

Sun City's operations boss quits amid licence probe

The director of operations at Sun City, Geoff Mabote, has resigned amid an investigation by the North West Gambling Board into questions of his suitability to hold a licence in the gambling sector.



Sun City in North West is an internationally renowned holiday resort offering golf, game-viewing and gambling as well as world-class hotels. Sun International owns the resort.

The investigation by the board set out to establish Mabote's suitability to hold an employment licence in the gambling industry.

He had been on a temporary permit since his appointment in November 2011.

The National Gambling Act disqualifies a person from holding an employment licence, if that person had been associated with misconduct or dishonesty relating to the use of funds.

In 2006, Mabote was sucked into a R100m Post Office tender controversy that resulted in a disciplinary hearing.

North West Gambling Board chief executive Fortune Sekgaphane confirmed that the investigation was under way.

"Yes we are investigating him but this is a private matter. How did you get the details?"

Sekgaphane wrote to the South African Post Office, in a letter dated January 24, seeking answers over Mabote's departure from the Post Office.

"On the basis of the information you provided, when evaluating whether Mabote is a fit and proper person to hold an employment licence in terms of the respective legislation stated above, it is apparent that the board may face challenges in granting him an employment licence," the letter reads.

Sekgaphane requested a meeting with Christopher Hlekane, the group chief executive of the Post Office, saying: "It is the

reasons mentioned and the sensitivity surrounding this matter that the CEO of North West Gambling Board humbly requests a meeting with you to discuss some salient negative findings already made by the investigation team against Mabote's suitability for employment by Sun City Resorts."

The meeting was scheduled for last Monday (4 February) in Centurion. It is not clear if it took place and what emerged from it.

Asked for comment about the meeting Sekgaphane said: "I will not divulge any details regarding Mabote. It's wrong for me to do that. I am legally bound as the CEO to respect the privacy of Mabote."

South African Post Office CEO Chris Hlekane promised to call back but did not respond.

Contacted for comment, Sun International said that they found it "weird" that Mabote could not be issued with a permanent operating licence as required by the law.

Kele Mazwai, the human resources director, said: "Mabote was never issued with a permanent licence. It was of concern to us and (we) found it weird that he was not being issued with a permanent licence."

Mabote agreed to speak to *Business Day*, but after two weeks of postponing said: "I didn't get the outcome of the Post Office inquiry, I don't know whether I was found guilty or not. You know it's public knowledge that every time a CEO leaves all those who were close to him, are also bound to go. I was one of those. I have resigned from Sun City to pursue other things. There are people that are out to tarnish my name."

Source: *Business Day* via I-Net Bridge

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