

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA demands immediate closure of Durban Labour Centre**

DATE 29 July 2024

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged by the deplorable conditions at the Department of Employment and Labour's (DEL) Durban Labour Centre, at 15 Beach Masonic Grove Government Building, Mcandi Road, and demands immediate closure of this facility until all occupational health and safety (OHS) issues have been addressed.

The core function of the DEL is to ensure the safety of employees in the workplace. It is therefore ironic and unacceptable that the DEL fails to comply with OHS standards and disregards concerns raised by PSA shop stewards. Allegations against the Centre's manager include that he operates in an autocratic manner and undermines collective bargaining. The Centre's elevators have been out of order for four years, forcing employees and visitors to use stairs. This is unacceptable, especially for people with disabilities. Some stair areas have no lighting, creating a hazardous environment.

In addition, the Centre often runs out of water, leaving employees and visitors without access to basic sanitation and hygiene facilities. The septic tank is overflowing, and the outside tap provides untreated water, posing serious health risks. The plumbing challenges are exacerbated by 16 toilets with broken seats, bad smells, and inadequate facilities for people with disabilities. Other concerns include fire extinguishers that have expired and parts of the ceiling that are collapsing. Additionally, the Centre lacks essential stationery and tools. The OHS Committee is inactive, with no trained members in line with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*.

The DEL's failure to comply with the *OHSA* and obtain a compliance certificate clearly indicates its disregard for employee and public safety. This negligence is unacceptable and must be addressed immediately. The PSA calls for an urgent inspection and the temporary closure of the Durban Labour Centre until these critical issues are resolved.

END