

EDUCATION

Students divided on NSFAS payment plan

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WHILE the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) board has moved to end the contracts of fin-tech service providers to distribute student allowances, there has been mixed reaction on the continuation of the direct payment system.

This as NSFAS board chairperson Ernest Khosa expressed the entity's view of still forging ahead with the direct payment system.

According to Khosa the board was satisfied with policy changes, including the introduction of the direct payment method, saying the system was not the problem but how it was implemented was important.

"The board views the direct payment solution as a necessary measure to reduce instances of unauthorised access to beneficiaries' allowances, payment of ghost students (and) inconsistencies and delayed payments of allowances.

"The direct payment solution is in line with the student-centred model which NSFAS adopted."

He was speaking at a media briefing on Wednesday where he shared the preliminary findings of the Werkmans Attorneys report into tender irregularity allegations at NSFAS.

NSFAS introduced direct payment, partnering with service providers eZaga Holdings, Coinvest Africa, Tenet Technology and Noracco Corporation, with intentions to ensure accountability on student allowances and to establish a better co-ordinated system of the transfer of funds to students.

This was meant to be a 5-year contract to directly pay student allowances through a compulsory bank account.

However, it has been met with challenges including a delay in payments, concern over excessive fee charges, inaccessibility of service providers and lack of clarity on how to access funds.

The portfolio committee on higher education had highlighted the lack of accountability as NSFAS contended that they had correctly disbursed funds, while service providers pointed fingers at the entity for delaying fund transfers.

This after it came to light during the fin-tech company presentations that nearly 100 000 students or more had not received allowances.

UCT Student Representative Council (SRC) president Hlengiwe Dube said their stance had never changed, as they still rejected the direct payment system even if new service providers were appointed.

"Since day one we have never supported this third party system. It should not have been allowed or even rolled out in such a space, they

had not even completed dealing with challenges at TVET colleges where they piloted but still moved the project to a bigger crowd in universities.

"Just as we anticipated, it did not work out. We are dealing with a high bank charge, something that didn't exist. To date some students have not received their allowances, university and SRC's had to intervene after depleting our resources," said Dube.

UWC SRC president Mandla-Onke Notyawa expressed the same sentiments that direct payment must be discontinued.

"NSFAS must end the direct payment system and for institutions to continue their payment system to students."

South African Union of Students (Saus) national spokesperson Asive

Dlanjwa said they welcomed the decision for the contracts to be terminated.

"We are not surprised by the board's decision. In fact, we welcome the report outcomes. We were always of the view that the service providers were not competent and this was evident in the disbursement of student allowances.

"As a result, there were protests at about five institutions over delayed allowances and other issues. Thousands of students have been disadvantaged. We heard the board chairperson saying that they would ensure that students are not affected by the cancellation of the contracts. We cannot take their word but only wait and see how things will play out," said Dlanjwa.

He said while they were against the appointment of the four service

providers they were still in support of the new direct payment system.

"We still support the direct method because it can curb corruption which was seen at NSFAS and at tertiary institutions where there are also ghost students.

"This system, if operated well, will mean students can get their funds without delays.

"It is more efficient and timely," he said.

Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse's (Outa) investigation manager Rudie Heyneke said they were confident that the investigation team made sound recommendations to the board and welcomed the outcomes shared.

She said they advocated for an allowance payment system that was in the best interest of the students.

METRO

Hofmeyr event 'shocking, alarming'

from page 1

usual processes, and the university noted concerns that have been raised around one of the participants.

"The UCT management wishes to make it clear that the event in question is not a UCT event, but an event that is scheduled to be hosted on the UCT campus by an external party. This is in line with similar previous external events hosted on campus, including but not limited to corporate or sporting events," said Moholola.

He said the university's management was not in any way involved in the programme for events hosted by external parties on campus, nor did management necessarily align with the hosting external parties or any views held or expressed by any participant.

"The university notes concerns that have been raised around one of the participants, and urges the external host and the concerned parties to engage these accordingly. In our statement of values, UCT commits itself, among others, to an institutional culture of inclusiveness, embodying respect for cultural, religious, linguistic, political, and other differences and acknowledgement of the value of diversity in society," said Moholola.

The event organisers and Hofmeyr did not respond to requests for comment yesterday. Youth and student activist Masixole Mlandu said universities should understand its ethical duty.

"The university over the past couple of months has reached a crisis of governance. This crisis does not emerge out of nowhere, but from the historical events that have unfolded in the university. It is our belief that since the year 2015, the year of Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall, the university has not been able to understand its role as a public university and its ethical duty to strive for a just society. It is within that breath the event which will host Hofmeyr must be rejected with the harshness it deserves.

Hofmeyr has been unrepentant about racial remarks and is equally homophobic," he said.

Earlier this year, Hofmeyr agreed to pay a R100 000 fine over comments he made about the LGBTQIA+ community in April last year, after being hauled before the Equality Court.

Sibonelo Ncanana, human rights co-ordinator for OUT LGBT Wellbeing – the LGBTQ organisation to which Hofmeyr had to apologise, said they were also concerned that he would be performing at UCT.

"It is shocking and alarming that a university of such a high stature would allow organisations, companies and individuals to continue giving such people a platform.

"They are either for or against something and can not hide behind who is the host. In general we feel like there is backtracking in Africa in lobbying for policy change," said Ncanana.

SPORT PAGE 16

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LONGYUAN SOUTH AFRICA REFLECTS ON A DECADE OF WIND ENERGY INNOVATION ALONG THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE



IN THE HEART of China's global economic strategy lies the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an expansive endeavour encompassing land and maritime routes. President Xi Jinping, leveraging China's economic prowess and backing from organizations like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Silk Road Fund, has elevated OBOR as a pivotal foreign policy priority. This strategic initiative links Asia and Europe through the maritime route and establishes a land-based Silk Road Economic Belt from Asia to Europe.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of China celebrated its tenth anniversary in September 2023.

BRI addresses critical economic challenges on both a domestic and global scale. It aims to alleviate regional economic disparities within China, fostering development in underprivileged regions. Moreover, while propelling advancements in Chinese technology and engineering standards. While geopolitical considerations undoubtedly contribute, the initiative's core driver remains China's imperative to address immediate economic hurdles.

Longyuan Power, the globe's leading wind power developer and operator, harnesses Africa's abundant renewable energy potential. They traverse extensive distances, harnessing the wind and spreading a wave of green development to South Africa. This vividly embodies the essence of

"Belt and Road" – promoting peace, cooperation, openness, tolerance, mutual learning, shared benefits, and fostering win-win scenarios.

Longyuan South Africa Renewable (Pty) Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the State Power Investment Corporation (SPIC) Longyuan Power Group, has been at the forefront of renewable energy development in South Africa. Established on March 17, 2011, this company has focused its efforts on the development, construction, and operation of renewable energy projects, particularly wind farms. Among its notable achievements is the completion and operation of the Longyuan De Aar Project, which represents a significant milestone in Africa's renewable energy landscape.

A prime example of Longyuan South Africa's dedication to sustainable energy is its investment in two wind farms in the country's Northern Cape Province. The total installed capacity of these plants, which are run under the National Energy Group Longyuan De Aar Project, is 244,500 kilowatts. The Longyuan De Aar Project, which was officially launched in October 2017, is unique because it is the first wind power project in Africa to have been independently funded, built, and run by a state-owned power generation company.

Both Chinese and South African media outlets have praised the project, hailing it as an example of BRICS energy cooperation. In addition, it has helped the Belt and Road Initiative

by facilitating the export of Chinese goods, technologies, and services. The Longyuan De Aar Project's journey started in June 2009 when negotiations and research for the South African wind power project got under way. By June 2011, significant progress had been made as a result of partnerships, which included collaboration with the China-Africa Development Fund and the South African Mulilo Renewable Energy Company.

The De Aar I and De Aar II (North) wind power projects, both located in South Africa's Northern Cape Province, were the phase's high point in August 2013 when Longyuan South Africa won the bids. Particular praise was given to De Aar I because it had the greatest electricity price out of all the projects chosen in that round. The grid in South Africa received a total of 244,500 kilowatts of clean energy from these plants.

The Longyuan De Aar Project's building phase was a massive project. It included a number of crucial tasks, such as building roads, setting up substations and collection lines, installing wind turbine foundations, assembling wind turbines, energizing substations, conducting grid acceptance tests, and eventually beginning commercial operation on October 31, 2017.

The project's dedication to equity and to governance that acknowledged the interests of local community members was one of its distinctive features. Because local businesses and a Black Community Fund held 40% of the project's ownership, there was a sense of cooperation and trust among all parties.

Longyuan South Africa goes above and beyond simple contractual responsibilities by actively working with regional consulting and service companies, boosting the local economy, and fostering knowledge transfer. Throughout the construction process, the corporation placed a high priority on adhering to local laws and the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) program of South Africa.

Longyuan South Africa showed a persistent dedication to environmental

protection during the project's construction and operation phases.

This involved carrying out thorough environmental impact studies, strictly adhering to environmental standards, and putting ecological restoration plans into action. The company demonstrated its commitment to sustainable practices by actively monitoring noise levels and their effect on nearby wildlife.

The dedication of Longyuan Power to South Africa goes beyond energy production. The business actively supports the neighbourhood through a number of social welfare programs. These programs cover a variety of areas, including sports, infrastructure development, healthcare, and assistance for the aged and disabled. The efforts made by Longyuan South Africa have improved local quality of life while also deepening friendship ties between China and South Africa. A noteworthy accomplishment in the development of renewable energy, international cooperation, and social responsibility is the Longyuan De Aar Project in South Africa. It serves as evidence of Longyuan South Africa's commitment to local development, renewable energy, and international cooperation.

The enormous importance that China plays in commerce with Africa is highlighted by official statistics for the year 2022. 56.74 billion dollars' worth of trade took place on a bilateral basis between China and Africa, making up a sizeable 20.1 percent of China's entire trade with the continent. China has consistently remained South Africa's biggest commercial partner for the past 14 years. South Africa has been China's top trading partner in Africa for an astonishing 13 years running, at the same time.

A cornerstone of China's economic and international policy, President Xi Jinping's One Belt, One Road plan was carefully crafted to solve economic disparities, excess industrial capacity, and technological innovation. As the country continues to develop and prosper, it is set to alter the dynamics of the global economy and strengthen China's position on the international stage.



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Friday, 17 November 2023 @ 15:00

MN 207/2023



LITTLE MOWBRAY AND ROSEBANK IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NPC (AGM)
NPC 2016/211084/08
2 Raleigh Road, Little Mowbray 7700
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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The Little Mowbray and Rosebank Improvement District NPC (LMRID) will be holding its Annual General Meeting (AGM). All stakeholders are invited to a review of the year's activities and planning for 2023-2024.

Date: Thursday 16th November, 2023
Time: 19h00 (registration for meeting), 19h30 (meeting commence)
Venue: Mossop Hall, cnr Cheltenham and Roseberry Roads, Little Mowbray.

Resolutions presented at the AGM may only be voted on by bona fide members of the LMRID. Membership is free of charge to all owners of non-residential and/or residential property within the LMRID, but they must be registered before 9th November, 2023.

A Special Resolution will be required for the amendment of the new Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI) as contemplated in Section 16(5)(a) of the Companies Act, Act 71 of 2008.

For further information regarding AGM documentation and how to register: www.lmrid.capetown, email: info@lmrid.capetown or phone 0861058743



CLIFTON
CITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Notice of Members meeting

The Clifton City Improvement District NPC will be hosting a Members meeting. All stakeholders are invited to a review of the activities to date and planning for 2024/25.

Date: Tuesday 14th November 2023
Time: 17h00
Venue: The Scout Hall, Ridge Road, 4th beach, Clifton

Resolutions presented at the Members meeting can only be voted on by bona fide members of the Clifton City Improvement District NPC (Clifton CID). This membership is available free of charges to all owners of property within the Clifton City Improvement District NPC (Clifton CID) footprint, but they must be registered before Friday 3rd November 2023.

For further information, documentation and how to register go to www.cliftoncid.co.za or e-mail info@cliftoncid.co.za



Notice of Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Mount Rhodes Community Improvement District NPC (MRCID) will be hosting an AGM. All stakeholders are invited to a review of the past financial year's activities and planning for 2024/25.

Date: 15 November 2023

Time: 19:00

Venue: St Peters Hall, Main Road, Hout Bay, 7806

Resolutions presented at the Members meeting can only be voted on by bona fide members of the Mount Rhodes Community Improvement District NPC (MRCID). This membership is available free of charge to all owners of residential property within the Mount Rhodes Community Improvement District NPC (MRCID) footprint, but they must be registered before 8 November 2023.

A Special Resolution will be required for the amendment of the new Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI) as contemplated in Section 16(5) (a) of the Companies Act, Act 71 of 2008.

For further information, documentation and how to register go to www.mountrhodes.co.za (CID web page), e-mail mountrhodescid@gmail.com or call 083 640 0933