding that the dismissal was procedurally unfair. The Court substituted the award with a finding that Mr Mkonto's dismissal was substantively fair. However, the SAPS was ordered to pay him compensation equal to three months' salary owing to the procedural unfairness.

What it means in practice

What is clear from this judgement is that whilst a chairperson is not bound to accept a sanction in terms of a plea-bargain agreement, they are not empowered to modify it. Where a chairperson refuses to accept the agreed sanction, the effect is that the entire plea-bargain agreement collapses. The proposed guidelines provide a fair and structured approach to be followed where a chairperson has reservations about the lenient sanction contained in a plea-bargain agreement, particularly in circumstances where the misconduct is serious and a harsher sanction may be warranted. Accordingly, it must be noted that these guidelines are not rigid rules and should be applied with a measure of flexibility where the interest of justice so require. Ultimately, the *Mkonto* judgement serves as a critical reminder that whilst plea bargain is a valuable tool for resolving disputes efficiently, it cannot override a chairperson's duty to ensure a procedurally and substantively fair hearing.



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Community Health Workers:

In search of dignity, justice, and recognition

Women's Day 2026, under the theme “Building Resilient Economies for All”, shines the spotlight on the women whose labour continues to sustain families, communities, and essential public services across South Africa. These include Community Health Workers whose daily work remains one of the clearest examples of resilience, sacrifice, and service in the South African public healthcare system.

Long before sunrise, Community Health Workers begin their daily journeys through communities across the Country. Armed with clipboards, medicine packs, healthcare information, and years of frontline experience, they move from house to house checking on elderly patients, supporting pregnant mothers, ensuring that TB and HIV patients remain on treatment, and helping families navigate a strained healthcare system.

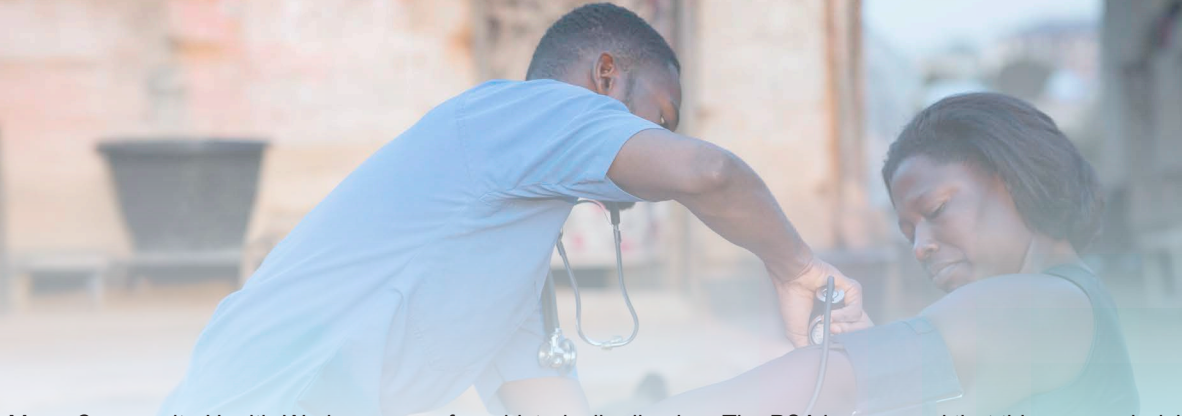
For many vulnerable communities, these workers are far more than healthcare providers. They are counselors, caregivers, educators, and often the only consistent connection to public healthcare services. Despite the critical role they play in sustaining communities and supporting the economy through healthier populations, thousands of Community Health Workers continue to face discrimination, exclusion, and uncertainty within the very system they help sustain.

The PSA has continuously raised serious concern about the treatment of Community Health Workers. This intensified following recent developments regarding the exclusion of those who do not possess a matric qualification from permanent appointment opportunities in the Department of Health. For many Community Health Workers, the issue extends beyond qualifications or administrative requirements. It speaks directly to dignity, recognition, fairness, and years of sacrifice.

The majority of Community Health Workers are women, many of whom have dedicated their lives to caring for communities whilst carrying the additional burden of poverty, unemployment, and family responsibilities. Their work represents an essential yet often invisible pillar of South Africa's healthcare system and local economies. Without their contribution, countless households would struggle to access basic healthcare services, treatment support, and health education.

Many Community Health Workers began their service as volunteers, working with little or no income whilst caring for vulnerable communities. Others spent years working on temporary contracts or modest stipends without pension, medical aid, or employment security. Despite these difficult conditions, they remained committed to serving communities often facing poverty, overcrowding, disease outbreaks, and limited healthcare access.

Many of these dedicated workers remain uncertain about their future. The PSA has criticised the exclusion of experienced Community Health Workers without matric qualifications as such an approach disregards years of practical healthcare experience and dedication. Competence, institutional knowledge, and lived experience should not be ignored, particularly when many of these workers were trained and empowered by the healthcare system. Women and men who spent years serving communities under difficult and under-resourced conditions are now confronted with the possibility of being excluded from permanent employment or redirected into lower-level support positions despite their healthcare experience. Some workers have dedicated between ten and 20 years to community healthcare. This discrimination extends beyond employment practices. It affects the dignity and humanity of workers who have spent years caring for others.



Many Community Health Workers come from historically disadvantaged communities where access to formal education was severely limited by poverty and inequality. Whilst they may not possess formal matric certificates, they acquired extensive healthcare knowledge through years of frontline experience and direct patient care. Their practical skills, cultural understanding, and deep community relationships cannot simply be dismissed. Their importance became even more visible during the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time of fear, uncertainty, and overwhelming pressure on hospitals and clinics, Community Health Workers became one of the Country's most important lines of defence. They went into communities to conduct screenings, provide healthcare education, trace contacts, monitor patients in isolation, support vaccination awareness campaigns, and ensure that vulnerable residents continued receiving chronic medication and basic healthcare support. Many worked without adequate protective equipment, sufficient resources, or job security, yet they continued serving communities at great personal risk to themselves and their families. Their contribution during the pandemic highlighted both their importance to the healthcare system as well as the deep injustice of continuing to treat these essential workers as temporary or disposable labour despite their sacrifices that helped the Country through one of its most difficult public-health crises.

In January 2025, the Labour Court ruled that Community Health Workers performing permanent and essential work should be recognised as permanent employees of the state. The ruling acknowledged what these workers and communities have long understood: The work by Community Health Workers is not temporary as the need for healthcare and community support is permanent.

The PSA welcomed the ruling as an important step towards justice for workers who had spent years labouring under precarious conditions. However, concerns emerged regarding the implementation of the ruling and the exclusion of experienced workers who do not meet newly enforced educational criteria. The situation has created fear and anxiety amongst these workers. Whilst some are absorbed into permanent positions, others remain trapped in uncertainty, earning significantly less and continuing without the protections and benefits of permanent employment.

The PSA has warned that this approach risks undermining workers' rights and the public healthcare system. Community Health Workers are not temporary additions to healthcare services. They are essential to the functioning of clinics, hospitals, and primary healthcare programmes. They assist with preventative care, reduce pressure on healthcare facilities, support treatment adherence, and provide healthcare services directly in communities that may otherwise struggle to access care. The treatment of Community Health Workers reflects a broader societal pattern where care work, particularly work largely performed by women, continues to be undervalued and underpaid. Despite being described as the "backbone" of community healthcare, many Community Health Workers still face precarious employment conditions, occupational insecurity, and limited recognition.

As South Africa commemorates Women's Day, the experiences of Community Health Workers serve as a reminder that resilient economies cannot be built whilst essential care workers remain excluded, underpaid, and insecure. A truly resilient economy values care work, protects vulnerable workers, and creates pathways for dignity, inclusion, and economic justice. The PSA has called for a more humane and equitable approach that recognises both formal education and years of practical experience. Workers who have demonstrated their competence and commitment through years of service should not be discarded because of barriers rooted in historical inequality.

The PSA has called for urgent intervention to ensure that Community Health Workers are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. This includes recognising prior learning, valuing workplace experience, ensuring fair pathways to permanent employment, and protecting workers from unfair exclusion, and occupational demotion. At its core, the struggle of Community Health Workers is about far more than employment contracts - it is about dignity, justice, equality, recognition, and the value placed on women's labour in society. It is about ensuring that those who spent years caring for vulnerable communities are not discarded when they seek recognition, protection, and financial security from the system they faithfully served.

Source
<https://irs.org.za/2026/04/28/how-the-state-undermined-the-rights-of-community-health-workers/>
<https://groundup.org.za/article/major-court-victory-for-community-health-workers/>
<https://www.medicalbrief.co.za/banner.jpg>
PSA Interests

PSA member recruitment: How **YOU** benefit!

A strong Union, growing union, supported by member recruitment efforts, provides significant benefits for individual members and the collective group of members.

A solid and growing membership base strengthens the union's collective bargaining power, allowing it to negotiate better wages and improved working conditions. It further strengthens worker representation in workplace disputes, promotes labour rights advocacy, ensures safer work environments, and educates employees about their rights. The union empowers workers with a collective voice to address concerns, influence policies, and drive positive change in their workplaces.

The PSA is such a strong and growing Union of Choice of more than 245 000 public-sector employees and retired employees, thanks also to members' continued efforts! The PSA rewards registered members who successfully recruit new members for the Union with an honorarium.

To qualify, the recruiter must submit the fully completed membership application form of the new member, ensuring that the recruiter's details are also fully completed on the form. Once the PSA collects the first membership fee from the new member's employer, the recruiter will receive an honorarium equal to the current PSA monthly membership fee of R119 (minus 25% tax).

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***Membership application form provided on page 18 of this magazine (also available at www.psa.co.za)**



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- 1. Is a growing Union** with 240 000+ members served by Provincial Offices across the country.
- 2. Attends to members' individual disputes FREE** of charge.
- 3. Negotiates fair terms of remuneration** and represents members' interests in bargaining structures.
- 4. Protects members' service benefits** (including medical aid, pension schemes, and housing subsidies).
- 5. Addresses issues** such as fair and reasonable working conditions, hours of work, and leave.
- 6. Is the only Union in the Public Service that serves Public Service pensioners.**
- 7. Is financially stable** (complies with the *Companies Act and Labour Relations Act*).
- 8. Assists beneficiaries and communities throughout South Africa as part of the Union's corporate social investment programs.**
- 9. Protects members' rights** and defends them in unfair labour practices or infringements of constitutional rights and legislation (*Labour Relations Act, 1996, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997, and Employment Equity Act, 1998*). Disputes are resolved at the CCMA, Labour Court, and Labour Appeal Court. In the Public Service, the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC), Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), Safety and Security Sectoral Bargaining Council (SSSBC), Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC), and General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council (GPSSBC) provide dispute resolution functions. With the promotion of interests, rights are also established with collective agreements - non-compliance with such rights is being taken care of by these institutions.
- 10. Employs professional, dedicated and competent staff** to support member structures in service of members.
- 11. Promotes members' interests** during collective bargaining in bargaining forums with employers.
- 12. Is admitted to the various bargaining councils**, which enables the Union to resolve workplace problems in these councils, saving cost and time.
- 13. Acts only on members' mandate** (mandates on collective issues are obtained from member structures).
- 14. Has country-wide, extensive member structures** (national and sectoral) that are the link between the Union and members. These structures mirror the structures for collective bargaining and ensure the protection and promotion of members' rights and interests. Structures are active in all provinces to promote the organisation of members, obtain mandates and improve communication. For information on your PSA representative and structure, contact your local PSA Provincial Office.
- 15. Has an impressive success rate in resolving cases** by the Union's full-time staff and thousands of democratically elected, trained shop stewards.
- 16. Offers fringe benefits to members, including FREE membership of PSACLUB!**
Other benefits include an exclusive PSA short-term insurance scheme, insurance benefits, funeral schemes, and assistance with debt and personal loans.
- 17. Provides FREE financial assistance with funeral costs at a member's death.**
- 18. Provides FREE professional indemnity insurance cover** for identified groupings of members (R1 million, per member, per year with no limitation in the aggregate).
- 19. Holiday Resort** offers holiday accommodation at discounted rates.
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The PSA effectively represents the full spectrum of the South African population and lives by the values of **LOYALTY, TRANSPARENCY, RESPECT, ETHICAL CONDUCT, CONSISTENCY and SERVICE EXCELLENCE!**

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PSA membership application

Public Servants Association of South Africa (NPC)

Reg No 1942/015415/08



*COMPULSORY FIELDS

PERSONAL INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT / EMPLOYER*			
TITLE (DR, MR, MRS, MS)*		PERSAL / SALARY NUMBER*	
SURNAME*		INITIALS	
FIRST NAMES*			
IDENTITY NUMBER*		DATE OF BIRTH	DD MM YYYY
CELL PHONE*		TELEPHONE	FAX
EMAIL ADDRESS			

METHOD OF PAYMENT* STOP ORDER (SALARY DEDUCTION) ☐ DEBIT ORDER (BANK DEDUCTION) ☐
(Indicate choice with X) (Noting that the Agency Fee will also be payable in this instance)

MEMBER'S BANKING DETAILS (only if debit-order payment option is chosen)

BANK NAME		BRANCH CODE	
ACCOUNT NO		ACCOUNT TYPE	
ACCOUNT HOLDER			

CONSENT

I hereby **explicitly** consent to the processing of my personal information by the PSA for the **specific purposes** indicated below (Please tick (✓) purposes for which you consent OR (X) for which you do not give consent):

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Marketing and promotions (PSA and all Business Partners) | ☐ |
| 2. Discount and special offers (PSA and all its Business Partners) | ☐ |
| 3. Research activities (PSA and all its Business Partners) | ☐ |

I confirm and understand that: (1) I have been informed of the purpose of processing; (2) The processing is voluntary, and I may withdraw consent at any time by contacting the Information Officer of the PSA; (3) I understand the consequences of not providing consent where required and withdrawal of consent may limit my ability to use certain services; (4) My consent is specific and applies only to the ticked purposes; and (5) My personal information will be processed in accordance with the POPI Act, 4 of 2013, and the PSA Privacy Policy (available at www.psa.co.za). By taking up membership, I agree to the said Policy.

***Failure to tick any consent checkbox, or failure to return this form, shall under no circumstances be interpreted as consent. It shall be deemed an explicit refusal (X) to the processing of personal information for the purposes listed.**

SALARY STOP-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE: _____

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership of the PSA (Public Servants Association of South Africa) and authorise and request the Accounting Officer of my employer to deduct the applicable PSA Membership Fee (as approved by the PSA Board of Directors) from my salary as membership fee, starting from the STOP-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE, and thereafter to continue such monthly deductions until my further written notice.

I UNDERSTAND THAT IN TERMS OF SECTION 13(3) OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT, 1995, THIS STOP-ORDER MAY ONLY BE REVOKED BY THE GIVING OF THREE MONTHS' (ONE MONTH IN THE CASE OF NON-PUBLIC SERVANTS) WRITTEN NOTICE TO MY EMPLOYER AND THE PSA.

I understand that membership fees are due to and collectable by the PSA while I am a member of the PSA.

BANK DEBIT-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE: _____

I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership of the PSA (Public Servants Association of South Africa), requesting and authorising you at the same time to deduct from my account at the above bank the applicable PSA Membership Fee (as approved by the PSA Board of Directors), which covers my membership fee to the PSA, starting from the DEBIT-ORDER COMMENCEMENT DATE and **continue deducting said amount monthly on the ...th day of each month thereafter until further my written notice.**

SIGNATURE*

DATE*

RECRUITER (NOT PSA STAFF MEMBER)	PSA MEMBERSHIP NO*		TAX NO*	
	IDENTITY NO*		CELL PHONE	
	INITIALS & SURNAME			
	POSTAL ADDRESS*		POSTAL CODE	
	EMAIL ADDRESS			
	BANK NAME*		BRANCH CODE	
	ACCOUNT NO*		ACCOUNT TYPE	
ACCOUNT HOLDER				

PLEASE NOTE THAT NO HONORARIUM CAN BE PAID WITHOUT A VALID TAX NUMBER. THE HONORARIUM WILL BE PAID DIRECTLY INTO YOUR BANK ACCOUNT.

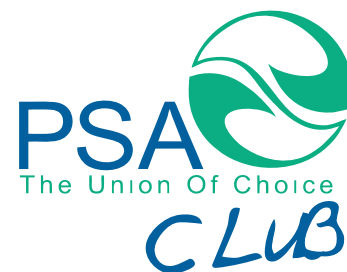
NOTE: THE PSA WILL ASSIST MEMBERS (REPRESENTATION, FINANCIALLY, OTHERWISE) ON CONDITION THAT THE CAUSE OF ACTION FOR WHICH ASSISTANCE IS SOUGHT AROSE AFTER THE PSA'S ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

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PERSAL / EMPLOYEE NUMBER

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Understanding your PSA structure

Country-wide member structures (on national and sectoral level) are the link between the PSA and its members. These structures mirror the current structures for collective bargaining and offer direction, thereby ensuring the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of members.

The PSA's Board of Directors (BOD) on 29 March 2017 resolved that in terms of the *Labour Relations Act* or an Organisational Rights agreement, a group will be entitled to elect five shop stewards. The Board may, on good cause shown, establish such a group as a branch.

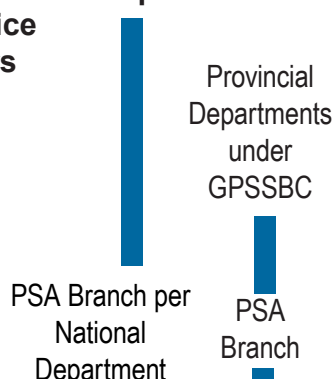
These structures have been established in all provinces to promote the organisation of members, obtaining their mandates, and improving communication with members.

Details of this extensive network of committees and branches are available from the PSA Head Office as well as any of the twelve PSA Provincial Offices.

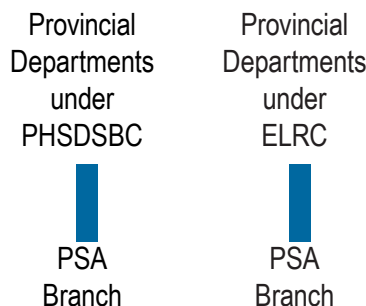
It is important to understand PSA member structures. In addition, you should be involved in these structures as active members can provide timeous, informed mandates, and ensure that skilled workplace representatives are elected.

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Public-sector cybersecurity

Every Click, Share, and Forward has consequences

In an increasingly technology-driven workplace, cybersecurity is no longer solely the responsibility of IT departments or cybersecurity specialists. Every public servant plays a direct role in protecting public sector information, maintaining institutional integrity, and safeguarding the trust placed in government institutions by the public.

Earlier this year, South Africa experienced two significant public sector cybersecurity breaches which highlighted the growing vulnerability of government institutions to cybercrime.

The first breach reportedly involved systems linked to the Gauteng Provincial Government, where cybercriminals allegedly gained access to sensitive personal and employment-related information, including identity numbers, CVs, contact details, and recruitment records. The incident raised concerns about the exposure of citizen and employee data stored within government HR and recruitment systems.

Shortly thereafter, Statistics South Africa confirmed that it had suffered a ransomware attack linked to the cybercrime group XP95. Approximately 453 000 files were reportedly stolen from the institution's recruitment database, exposing sensitive information belonging to job applicants and reinforcing concerns around the protection of personal information within the public sector.

Why public servants are prime targets for cybercriminals

As government institutions become increasingly digitised, public servants are finding themselves on the frontline of cybersecurity threats. The recent cyberattack on Statistics South Africa highlighted several critical realities facing the public sector and reinforced the growing vulnerability of government institutions in a rapidly evolving digital environment.

- Public institutions are prime targets for cybercriminals because they store vast amounts of personal, financial, and confidential information belonging to employees, citizens, service providers, and government stakeholders. Unlike private companies, government departments often hold information affecting millions of people, making a single breach significantly more damaging.
- Human resource systems are particularly attractive to cybercriminals because they contain identity numbers, contact details, CVs, qualifications, banking details, employment histories, medical information, and other highly sensitive personal records. This information may be exploited for identity theft, financial fraud, phishing scams, extortion, or sold on the dark web.
- Cybercriminals also recognise that public sector environments often operate across large, interconnected systems where a single compromised account, weak password, or careless click can create access to broader institutional networks. Phishing emails disguised as internal communication, fake login portals, malicious attachments, and fraudulent links are increasingly sophisticated and specifically designed to exploit human error.

WhatsApp-group administrators and heightened responsibility

Across workplaces and homes in South Africa, WhatsApp has become the default communication platform. Its speed, convenience, and familiarity create the perception that it is informal, temporary, and private. In law, however, it is neither informal nor consequence-free.

South Africa's legislative framework, including the *Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020* and *Protection of Personal Information Act*, imposes direct accountability for online misconduct and negligent handling of information.

Every Click, Share and Forward has consequences

Public servants should therefore exercise caution when managing workplace-related groups, community forums, or union discussion spaces. Establishing clear written rules and acting swiftly against unlawful conduct are increasingly necessary forms of digital risk management.

POPIA and the protection of personal information

POPIA recognises privacy as a statutory right and places strict obligations on the handling of personal information. Protected information includes: Identity numbers, phone numbers, residential addresses, payroll details, medical information and employment-related records. Sharing such information in group chats or on social media without lawful justification or consent may constitute unlawful processing under *POPIA*.

The leaking of screenshots from private conversations, particularly where they contain sensitive information such as health status, disciplinary matters, or trade union affiliation, may trigger investigation by the Information Regulator.

Administrative fines under *POPIA* may reach R10 million, while criminal sanctions may apply under certain circumstances. The growing practice of doxing, publicly exposing personal details to encourage intimidation or harassment, further intersects with both *POPIA* and the *Protection from Harassment Act*.

Practical advice for PSA members and public servants

PSA members are encouraged to adopt a proactive approach to cybersecurity, responsible digital conduct, and the protection of sensitive information:

- Verify before forwarding content, particularly where information may cause panic, outrage, or reputational harm.

- Avoid sharing confidential workplace information, internal grievances, or sensitive employment matters in social groups.
- Exercise caution when participating in politically charged or defamatory online discussions.
- Establish clear rules when administering digital groups.
- Remove unlawful content immediately and record corrective action where necessary and
- Dissociate from unlawful digital environments where harmful or illegal conduct becomes normalised.

Importantly, if a digital group becomes a channel for unlawful conduct, defamatory communications, or harassment, members should exit the group and clearly state their reasons for doing so.

Cybersecurity is not only a technological issue. It is a governance issue, a legal issue, and a workplace conduct issue. In the modern public sector, every click, screenshot, share, and forward carries consequence. Digital conduct is subject to the rule of law. Each forward is a legal act. Each screenshot creates a permanent record. Public servants must therefore approach digital communication with the same level of professionalism, caution, and accountability expected in every other aspect of public service.

Sources

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Constitution 30 years on: Democratic foundation for workers' rights and trade-union progress

In 1996, South Africa adopted one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. Born from decades of struggle, sacrifice, negotiation, and hope, the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* became far more than a legal document - it became a promise a commitment to dignity, equality, justice, and freedom for all who live in the Country.

In 2026, 30 years later, the impact of the *Constitution* continues to shape every sphere of South African society, particularly the world of work. For workers and trade unions, the *Constitution* laid the foundation for rights that generations before democracy could only dream of achieving. It transformed labour relations, strengthened collective bargaining, protected workers from exploitation, and gave organised labour a recognised and respected place. Before democracy, many workers faced severe discrimination, unfair labour practices, exclusion from decision-making processes, and limited legal protection. Trade unions often operated under hostile conditions where activism came with intimidation, victimisation, or dismissal.

The adoption of the *Constitution* in 1996 changed the trajectory of labour rights in South Africa forever. Central to this transformation was the inclusion of labour rights in the *Bill of Rights*. Section 23 of the *Constitution* entrenched the rights of every worker to fair labour practices, to form and join trade unions, to participate in union activities, and to strike. These protections elevated workers' rights from negotiable workplace privileges to constitutionally protected rights. The *Constitution* recognised that democracy could not exist only at the ballot box. True democracy had to extend into workplaces, ensuring that workers were treated with dignity and fairness. It acknowledged that labour rights are human rights and that strong trade unions are essential in building a just and equitable society.

For the PSA, the *Constitution* created an environment in which the Union could strengthen its role as a defender of public servants and an advocate for improved service delivery. Since 1996, the PSA has utilised constitutional protections to advance the interests of members through collective bargaining, labour litigation, workplace representation, and policy engagement. The *Constitution* enabled unions such as the PSA to engage employers from a position grounded in law and democratic principle. Through constitutionally protected collective bargaining structures, unions gained stronger mechanisms to negotiate salaries, benefits, workplace conditions, and transformation in the public service. Over the past three decades, the PSA has successfully defended workers against unfair dismissals, discrimination, unsafe working conditions, and unfair labour practices. Constitutional rights have empowered the Union to challenge injustice through the courts, bargaining councils, and dispute-resolution mechanisms. Many victories achieved by organised labour today would not have been possible without the constitutional framework that protects workers and unions.

The *Constitution* also contributed significantly to the development of labour legislation that reshaped the workplace landscape in South Africa. Laws such as the *Labour Relations Act*, the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act*, the *Employment Equity Act*, and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* emerged from constitutional principles of fairness, equality, and dignity. These legislative developments strengthened protections for workers across sectors and promoted accountability amongst employers. These *Acts* introduced clearer standards regarding working hours, leave provisions, dispute resolution, non-discrimination, and workplace safety as well as reinforcing the role of trade unions as legitimate and essential stakeholders in society.

For public servants, constitutional democracy created a more inclusive and representative public service. It opened opportunities for transformation and promoted principles of equality in recruitment, promotion, and workplace participation. Whilst challenges remain, significant progress has been made in dismantling many discriminatory practices that characterised the apartheid-era workplace.

The PSA has remained at the forefront of this journey, consistently advocating for fair treatment, ethical leadership, professional public administration, and quality service delivery. The Union's growth and resilience during the new democratic period reflect the strength of constitutional protections that safeguard organisational rights and freedom of association.

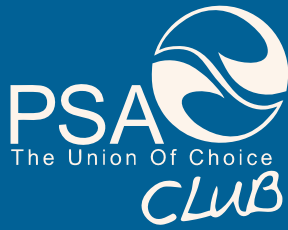
Beyond legal protections, the *Constitution* also established a culture of accountability and participation. Workers and unions now have greater opportunities to influence policy discussions affecting labour, economic development, healthcare, education, pensions, and public administration. Through institutions created in democratic South Africa, organised labour gained a stronger voice in shaping national discourse. However, commemorating 30 years of the *Constitution* also requires strong reflection. Despite remarkable progress, unemployment, economic inequality, workplace insecurity, and deteriorating public services are prevalent. Poverty, corruption, and governance failures continue to place pressure on workers and communities.

The constitutional promise of dignity and equality remains work in progress. Trade unions therefore continue to play a critical role in defending democratic gains whilst pushing for deeper social and economic justice. The PSA is committed to ensuring that constitutional rights are not weakened or undermined, particularly during periods of economic difficulty and austerity measures. As South Africa marks three decades of constitutional democracy, the anniversary serves as a reminder that the *Constitution* is not self-executing. Its values must continually be defended, strengthened, and advanced through active citizenship, ethical leadership, and organised worker participation.

The history of organised labour in South Africa is deeply intertwined with the broader struggle for freedom and justice. The *Constitution* recognised this reality by affirming the importance of workers' voices in democracy. For unions such as the PSA, the democratic era created opportunities to protect workers and contribute meaningfully towards building a fairer and more inclusive society. Today, the *Constitution* remains one of South Africa's greatest democratic achievements. It continues to provide hope, protection, and direction for millions of workers across the Country. It stands as a powerful reminder that the dignity of workers matters, that fairness in the workplace matters, and that democracy must always include the voices of those who serve the nation.

As the PSA reflects on the gains of the past 30 years, the Union also looks toward the future with determination. The responsibility now rests with all sectors of society to preserve constitutional democracy, strengthen labour rights, and ensure that future generations inherit workplaces rooted in fairness, equality, and human dignity. The *Constitution* did not simply change laws, it changed lives. For workers, for unions, and for South Africa, its legacy continues to shape the ongoing pursuit of justice and transformation.

Source
<https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/SACConstitution-web-eng.pdf>
<https://www.gov.za/documents/labour-relations-act>
<https://www.psa.co.za>
<https://www.nedlac.org.za>
<https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/freedom-association>
<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/adoption-constitution-republic-south-africa-1996>



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Public Service Pensioners in ACTIVE service of members

By **Peter Tlowana** - Chairperson: PSA Limpopo Pensioner Committee

The PSA Branch for Associate Members: Public Service Pensioners actively pursues issues brought to its attention by members. Owing to the nature of some issues, these are regularly emotionally argued over but after debate, considering facts, logic and open-mindedness, consensus on the way forward is reached. Issues being handled by the Branch, include:

Pension increase

In 2025, Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) pensioners received a pathetic 2.9% increase. This angered members and the Branch. Through the PSA intense efforts were made to have this increased or at least to secure a catch-up increase. Well-researched letters were written to the Chairperson of the Board and the Minister of Finance. These letters were distributed to PSA members for whom an email address is on record, in an attempt to improve communication. Unfortunately, none of the two parties bothered to respond despite being sent two reminders through the PSA Administration. In December 2025 the Branch, realising that the reactive approach regarding the pension increase had not worked, decided to take a proactive approach. Once Statistics South Africa released November year-on-year CPI figures in late December, a well-researched letter with supporting documents was prepared for the PSA to send out in January 2026. Unfortunately, a lacklustre response was received from the Chairperson of the Board, including the following: *"Having considered the PSA's submission carefully, including Annexure A titled 'Economic Hardships Experienced by Pensioners in South Africa', the Board is not able to support the request for an above-100% CPI pension increase for 2026, nor is the Board able to take forward a recommendation for supplementary funding to be provided by the Minister for this cycle. The reasons for this position are set out below in a manner that seeks to be both transparent and respectful"*. The GEPF argued around the sustainability of the Fund and in the make-up of the CPI basket with respect to pensioners. The Branch regards the argument around the CPI basket as flawed as Statistics SA provides a CPI figure covering pensioners, which is in the order of half a percent higher than average CPI.

Unfortunately, it did not broach the issue of the extremely low return on investment, which the Branch regards as a contributory factor to the low increase. One such example being losses owing to mismanagement of *Daybreak Foods*. Whilst the pension increase in 2026 was slightly better, it still does not offset above-inflation increases of the majority of basic key components making up a pensioner's budget. The Branch's calculations regarding the 2025 increase showed that considering only medical-aid membership and a minimal amount of electricity units, all GEPF pensioners started the financial year being far worse off and having in real terms less money in their pocket than in the previous year. The Branch is considering a response to the letter received.

Average CPI versus year-on-year CPI as basis for pension increase

The GEPF is a defined-benefit pension fund and benefits to which GEPF pensioners are entitled are defined in a government act, known as *GEP Law* (Proclamation 21 of 1996). The Branch's research revealed some ambiguity in the *GEP Law* on whether the GEPF should be using year-on-year CPI as opposed to average CPI.

Research further revealed that the GEPF has consistently used year-on-year CPI as basis for determining pension increases. Whilst seeming to average out over a long period, one would ask why is the Branch pursuing this issue? To use a phrase by financial journalist, Maya Fisher-French, in an article on the GEPF pension increase, year-on-year CPI gives rise to a 'LOTTO' effect. This was clearly demonstrated with the 2025-pension increase where year-on-year CPI, depending on the month selected, ranged from a high of 5.6% in February to a low of 2.9% in November. Average CPI removes peaks and troughs found on the year-on-year CPI curve. The average CPI in November 2024 was 4.6% as opposed to 2.9% for year-on-year (figure used for pension increase), thus sitting in a significant trough. As average CPI in any given year could be below year-on-year CPI depending on whether it was sitting at a peak or a trough, it was decided to seek a mandate on the matter. The mandate clearly revealed that the Branch's GEPF pensioner members unanimously support moving to an increase based on the average CPI. The Branch is now pursuing a correct interpretation of the GEP Rule regarding the issue.

Transparency of GEPF Board

Members of Provincial Pensioner Committees are regularly taken to task on the transparency of the GEPF Board and its skewed representation from both a political perspective (government-appointed trustees), disproportionate representation (pensioners forming the largest single group represented by only one trustee), confidentiality agreements, and bad investments. These bad investments are regularly reported in the media, with members blaming this as the main reason for them being denied reasonable pension increases.

PSA pensioners have, in fact, three persons representing them on the GEPF Board, i.e., the PSA-delegated trustee, the PSA-delegated substitute trustee, and the pensioner trustee elected by pensioners. On the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) Board, pensioners also have a PSA-delegated member. All these representatives are bound by a confidentiality agreement, which makes it impossible for them to communicate with the members to whom they owe their positions. The Branch regards this as an unhealthy state of affairs. Whilst the PSA has a *Strategic Deployment Policy*, it is rendered ineffectual owing to the confidentiality agreement. The Branch will continue pursuing the matter as it is unacceptable that other pension funds, for example the Political Office Bearers Pension Fund, post summaries of trustee meetings, yet a shroud of secrecy surrounds the GEPF and PIC.

Amendment: Rule 23.2.1 of GEP Law

This said Rule spells out the minimum pension increase that can be awarded by the Board of Trustees. At present it stands at 75% of CPI. The Branch believes that it should be changed to 100%, given that the GEPF Board has historically provided 100% CPI increases. The Branch's analysis, however, shows that when CPI is slightly higher than normal, it reverts to 75%. The matter was referred to the PSCBC with the GEPF then indicating that it was not affordable. The Branch is not satisfied with this response and will continue to pursue the matter.

There are various issues being addressed by the Branch, including mechanisms of improving communication with members, questioning the interpretation of a legal opinion regarding the *PSA Statute*, a Pensioner Day, revising the booklet 'Guiding the Dependant', and finalising a list of Branch goals. The Branch and its Provincial Committees are making concerted efforts to improve the lot of PSA Pensioners.

#PSApics



The PSA hosted the Union's National Chairpersons' Forum, in Pretoria in May 2026, where PSA Chairpersons gathered to discuss matters impacting PSA structures. The PSA also launched the *Update Your Details* campaign at the event, where members were encouraged to scan a QR code and keep connected to the Union of Choice.



The PSA Provincial Office in the Northern Cape hosted an Intersectoral Members' Meeting in Kimberley in March 2026, where members interacted and were updated on PSA activities.





The PSA together with various unions came together in Johannesburg on 1 May 2026 to commemorate Workers' Day under the Fedusa banner. Together, the affiliated unions called for more action to be taken on corruption and the improvement of public servants' rights.



PSA lends helping hand to Cheshire Homes South Africa



As part of the PSA's ongoing corporate social investment initiatives, the PSA recently assisted Cheshire Homes South Africa with a donation of R10 000.





GEMS contribution increase **REDUCED - PSA secures** **relief for members**

For public servants battling rising living costs, transport expenses, food inflation, and mounting household debt, the announcement of a sharp increase in Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) contributions at the start of 2026 was another financial blow.

When GEMS initially proposed an increase of 9.8% in member contributions in November 2025, alarm bells rang across the public sector. Organised labour, including the PSA, warned that the increase was unaffordable and out of touch with the financial realities facing workers, especially as salary adjustments remained uncertain. Despite strong objections raised at the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC), GEMS proceeded with a revised 9.5% increase in January 2026. The situation was worsened by delays in the implementation of adjusted medical subsidies by the Department of Public Service and Administration, leaving public servants to absorb the full impact of the higher contributions without sufficient subsidy support in January 2026.

Against this backdrop, the PSA welcomes the decision by GEMS to further revise the 2026 weighted member-contribution increase from 9.5% to 7.5%, effective from 1 July 2026, subject to approval by the Council for Medical Schemes.

The decision follows months of sustained pressure and engagement by organised labour and is an important victory for public servants. It demonstrates the power of collective action in defending workers' financial security and access to affordable healthcare.

The PSA, alongside other unions, made intense efforts against the increase through formal engagements, memoranda submissions, protest action, and escalation via statutory processes, including a Section-77 dispute at Nedlac, led by the Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa). These interventions compelled GEMS to revisit its position and agree to the reduced 7.5% increase

Relief tempered by ongoing concerns

Although the reduction in the contribution increase provides some relief, the PSA maintains that considerable damage has already been done to the finances of public servants during the first half of 2026. Many members were forced to stretch limited household budgets to accommodate higher medical costs at a time when economic pressures continued to intensify. For numerous workers, the increase translated into difficult choices between healthcare, transport, food, school expenses, and other essential needs. Despite the revised increase, several serious concerns raised by the PSA throughout engagements with GEMS and the employer have still not been adequately addressed. These include GEMS governance challenges, escalating administrative and outsourcing costs, fraud and claims leakages, concerns regarding benefit design decisions, and insufficient consultation with members on major financial changes.

The PSA maintains that these systemic challenges must be addressed urgently to ensure the long-term sustainability and fairness of GEMS.

Driving accountability and fairness

The PSA will continue to prioritise engagement with GEMS through the PSCBC to ensure improved accountability and transparency. The PSA is further advocating for better alignment between salary and cost-of-living adjustments for public servants, improvements in working conditions, and GEMS contribution increases. These issues are interconnected and directly influence the socio-economic wellbeing of public servants. The PSA is also committed to ensuring compliance with PSCBC Resolution 4/2017, which mandates labour representation on the GEMS Board of Trustees. Ensuring that at least four board members represent organised labour is essential to safeguarding members' interests and strengthening oversight in GEMS.

The PSA has also taken a firm stance against any reduction in benefits or the increasing reliance on co-payments when accessing healthcare services.

Protecting GEMS founding mandate

At the core of the PSA's position is the need for GEMS to remain true to the Scheme's founding objectives, as outlined in PSCBC Resolution 1/2006. These principles emphasise accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare for public servants and their dependants. A key concern highlighted by the PSA is the growing disparity between employer-subsidy adjustments and contribution increases. Whilst the employer subsidy is intended to shield employees from rising healthcare costs, it has failed to keep pace owing to differences in Medical Price Inflation assumptions. This mismatch continues to erode the value of the subsidy and shifts a disproportionate financial burden onto employees. In addition, the PSA fully supports the Section-77 Nedlac process initiated by Fedusa as a critical mechanism to protect workers' rights and interests. The PSA remains steadfast in the Union's commitment to ensuring that public-sector employees have access to affordable, high-quality healthcare.

The recent outcome demonstrates that collective action delivers results. The battle is, however, far from over. The PSA thus will continue to hold the GEMS leadership accountable, whilst advocating for fair and sustainable contribution structures. The PSA will oppose unjustified cost increases and co-payments and pursue meaningful labour participation in governance.

The reduction of the GEMS contribution increase to 7.5% is a direct result of the united efforts of organised labour and a significant step toward easing financial pressure on public servants. Nevertheless, structural challenges in GEMS remain. The PSA will continue to champion the rights, wellbeing, and healthcare access of public-sector employees.

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PSA Interests



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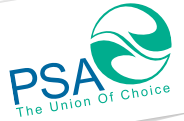


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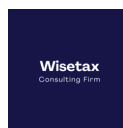
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Letters

PSA North West shines

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Nceba Baardman and the PSA North West team for their unwavering support during my lengthy process with the Department of Higher Education and Training. Through the PSA's intervention, all monies owed to me were paid and my alignment matter was successfully resolved. I truly appreciate the PSA's commitment to assisting workers and will continue supporting the organisation through my recruitment efforts.

PSA Member - Department of Higher Education and Training

PSA Limpopo delivers results

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the PSA Limpopo Office for successfully resolving my notch adjustment matter with the employer. Special thanks go to Deidre Reynecke for her professionalism, dedication, and continuous support throughout the process. Her regular updates and committed representation reassured me during a very difficult and emotionally taxing period, ultimately leading to a successful outcome. I remain grateful for the outstanding service and support I received from the PSA.

PSA Member - Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

Thank you, PSA for years of excellent work

As I prepare for my approved early retirement on 31 March 2026, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the PSA for the support and representation I received throughout my years in the public service. I truly appreciate the sterling service, commitment, and dedication shown by the PSA and its members over the years. I will continue to promote the good name of the PSA wherever I go and remain thankful for the role the organisation played throughout my journey.

M Nkosi - Mpumalanga Department of Health

Letters shortened - Editor

Celebrating decades of dedication

Stanley (Stan) Davis (second from left) has served the PSA for many years in a dedicated and selfless manner and in his 89th year remains an active member of the PSA's Western Cape Provincial Committee of the Branch for Associated Members: Public Service Pensioners. Stan joined the PSA on 1 March 1977. He was elected as Chairperson of the PSA Southern Cape Pensioner Management Committee of the Branch Associated Members: Public Service Pensioners, on 30 November 2002. Stan held this position for more than 15 years, serving this Committee and the pensioners in his jurisdiction with commitment and dedication. His four years' experience as Secretary of the Public Investment Commission (renamed to Public Investment Corporation in 2011), enabled him to provide invaluable input and insight at National Pensioner Branch Management meetings. Following the restructuring of the Branch for Associated Members: Public Service Pensioners in 2023, he was elected as the Vice-Chairperson of the Western Cape Pensioner Committee.





PSA Stiglingh Memorial Bursary **Investing in education, skills, and future**

The rising cost of higher education continues to place significant financial pressure on many South African families. For public servants, who often carry extensive household responsibilities whilst serving the Country, funding tertiary studies for their children or themselves can become a major financial burden. Through the Stiglingh Memorial Bursary, the PSA continues to provide support that contributes to education, skills development, and long-term empowerment.

The Stiglingh Memorial Bursary has a proud history within the PSA's broader commitment to social responsibility and member support. The Bursary has been granted since 1993 to students who want to pursue careers in Medicine or Natural Sciences. It was made possible by the late Mr JH Stiglingh, a former PSA member, whose legacy continues to support the development of future professionals in critical fields.

The Bursary is awarded annually to public servants and/or PSA members, as well as their dependent children, who meet the prescribed qualifying criteria. Applicants must have been employed in the Public Service or have been PSA members for at least twelve months on the closing date of the year in which the Bursary is applied for. The Bursary provides financial assistance of between a minimum of R3 000 and a maximum of R10 000, depending on the availability of funds. Although this may not cover the full cost of tertiary education, it makes a meaningful difference by assisting with education-related expenses. In the current economic climate, this form of support is relevant, practical, and necessary.

The Stiglingh Memorial Bursary is specifically aimed at supporting studies in Natural Sciences and Medicine. It applies to undergraduate and post-graduate studies, whether pursued on a part-time or full-time basis. It may also support research in Natural Sciences or Medicine at a recognised South African university, or abroad, after the successful completion of the first year of study or research project. The number of Bursaries awarded each year depends on the availability of funds and the number of qualifying applications received, with preference given to PSA members and their dependent children.

How to apply

- Applicants are required to submit a letter of application, a full curriculum vitae, certified copies of their academic record and, where applicable, proof of PSA membership.
- Application forms are available from all South African universities and on the PSA website (www.psa.co.za).
- Completed applications must be submitted to the relevant university by **15 October 2026**, with copies sent to the PSA at ask@psa.co.za. Proof that the application was submitted to the relevant university by the closing date must also be provided to the PSA.
- Universities are required to submit applications from candidates, in order of preference, to the PSA as soon as possible after the closing date, but no later than **15 January 2027**.

Members and eligible dependents are advised to take note of the deadlines and ensure that applications are submitted timeously, with all required supporting documents included.

Through the Stiglingh Memorial Bursary, the PSA continues to invest in education and the future of South Africa. By supporting studies in Medicine and Natural Sciences, the Union assists students whilst contributing to sectors that are essential to public wellbeing, innovation, and national development.

Mandela Day 2026

"Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished." **Nelson Mandela - Long Walk to Freedom, 1995**

Thinking of switching insurance? Here's how to know it's time



Insurance is usually a “set it and forget it” task, especially when everything seems to be working just fine. But life changes, and your insurance should keep up.

Whether you've moved, upgraded, downsized or simply want to be sure, a quick review of your insurance options can help you understand your current position and whether your cover still suits your unique needs.

Signs it might be time for a change or an update

You want to save on your premium:

- Just make sure a lower premium doesn't mean less cover where it really matters.
- Increasing your excess may lower your premium, however it could leave you paying more when a loss or damage occurs.

You're looking for better value:

- Extra benefits like emergency assistance or roadside support can make a big difference.

You're not sure what's covered:

- Your insurance should be clear, simple, and easy to understand.

Your life has changed:

- A new home, a new car, or a new phase of life means your cover should reflect that.

You want simple, more reliable service:

- Getting help should be quick, easy, and stress free.

A quick comparison checklist

Before switching, take a moment to review:

- What your current policy covers (car, home, valuables).
- Your excess and any added benefits or optional add-ons included in your cover.
- What a new provider includes and excludes, as well what you may be charged when you claim like additional excesses.
- How easy it is to get support when you need it.

Before you switch:

- Make sure your new policy is active before cancelling the old one.
- Get all confirmation in writing.
- Inform your bank or finance provider if needed.
- Make sure it's cover that keeps up with you.
- The right insurance gives you confidence to live your life, knowing the things that matter most are protected.

Santam's got you covered

Santam's insurance gives you the freedom to live in the moment, knowing that what matters most to you is safeguarded.

From car, building, home contents and portable possessions (all-risk) insurance, Santam helps you stay prepared for accidents, theft and damage. And, with emergency assistance and roadside support included at no extra cost, help is never far away when you need it.

Get a quote in minutes and cover that works for you email: psa@santam.co.za



Santam is an authorised financial services provider (FSP 3416), a licensed non-life insurer and the controlling company for its group of companies.