

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

‘We are experiencing many problems’

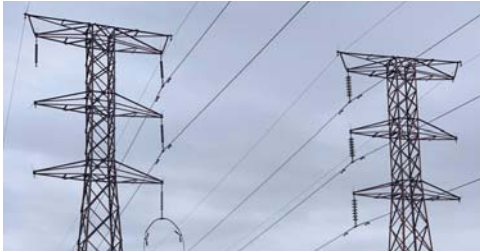
Rustenburg – Please allow me space in your newspaper to highlight the challenges we are facing as businesspeople operating in the industrial area in Zinniaville extension 9. Many large businesses operating in this area are struggling daily to do business in an orderly and uninterrupted way. Water supply interruptions are at the order of the day here and many of our roads are falling apart. Sewerage is running in some stormwater channels and nothing is being done by the Rustenburg Local Municipality to rectify it. The current rate of infrastructure degradation is very alarming. We are all very worried. Urgent and proper attention – not the current ad hoc responses to reported cases – is required.

Some problems have accumulated and escalated over the past few years and no forward-looking maintenance other than fixing breakdowns has been done. The municipality must maintain their infrastructure to prevent businesses in our area from failing. This maintenance is well within the interest of the municipality because these businesses also generate significant amounts of income for them. We as business owners have reported these problems time and time again and it seems like all our complaints are falling on deaf ears. This area seems like it is falling apart and the municipality just doesn't care. They have to start finding lasting solutions instead of just this 'quick fix' service.

Worried resident



The damaged roads.



The reader has called upon the municipality to attend to the damaged electricity cables.



Dangerous 'solutions' to some of the problems this area faces.

STUDENT PROTEST ACTION CONTINUES AT ORBIT TVET MANKWE CAMPUS

Mankwe – ORBIT TVET Mankwe Campus has been faced with a student protest since the reopening of the college in January 2020, due to concerns raised by student representative council (SRC) members. The college has, from the onset, deemed these concerns in a very serious light. The protest which saw SRC members barricading the campus gate daily has resulted in the campus being non-operational and thus affecting teaching and learning.

The key issue at hand was the barring of the 2019 SRC president, Nkosinathi Delmani by the college from registering for the 2020 academic year, as per the admission policy (paragraph 16.2), which focuses on admission exclusion read together with paragraph 75 of the Department of Higher Education's Admission Policy. The exclusion came after Delmani had failed to pass more than two consecutive examinations.

On 17 January 2020, an interim court order was granted by the High Court and served to the students.

Despite the court order, the SRC continued to barricade the campus gates, thereby denying access to students and staff.

Through the intervention of the office of the Minister of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Blade Nzimande, a meeting was convened on 25 February at ORBIT College, Central Office in seeking an amicable solution for all parties involved.

After long deliberations, the representatives from the minister's office advised senior management to waive the admission policy, on condition that a settlement agreement is drafted and signed between senior management and the SRC stating that the former SRC president, Delmani be registered as a student at the college. Senior Management unanimously agreed to the said proposal but, stated that the challenge with the implementation of the decision to register Delmani at this stage would be hampered by the fact that registration for trimester one has long been closed. Senior management then suggested that Delmani be registered for trimester two of the current academic year, a suggestion which all present fully supported except for Delmani.

This resulted in the SRC refusing to sign the settlement agreement, and them resolving to continue barricading the Mankwe Campus gate.

Further deliberations led to DHET officials advising to temporarily close down Mankwe Campus, upon which the college senior management submitted an official request to do so to the office of the director general, Gwebinkundla Qonde. The request also included an urgent plea to DHET to assist by involving the national police structures in restoring order at the campus.

This stand taken by the SRC not to accept the compromise and to continue with the strike has several serious implications, should students not be able to return to class. The most serious consequence is undoubtedly the lack of academic progress by students as a result of non-attendance of classes, which might ultimately result in the affected students failing their examinations. Not attending classes will also have an impact on the financial aid of bursary-funded students as students may forfeit their allowances for the current academic cycle.

Students who are residing in the campus hostels are required to pass to be accommodated. Poor academic performance as a result of non-attendance may therefore jeopardize these students' hostel accommodation.

All the above implications come at a time when there are less than twenty lecturing days left before the commencement of Trimester 1 examinations.

As it stands, it appears that the interests and wellbeing of approximately 2300 registered students depend on one individual; Delmani's acceptance of a compromise by the college and DHET to allow him to register for trimester two. His unwillingness to co-operate puts the future of all these students at risk – both academically and financially – as they might end up being unable to complete their studies.

However, senior management remains committed to implementing recovery plans to ensure that order is restored at Mankwe Campus and that a conducive teaching and learning environment prevails once more.

Extracts from ORBIT TVET College press release, 28 February

MAN ARRESTED FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF EXPLOSIVES

Boitekong/Rustenburg – A man who unsuccessfully attempted to evade arrest for illegal possession of explosives only succeeded in putting himself in more trouble.

Rooi Khoza appeared before the Rustenburg Magistrates' Court on Monday 24 February on charges of perjury and contravening the Explosives Act.

The 34-year old Khoza was arrested in Boitekong on 19 February by police officers who had been carrying out patrols along the R510 road.

During the patrols, the police noticed a suspicious white BMW without a rear registration plate. They decided to follow the vehicle, which was being driven by Khoza.

"The driver made a u-turn and drove towards the direction of Boitekong Mall. The suspicious vehicle entered the parking area and a siren was activated to identify police presence," explained police spokesperson captain Elsabé Augoustides.

Khoza fled from the vehicle as soon as he spotted the police. A total of 21 blasting cartridges and 22 shock tube assemblies, a cellular phone and a set of employee cards were discovered in the car during a search.

Khoza allegedly laid false charges at the Boitekong Police Station stating that he had been hijacked.

"A case of perjury will be investigated in addition to the charge of illegal possession of explosives," Augoustides concluded.



Some of the explosives cord recovered by the police.



The explosives are the type used for mining activities.



Police gathering evidence at the scene.

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