

Eskom board orders investigation into COO

The Eskom board has ordered an independent investigation into allegations of corruption against its chief operating officer (COO) Jan Oberholzer.



Eskom COO, Jan Oberholzer

“In the best interest of Eskom and both the complainant and the COO, the board has engaged the services of an independent senior counsel to investigate the allegations against the COO, and upon conclusion of such an investigation, to provide recommendations to the board,” said the board in a statement.

This as the board acknowledged the receipt of correspondences from civil society organisation Corruption Watch, dated 11 March 2020. The board also revived correspondence from South African Federation of Trade Unions (Saftu), dated 12 and 18 March 2020.

In the letters both organisations articulate allegations of corruption and victimisation against Oberholzer.

“Both organisations cite the same source, an Eskom employee who has since deposed to an affidavit to the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture, as having raised the allegations. In the correspondence, the organisations implore the Eskom board to intervene and act to protect the whistle-blower.”

The board added that many of the allegations raised in the letters have not previously been made available to the executive

management and the board of Eskom.

The letters also follow the publication of recent media articles that continue to refer to some of the allegations.

Whistleblowers

"From the onset, it must be stated categorically that Eskom's executive management and the board stand firmly against corruption, victimisation and abuse of power," said the board, adding that whistle-blowers are a key instrument in the fight against corruption.

Eskom has previously dealt with matters concerning the COO, and after an investigation led by an outside senior counsel, the investigation was closed following a thorough examination of the allegations, to which no substance was found.

"In light of the new allegations as articulated in the Corruption Watch and Saftu letters, including the alleged abuse of power, the board of Eskom has taken urgent steps to address these allegations in a transparent process following Eskom's governance principles and disciplinary code," it said.

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