

PROTEST ACTION AT THE VOORTREKKER MONUMENT

Pretoria, 2 May 2019. This morning members of the VTM Projects Company started protest action outside the main gate of the Monument in Eeufees Road. This Company provides cleaning, gardening and security services to the Voortrekker Monument and it has an agreement with Academic and Professional Staff Association of Universities of South Africa (APSA). The action was launched because an agreement could not be reached after negotiations concerning salaries.

1. The first round of salary negotiations took place on 26 February 2019 after the Board of Directors' meeting, during which an increase of 6% was approved.
2. The union insisted on a minimum salary of R7 500 per month. (The minimum salary scale is R4000 – the suggested salary increase would therefore be 87,5%) which would be totally unfeasible and unfair. This was explained to the union who undertook to meet with their members and then give feedback.
3. After several negotiations between VTM Projects and the union, the union gave us notice on 6 March 2019 that VTM Projects had given them a mandate to declare a dispute because a deadlock had been reached. The members had requested that the union approach the CCMA for conciliation/arbitration.
4. The session at the CCMA took place on 28 March 2019 where the Commissioner was also informed on the current financial status of VTM Projects. He was informed that should VTM Projects have to comply with the demand of R7500,00, there would be no option but to implement retrenchments and outsourcing. The Commissioner then asked the union if its members were aware of the implications if he should issue a certificate of industrial action. The union as well as the shop stewards answered yes to this question.
5. At that stage, the union had not yet prepared any picketing rules and routes and the CCMA session adjourned until 9 April 2019 to set out the rules. During this session on 9 April, the applicable documents were signed by the parties involved and handed to the CCMA Commissioner after which the Commissioner issued a certificate for a protected strike.
6. According to the Labour Law the union must give the employer 7 days advanced notice if they are going to strike. The Voortrekker Monument received notice on 30 April that the strike action would start on 2 May 2019.
7. The strikers are blocking the main entrance of the Monument and in this regard, several tour busses have already had to turn around this morning. The Monument is one of the most visited heritage sites in Gauteng. With tourism as our main source of income, we will suffer even more harm and therefore salary increases in the future would be even more difficult.

ISSUED BY:

**CECILIA KRUGER
MANAGING DIRECTOR
VOORTREKKER MONUMENT
TEL: 012-326-6770 / 083-4174411
E-mail: bd@vtm.org.za**