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**NAPTOSA**

**National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa**

## **WORKERS'DAY: 1 MAY 2019**

Workers' Day is one of the most important days on the calendar of trade unions globally.

It presents unions with an opportunity to assess their role and position in the labour market in which they operate and to also do introspection.

As the second largest trade union in the education sector in South Africa and by far the most diverse, NAPTOSA has a lot to be proud of. In the PSCBC and ELRC and in curriculum and education policy matters NAPTOSA enjoys far greater respect and recognition than its size suggests. But this should never be enough. A concerted effort from every NAPTOSA member in terms of recruitment could see our union grow to a point where we would no longer have to join forces with other unions to gain admission to the relevant bargaining councils and where our voice in policy matters will carry even greater weight.

On the labour market front, centralized collective bargaining in the public service is still alive and well, although amendments to the Labour Relations Act, allowing minority unions to seek organizational rights, are causing concerns. The bargaining councils in which NAPTOSA is involved, continue to deliver collective agreements, not all of which are necessarily supported, such as the recent ones in the ELRC on the re-appointment of educators after a break in service and the disciplinary procedure for educators charged with acts of sexual misconduct that both constitute a downward variation of existing rights.

Voices, also in our midst, regularly go up for greater union militancy and activism in the public service. Whilst such calls sometimes have merit, it should not be driven by the actions of rival unions who often act outside the legal parameters. To blow hot air without any real prospect of success or to take action merely for the sake of media attention, achieves very little. In these matters it is important to be strategic and to embark on actions that are achievable and can bring about real benefits to members. As a principled, democratic union, NAPTOSA prides itself on the fact that the will of the majority always guides our actions.

On this Workers' Day the leadership of NAPTOSA salutes each and every member. Be assured that your membership of the union is highly valued, as is your contribution to the South African education system. You are the backbone of our education system and your dedication keeps it going. We trust that the employer will also use this day to pay tribute to educators as their employees. Too often they see and treat employees as mere expendables.

**B L MANUEL**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**