

Departmental Bargaining Chamber (DBC) - 17 October 2023

Collective Agreement (GPSSBC 1 of 2018)

Resolution 1 of 2018 deals with various matters of mutual interest. The agreement that was reached by parties to end a strike that was taking place in the Department in 2018, however, some outstanding matters have not been implemented by the Department. The PSA raised its displeasure at the pace at which this matter is being handled. The parties agreed to a task team meeting on 6 November 2023 to deal with outstanding matters.

Human Resource Policies (PMDS policy; bursary policy; OHS policy; resettlement policy; skills and development policy and housing policy)

The employer requested that the policies to be adopted because they have been consulted upon. The PSA acknowledged that the policies have been consulted on but bemoaned that it has not received feedback from the employer on the inputs submitted on all the policies. Parties agreed to engage on the final draft of all policies in a task team meeting on 3 November 2023.

Rotational or Remote Working

Members will recall that organised labour implored the employer to develop a policy on remote working. The employer reiterated its position that it cannot accede to such a demand because the Government (DPSA) does not endorse such a policy. The PSA shared two policies of two Government Departments on remote working and requested that the employer reconsider its position. The employer undertook to engage its principals using the two policies and provide feedback to organised labour by 30 November 2023.

Payment of Performance Bonus for Section 76 employees 2022/2023 Cycle

Members will recall that the employer paid 50% of bonuses to employees for the past two financial years citing financial constraints. The employer indicated that they can only indicate what percentage of the bonus they can afford to pay after the moderation process for the 2022/2023 financial year. The PSA raised a concern that the employer's inability to engage organised labour now will delay the payment of bonuses to employees. The employer committed to revert to organised labour on what percentage it can afford to pay bonuses by 30 November 2023. The parties agreed to have a special DBC on this matter on 5 December 2023.

Water and Sanitation: Code of Conduct

As members may be aware, DWS has initiated their Code of Conduct, and the process is still at the consultation stage. The parties agreed to deal with this matter together with policies at a task team meeting scheduled for 3 November 2023.

Changes to the Performance Assessment Cycle for Personnel appointed in Terms of Section 76 of the *National Water Act* (Construction)

Members were previously requested to make inputs or submit concerns on the employer's proposal to change the performance cycle of Section 76 employees to align it to the annual performance plan (APP) and the financial year. The PSA invited members on two occasions to make inputs or raise concerns regarding the employer's proposal, but none were received. The employer indicated that the employer is yet to take a final decision on the proposal and will provide feedback in the next meeting.

Review of Sexual Harassment Policy

The employer indicated that they have already started the process of reviewing the Sexual Harassment Policy to align it to the Code of Good Practice on Harassment in the Workplace. Parties agreed to deal with this policy at a task team scheduled for 3 November 2023.

National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency (NWRIA) Bill

Members will recall that a presentation by the employer was shared indicating a road map that anticipated the promulgation of this bill by the end of October 2023. The employer reported that the public participation (consultation process) on the *Bill* took long and therefore it is no longer feasible for the *Bill* to be promulgated by the end of October 2023. The employer reiterated that they would start the consultation process with organised labour in the DBC after the *Bill* has been promulgated regarding its impact on those employees who will be affected. Organised labour noted the submission by the employer.

Transfer of Employees to the Catchment Management Agencies (CMA's)

The employer reported that they have concluded the provincial visit accompanied by organised labour to engage employees in this matter and that the change management process is also being rolled out. The PSA indicated that it is still receiving concerns from employees regarding this matter. Some of the concerns received from members include all workstreams being chaired by the same person, different messages from different managers, and changes to the SAP system. The employer urged organised labour to raise this matter with them as soon as they are brought to their attention. Furthermore, the employer conceded that the communication channels have been blurred by some managers. The employer committed to finalise the communication strategy or plan and submit it to organised labour by 31 October 2023, together with the project plan or road map and the change management strategy. Members who wish to share concerns regarding this matter are requested to make written submissions to nwailaj@dws.gov.za by **31 October 2023**.

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

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GENERAL MANAGER