



**IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE CO-ORDINATING BARGAINING COUNCIL  
HELD AT BLOEMFONTEIN**

**CASE NO: PSCB 209-14/15**

PSA obo R C MUNRO

**APPLICANT**

and

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: FREE STATE

**RESPONDENT**

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**ARBITRATION AWARD**

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DATE OF ARBITRATION : 26 SEPTEMBER 2014  
DATE OF AWARD : 1 OCTOBER 2014  
VENUE : DEPT. OF HEALTH BLOEMFONTEIN  
ARBITRATOR : CINDY DICKENS  
ISSUE : INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF  
A COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT,  
RESOLUTION 14 OF 2002

## **1. DETAILS OF HEARING AND REPRESENTATION**

1.1 The abovementioned arbitration was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 at the offices of Kramer, Weihmann & Joubert Attorneys, 24 Barnes Street, Westdene, Bloemfontein.

1.2 The Applicant, Mrs. Munro, was represented by Mr. Greeff, an Official of PSA. The Respondent, Department of Health: Free State, was represented by Mrs. Makoa, Senior Employment Relations Officer. Mrs. Makoa indicated that she was requested by her colleague, Mr. Mapena, to attend the proceedings. She was not given the details of the matter and was also not advised that the case had been set down for arbitration.

1.3 The arbitration proceedings were digitally recorded.

## **2. ISSUE TO BE DECIDED**

2.1 The issue which I was called upon to consider was the interpretation of Resolution 14 of 2002, relating to the response to a grievance.

## **3. BACKGROUND TO THE DISPUTE**

3.1 The Applicant lodged a grievance on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2013.

3.2 The Respondent failed to respond to the grievance within the prescribed 30 (THIRTY) day time limit. Subsequently, the Applicant lodged a formal dispute on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2014 in terms of Section 24 (2) of the Labour Relations Act. The Applicant then filed a request for arbitration on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2014.

## **4. SURVEY OF EVIDENCE AND ARGUMENT**

4.1 The Applicant's argument boils down to the fact that the Respondent failed to comply with Resolution 14 of 2002, being no response to the Applicant's grievance.

4.2 Me. Makoa held that she cannot dispute the facts submitted by Mr. Greeff, and held that she has been placed in a very difficult position as she was not given any information regarding the case. She held that she will take the matter to her supervisor so that a response can be given to the grievance.

- 4.3 Resolution 14 of 2002 deals with the handling of grievances in the public sector. In terms of the said Resolution it is incumbent on the Respondent to respond to an employee's grievance in writing within 30 (THIRTY) working days. The Respondent simply failed to follow suit.
- 4.4 The purpose of the said Resolution is simply to attend to internal grievances in a speedy manner. I believe that the underlying reasons therefore are obvious; it is to create harmony in the workplace. It is irrelevant whether the response is acceptable to the employee. If the latter is not satisfied with the response / outcome of the grievance, then the employee can pursue the matter further through other means. Not all grievances will be arbitrable. The Council must determine whether it has the necessary jurisdiction to entertain the dispute through conciliation / arbitration.
- 4.5 I believe the Respondent had ample time to respond to the Applicant's grievance, but failed to respond for no apparent reason. As pointed out, the failure to take any positive steps in this regard can only cause disharmony in the workplace. Equally, one cannot ignore the fact that both Respondent and Council operate on tax payers' money. By frustrating this dispute, this causes unnecessary costs.

## **5. AWARD**

- 5.1 The Respondent failed to comply with the prescriptive timeframes contained in Resolution 14 of 2002.
- 5.2 The Respondent is ordered to respond to the Applicant's grievance in writing within 7 (SEVEN) days after date of receiving this award.
- 5.3 I have seriously considered to order costs against the Respondent, but decided to rather caution the latter to attend to grievances in a prompt manner.

**SIGNED AT BLOEMFONTEIN ON THIS 1<sup>st</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER 2014**



**C L DICKENS**  
**PSCBC Panellist**