



WAGE NEGOTIATIONS (NETCARE)

REPORT 8 OF 2017

5 April 2017

AS previously reported, the Health and Other Service Personnel Trade Union of South Africa (Hospersa) is currently engaged in a wage dispute with Netcare. Netcare's final offer is 6% while Hospersa's mandate from members is at 8%. Tomorrow and Friday will see a nationwide strike ballot taking place, and we thought it good to briefly reflect on the process up to now.

Already at the start of negotiations this year, it became evident that parties would deadlock. Netcare remained inflexible and unwilling to pay an increase reflective of their reported profit.

Netcare's opening offer was a mere 4,75% increase for all General Workers, and a below-inflation 5,2% increase for Registered Nurses. Since then not much has improved, with Netcare digging in its heels at 6%.

Netcare also failed to improve on its medical subsidy offer of 4% against the union's 11% demand.

We note that Netcare argues that their offer is "fair". Still our members feel the pinch of rising prices which continue to diminish their earnings. This effect becomes even greater when one looks at recent developments around a weaker rand which will decrease consumer spending power even more.

It is for these reasons that we have remained committed to a wage increase of 8% and a medical aid subsidy of 11%.

When negotiations deadlocked, Hospersa referred the matter to the Commission of Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). Due to Netcare's inflexible approach the

CCMA process also failed to resolve the matter, after which Hospersa called for a ballot. The results of this ballot were overwhelmingly in favour of rejecting Netcare's offer and engaging in industrial action.

However, Netcare questioned the ballot results and, knowing the seriousness of an unprotected strike, Hospersa decided to do another ballot.

However, we soon received reports that Netcare was engaging in foul play. While we were busy with ballot preparations, Netcare has engaged our members individually and collectively to try and convince them to break ranks and accept their 6% offer.

Netcare also employed scare tactics such as threatening no work, no pay for striking workers. While Hospersa understands and respects the principle of no work, no pay, it can never be used to undermine the constitutional right of workers to strike. Our members know this principle very well, and they know that the right of withholding labour is balanced by the employer's right to withhold pay.

By far the most unfounded tactic used by Netcare is that of the implementation date. Netcare is on record that they are warning members who do not accept their 6% offer, with later payment and no back-pay. Unfortunately this tactic worked with many individuals and even some of our sister unions.

However, the current Organisational Rights Agreement (ORA) clearly states that the implementation date will be "1st March every year unless otherwise agreed". We intend to take this matter for arbitration as it is clearly a dispute

of right, and we will ensure that all Hospersa members receive their back-pay once the strike process is finalised. Some unscrupulous managers reportedly even went so far as lying to members, telling them that they will immediately get their increase if they resign from Hospersa.

Hospersa notes this behaviour of Netcare with great concern, and we have formally reported it to Netcare management. We will table all these matters once the dust has settled.

Against this backdrop we urge all eligible members to take part in the balloting process taking place at Netcare facilities tomorrow (13:00-20:00) and Friday (8:00-13:00).

It is crucial that we now receive a clear mandate. If we want to strike, it is important to show our collective power and resilience so that Netcare will take us seriously – for this dispute as well as for future engagements!

8% FOREVER!

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To stay up to date with feedback from Hospersa we urge all members to follow us on Twitter (@hospersaonline) and join our Facebook group (hospersa online) as soon as possible.



All updates and newsletters are also placed on our website (www.hospersa.co.za)

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