

Parliamentary NewsWatch

Keeping Business Informed.

16 September 2011 Issue 9 Vol. 3

- Page 2 Parliament Now
- Page 4 The Mining Charter - public hearings
- Page 5 SMMEs & SARS e-filing

the cost of

National Health Insurance

Parliament Asks Questions Page 3



Parliamentary Newswatch

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Parliament

NOW



Protection of Personal Information Bill

The Technical Working Committee dealing with the Protection of Personal Information Bill (POPI) is scheduled to resume deliberations this Monday.

Meeting details:

Date: 19 September 2011

Time: 11h00

Venue: V119, Old Assembly Building, Parliament, Cape Town.

The TWC last met to discuss POPI on 1 March 2011, at which time State Law Advisors were tasked with researching the structure of the Information Regulator envisioned in the Bill.

Education - 18th Constitutional Amendment

Parliament's Justice Committee approved the 18th Constitutional Amendment on Wednesday, 14 September 2011. The Amendment will transfer responsibility for further education and training colleges from provinces to the Department of Higher Education and Training

Medium Term Budget Policy Statement

The Finance Minister is scheduled to make his Medium Term Budget Policy Statement on 25 October. BUSA Members wishing to attend the MTBPS may contact the BUSA Parliamentary Office for assistance at bpo@busa.org.za or 021 465 1633.

Costing SA's National Health Insurance

The Health DG appeared before Parliament in late August to outlay plans for the rollout of the NHI.

The key question for MPs:
How much will the NHI cost and who will pay?

*I*nnovative solutions will have to be found to fund South Africa's proposed National Health Insurance - that was the core reply from the Director-General of Health to questions from MPs on the funding of the NHI.

Led by Health Director-General Malebona Precious Matsoso and supported by officials from National Treasury, the Health Department appeared before Parliament's Appropriations Committee to outline plans for the rollout of the NHI.

Government will launch NHI pilot programmes in 2012. The pilots are expected to provide an indication of the accuracy of estimated costing as well as identify further requirements.

Alluding to her previous work experience at the World Health Organisation, the DG emphasised that innovative solutions had been found to fund international health programmes, and the same could be done in South Africa. National Treasury is supporting the Department of Health in finding solutions to the funding of the NHI.

The Health Department believes the current cost of both private and public health care in South Africa to be exorbitant. Public health care is escalating at the expense of the fiscus while private health care was said to be "out of control" at the expense of members of medical schemes.

With the NHI, government is hoping to provide improved access to quality health services for all South Africans irrespective of whether they are employed. Private health schemes will continue to exist.

Whatever the funding model decided on, the DG noted that individual households would (overall) not be required to contribute more than they currently pay in to private medical aid schemes. Funding is expected to come from a combination of sources including the fiscus, employer and individuals. The Health Department is aiming for the broadest possible revenue base in order to achieve the lowest contribution rates.

Parliament has requested National Treasury to return within 6 months with options for financing the NHI. National Treasury announced that it would release a discussion document on NHI financing to allow for public participation on funding. ■

BUSA supports the
Chamber of Mines in
public hearings on...



THE Mining Charter

Mining Charter

- The Mining Charter is a broad-based socio-economic charter for the South African Mining Industry
- It sets a framework, targets and timetable for effecting the entry of historically disadvantaged South Africans into the mining industry
- Targets, time frames and commitments are set for human resource development; employment equity; non-discrimination against foreign migrant labour; mine community and rural development; housing and living conditions; procurement; ownership and joint ventures; and beneficiation
- The Charter sets a target of 26% equity ownership by historically disadvantaged South Africans within 10 years
- Applicants for mining right must also have a labour and social plan approved as part of the application process

*I*n August, BUSA appeared at parliamentary hearings on the Mining Charter. BUSA had earlier been asked by the Chairperson of the Mineral Resources Portfolio Committee to provide a national perspective on the Charter. BUSA's submission supplemented that made by the Chamber of Mines, who followed on from BUSA at the hearings.

Key issues raised by BUSA

Competitiveness and transformation are very important to the economy in general and the mining sector in particular; BUSA encourages its members to meaningfully implement the spirit of transformation

BUSA recognises that the mining sector contributes much more to the local economy and to the fiscus than is generally realised due to its indirect contributions; and the Mining industry will continue to be an important pillar of South Africa's economy for the foreseeable future

The Mining Sector's primary contributions to the economy were:

- Creating decent work and sustainable livelihoods
- Addressing the legacy issues of the past
- Strengthening the skills and human resource base
- Sharing the benefits of economic growth
- Supporting the tax base
- Transformation
- Beneficiation and the sharing of benefits of economic growth

BUSA noted that the National Growth Path specifically identified mining as one of SA's main economic sectors, with a high potential for job creation – a projected 140 000 jobs by 2020 and 200 000 by 2030 excluding downstream and side stream effects.

However, BUSA cautioned that the mining sector is dependent on the smooth functioning of other elements of the economy, including: transport and infrastructure, electricity supply, skills development, and labour and regulatory issues. As mining is a long lead-time industry on investment decisions, rules should be consistent and provide sufficient time for implementation.

BUSA remains optimistic that mining and other sectors will meet their transformation targets. ■

Email bpo@busa.org.za for a copy of the BUSA submission



*T*owards the end of 2010 SARS began issuing notices making it mandatory for large taxpayers to use e-filing for PAYE and VAT submissions.

The Minister of Finance was recently asked by a Member of Parliament about the likely impact of mandatory e-filing on small businesses, particularly those which lack access to the internet.

Benefit of e-filing

In his written reply, the Finance Minister answered that SARS has for a number of years been encouraging the use of electronic filing for PAYE and VAT submissions.

Electronic filing contributes towards cost reduction and increased efficiency for SARS. Taxpayers benefit in the form of greater convenience, security, speed and cost saving.

At present, 75% of all PAYE submissions and 93% of VAT submissions are submitted electronically.

Impact on SMMEs

SARS is acutely aware of the fact that some small businesses may not have access to the internet or email. For this reason, the threshold for compulsory electronic submission was set at significantly high levels: R10 million in PAYE payments per annum and R30 million in turnover for VAT.

Registered vendors and VAT vendors whose payments and/or turnover are below these thresholds may still submit their PAYE and VAT returns manually in print, via the post office or at a SARS branch.

However, to reduce costs and the environmental impact associated with the automatic issue of print returns, SARS requires vendors and employers to request that they be issued with printed forms.

Requests for printed returns can be made via the SARS Contact Centre at 0800 00 7277 or at a SARS branch. ■