

## Consumer commissioner cocks snoot at dti minister

National Consumer Commissioner Mamodupi Mohlala-Mulaudzi believes that she has a good chance of being reappointed even though she has cocked a snoot at her political boss Trade & Industry Minister Rob Davies.



Trade & Industry Minister Rob Davies. (Image: GCS)

On Friday the Labour Court ruled in Mohlala-Mulaudzi's favour that Davies and the Department of Trade & Industry have to consult with her before deciding that her post should be advertised and calling for other applicants.

This stems from the department advertising the position, which is a relatively new one in government, last month without her knowledge.

The court also stuck to the original terms of her appointment saying that it does expire on September 3.

Coincidentally the court hearing occurred on the same day that Davies delivered his budget vote speech in Parliament and in a press briefing afterwards he said that he accepted and would abide by the order.

"Mohlala-Mulaudzi contention throughout was that her contract was for a five-year period. This was at the heart of the dispute between the parties. In terms of the court order, the only step that the minister must take is to consult with Mohlala-Mulaudzi in writing, prior to the minister taking a final decision as to whether to retain her or not. Depending on the minister's decision the recruitment process may be embarked upon," the dti said in a statement later on Friday.

However, Mohlala-Mulaudzi maintained the Labour Court decision vindicated her position and described the whole process as a waste of taxpayers' money.

### Legal costs

"I had one attorney at court who cost me R20 000. The department had three advocates plus an attorney and that would have cost them around R100 000. All to hear a decision that I put to the minister several months ago," she said.

Also in terms of the court order, Davies has to consult with her two months before the end of her contract and must give her 10 days to respond in writing once he had made a decision.

Mohlala-Mulaudzi believed she had a good chance of being reappointed as she said she had exceeded all the National Consumer Commission's targets.

"For some reason the minister still has not signed my performance appraisal, but the commission has met or exceeded almost all its targets," she said.

Also in progress was Mohlala-Mulaudzi's complaint against dti Director General Lionel October with the Public Protector.

Mohlala-Mulaudzi said she would be meeting with the Public Protector on May 24 about the issue.

Mohlala-Mulaudzi was appointed as National Consumer Commissioner in 2009 after having a massive fallout with then communications minister Siphwe Nyanda when she was the Department of Communications Director General.

Part of the settlement reached at the time was that she would be appointed to a position of equal status within the public service.

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