

Communiqué No. 14

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Dear all

As we continue to navigate our way to the end of this rather challenging year, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and socio-economic issues across the world, the SASLAW Pro bono NPC project remains committed to delivering quality advisory labour law services with hopes of making a difference in the lives of many who otherwise do not have access to justice. The need for these services in the wake of the resultant unemployment continues to be of paramount importance.

Following our previous communique in May 2020, our Pro bono offices across the country have continued to operate on virtual platforms throughout the lockdown period. However, in view of President Ramaphosa's recent relaxation of the lockdown level 1 regulations we hope to re-open most physical contact offices to indigent individuals who do not have access to the internet. Strict testing, social distancing and prevention measures will accordingly be applicable.

We remain in debt to our valued pro bono attorneys, national and administrators, and all of those who have been a part of this initiative during this difficult period. Your commitment is greatly appreciated.

I wish you all a wonderful and safe festive season, and may we all see a better new year in 2021.

Gugu Mthlane

SASLAW National Committee, Pro Bono Portfolio

SASLAW Pro Bono project - Hybrid

A decision was made in mid-March to continue with running the Pro bono project online as far as possible, while maintaining standards and the professional approach to assisting clients. Notices were put up at the four Labour Courts informing clients of this change in operations. In addition, the Court staff was informed, and this information was loaded onto the SASLAW social media platform, and on the website.

The administrators regularly contact the registrars, to see if there are clients to assist, and the national manager has kept in contact with the pro bono departments of the large law firms, to offer extra assistance as required. Thank you to those attorneys who have responded quickly to the administrator's requests. Your assistance at the time is greatly appreciated.

It has been decided that the Johannesburg office will open in October. Attorneys have been given the option to attend the office physically, or to liaise via Zoom or WhatsApp video, from their offices, with the clients in the SASLAW office, or to just assist via email or phone.

The offices have been equipped with all the necessary PPE required to keep the clients, attorneys and administrators safe, thanks to the very kind donation of R20 000 by Bowmans to cover the cost of the items and courier to the offices.

The project has a LinkedIn page since June. The page has 90 followers. Please follow the page on this link:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/saslawprobono/>

PRO BONO AWARDS - 2020

The Directors would like to honour the following, for their extraordinary work in the offices:

Port Elizabeth

The SASLAW pro bono project at the Labour Courts serves to deliver a quality advisory service and defined Labour law legal services to those who otherwise do not have access to justice

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Michael Yeates, Lusanda Raphulu

The individual award goes to **Adv Peter Kroon SC**, and the firm award goes to **Kirchmanns Inc** for their ongoing support and commitment to the Port Elizabeth office and clients.

Johannesburg

The Individual award goes to **Sean Jamieson, from Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr** for serving the most hours in the Johannesburg office this year.

The Firm award goes to **Webber Wentzel** for their extraordinarily generous donation to funding the cost of the Permanent Attorney in the Johannesburg office for 2020.

Durban

The Firm award goes to **Farrell Inc** for their contribution towards the initiation and implementation of the Durban Labour Court Virtual Hearings Project in 2020.

The Individual award goes to **Sanelisiwe Nyasulu from Garlicke & Bousfield** for serving the most hours & her commitment to the Durban office this year.

ADVICE OFFICE UPDATES

1. CHAPTER OFFICE REPORT BACK

- Johannesburg - Helen Sithole

The Johannesburg office re-opened on the 08 October 2020 much to the delight of our clients. We saw about 28 clients in total during the week. As per covid protocols each client is asked to sanitise their hands as they enter the office, and their temperature is taken.

We have about 3 cases going for trial this month and each client has expressed gratitude at being represented by the attorneys from the organisation. The office has reduced the number of clients to be seen each day from 10 to 15 to ease the congestion at the labour court. Most of our consultation are conducted via whatsapp video calls or we send emails the attorney on duty with attached documents from clients

Juliet Dakada fund

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R63 410 was raised by the very generous SASLAW members for Juliet's family after her untimely death in July. Funds were used for catering at the Labour Court memorial, a donation was given to the family, some has been spent on a laptop for her granddaughter and the rest will be used to assist her with her University studies next year.

The permanent Attorney - Jacqueline Keet - has assisted about 25 clients a week with their documentation.

- Durban - Diane Cochran

The Durban office is currently continuing to offer services to clients remotely. They have approached the Durban Registrar to discuss the re-opening of the Wednesday Advice office within the next month or so. They have discussed measures to be put in place as well as options which will be available to attorneys for attendance or other support. The Durban office will be re-configured to allow for the Virtual Court Hearing space as well as consulting space for an attorney and administrator.

The Durban Labour Court Virtual Court Hearing office



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- Cape Town - Fatima Rustin

The SASLAW NPC Western Cape office has continued to provide virtual consulting to clients on a weekly basis. Participating firms and attorneys have been rostered each week and clients have been able to e-mail matters and related documents and receive feedback within a few days. Clients who have not had access to emails were able to WhatsApp or contact the office via telephone and telephone consultations were arranged where possible to assist clients with their matters.

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At the moment the pro-bono office is in communication with the Labour Court each week where a register is kept of clients who visit the consulting office for advice. Clients are asked to email a brief of their matter or where they are not able to the list of names are sent to the office where we set up consult with clients who pass the means test.

We have certainly seen an increase in clients requesting assistance with labour matters and we are trying to assist as far as possible. For now, the office will remain closed and attorneys will be consulting via email or virtual consultation.

STATISTICS

SASLAW PRO BONO STATISTICS - NATIONAL February 2011 - November 2020

SASLAW PRO BONO STATISTICS - NATIONAL 4 February 2011 - 15 November2020					
Region	Cape Town	Durban	Johannesburg	Port Elizabeth	Total
Clients seen	4306	3453	17 758	839	26356
Hours spent in office/online	1849	2819	12777	1266	18711
No of attorneys	47	56	168	17	288
No of firms	27	32	99	12	170
No of matters taken on by attorneys	736	696	775	94	2301
No of matters taken on by Legal Aid	209	229	922	3	1363
No of new clients seen by the Permanent Attorney in the Johannesburg Advice Office			928		928

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - FELLOWS PROGRAMME

Due to COVID-19, the three fellows who were due to arrive in South Africa in early June 2020 were unable to do so. However, an online fellowship programme was created. The fellows attended an online LabourNet course during June 2020. Thanks to LabourNet for offering that course for free.

The fellows have participated in a research project with the Legal Resources Council on a land reform and education project. From 17 to 31 July 2020 they worked on a Lawtons Africa project and attended an online course on employment equity with LabourNet. In early August 2020 they physically visited Le Clair & Associates offices in London, Ontario. The project paid for a night's accommodation at a Delta hotel near the offices. Ron Le Clair and Nick Preston took the fellows out for supper. The fellows visited Norton Rose in Toronto in mid-August. Thanks must go to all these firms and organisations for their support and efforts.

It is hoped that the fellows will be able to visit South Africa for a month in January 2021.

SUCCESS STORIES

“Once again, thank you very much for taking the time to advise. You have been helpful whenever you can and by just responding to my email is also helpful.”

Shiralee Taylor Bravi, in Johannesburg, recently assisted a client in the Johannesburg office, who was so grateful with the result of the matter, that he kindly made a R500 donation to the Pro bono project.

In Cape Town, a happy client thanked the administrators and lawyers who have been so helpful and efficient.

PRO BONO PROJECT FUND RAISING WEBINAR

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The Directors of the project urge you to support the fund-raising project on the 26th November. Judges Gush and van Niekerk will be presenting to delegates via Microsoft Teams. The fee to attend is R200 per person and this includes one raffle ticket. Raffle prizes include Takealot vouchers, NetFlorist hampers and products from LexisNexis, Juta Law and LabourNet. We look forward to your participation. Register here:

<https://saslaw.org.za/index.php/events/>

Thank you for your wonderful contributions in time and energy to the project around the country. If you have any questions, **wish to participate in the project, or donate and receive a Section 18A certificate**, please contact Clare.

Directors

SASLAW Pro Bono NPC

November 2020

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