

WAGE NEGOTIATIONS

# Public servants land three-year pay deal

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The government and unions representing the country's more than 1.3-million public servants have signed a three-year wage deal that will result in teachers, soldiers, nurses and doctors receiving an above-inflation pay hike of 5.5% in 2025/26.

Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) general secretary Frikkie de Bruin said on Wednesday the wage negotiations were concluded after it secured a majority agreement of 84.34% after a 21-day consultation period.

Wage increases for 2026/27 and 2027/28 will be linked to the consumer price index (CPI).

The wage talks started with the government offering 3%, which it increased to 4.7%, and then 5% before finally settling at 5.5%. The revised offer caused unions to slash their demands from 12% to 6% for 2025/26. Consumer price inflation is forecast to average 4.5% in 2025.

The 5.5% deal cements the R700bn-plus wage bill as a big, unpredictable factor amid SA's efforts to stabilise its finances.

It could also put pressure on finance minister Enoch Godongwana, who postponed his 2025 budget speech on Wednesday until next month, to make good on his promises to persuade



Reuben Maleka

30,000 public servants over the age of 55 years to take early retirement packages as part of his broader plan to bring down the wage bill.

De Bruin said: "The PSCBC commends both employer and labour parties for their dedication and constructive engagement in working towards the agreement. Their commitment to dialogue and engagement demonstrates a shared vision of promoting harmonious labour relations and sustainable solutions for all stakeholders."

Reuben Maleka, GM of the 245,000-strong Public Servants Association, said: "This is a good deal under the circumstances and we believe it would actually make a difference. It was sup-

ported by almost all the parties in the bargaining council."

Waheed Hoosen, general secretary of the Health & Other Services Personnel Trade Union of SA (Hospersa), said: "It's the best deal we could get for our members under the prevailing conditions. We pushed the employer hard for a double-digit increase but it was not possible.

"Our members then gave us a mandate to take the offer. We are satisfied with the offer, but not totally happy because there are lots of issues that still need to be addressed," Hoosen said.

## MANDATE

December Mavuso, deputy general secretary of the National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), said: "We are still finalising our mandate-seeking process. Our process took a bit longer. We should be ready to pronounce on Thursday, latest Friday."

Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union spokesperson Richard Mamabolo said: "The majority of our members have said we should sign the deal."

National Professional Teachers' Organisation of SA executive director Basil Manuel said: "We are thrilled a majority has been attained. We are happy with some of the things we have got as part of the agreement."

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