| **MEDIA RELEASE** | PSA demands immediate action on school infrastructure amidst exam disruptions in Eastern Cape |
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| EMBARGO | None |
| ENQUIRIES | communication@psa.co.za |

The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the Department of Basic Education's decision to postpone the Computer Applications Technology (CAT) paper for 319 matriculants in Gqeberha, in the Eastern Cape, who were affected by severe weather on 28 October 2024.

Whilst this decision safeguards learners' exam performance under challenging conditions, the PSA is extremely concerned about persistent, inadequate state of school infrastructure in township areas. In Kwanobuhle, and Kariega, schools are frequently impacted by power outages, which often occur independently of extreme weather. These schools lack alternative power sources, such as generators or solar energy, creating a significant barrier for learners and educators. In addition, water-supply challenges owing to burst pipes have left sections of township without water for extended periods, often up to five days, further disrupting the learning environment.

Though the impact on said exam was limited owing to the postponement, the PSA recognises the toll such disruptions take on learners' mental well-being. After preparing diligently throughout the year, learners face heightened anxiety and uncertainty when exams are postponed unexpectedly. School infrastructure, particularly in previously disadvantaged communities, remains severely under-resourced. The storm season is an annual occurrence, yet affected areas continue to struggle with accessibility and safe facilities. This raises the pressing question of whether matriculants will have to face these same challenges year after year.

The PSA calls on the Eastern Cape Government to fulfil its commitment to improving school conditions in vulnerable communities. The proactive enhancement of infrastructure is critical to minimising the impact of recurring weather disruptions and ensuring a safe, stable learning environment for all learners.

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