

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO ALL EDITORS/EDUCATION REPORTS

DATE: 08 July 2026

CRITICISE THE NSFAS ADMINISTRATOR, BUT DO SO FACTUALLY AND FAIRLY

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has noted with grave concern the Sunday World's sensationalised story over the weekend about NSFAS Administrator, Professor Hlengani Mathebula.

Titled, *"NSFAS administrator 'living large' without Godongwana's approval"*, the story failed to canvass obvious facts to enable its readers to reach their own fact-based conclusions.

Here are the facts: Mathebula's administration has the lowest cost base by design, comparatively; it has only four advisors whose accommodation is also funded through their own salaries determined through the Department of Public Service and Administration's 2018 rates, which aren't latest rates available. Mathebula's accommodation is well within the range of his predecessors'. This was deliberate to curb costs in the interest of NSFAS and the fiscus.

"This statement is not intended to shield Professor Mathebula from accountability. As the leader of an institution as important as NSFAS, he must be subjected to public scrutiny and held accountable for his decisions and actions. However, scrutiny must be grounded in facts, fairness and objectivity. Sensationalised reporting does not advance accountability; it undermines it. In this instance, Sunday World failed to adequately interrogate the facts and contextual information presented to them before publishing their article," said Ishmael Mnisi, NSFAS Spokesperson.

"Public discourse on matters of governance and institutional performance must be informed by objective facts rather than selective narratives. Yet, in this case, Sunday World made no meaningful effort to compare the performance, challenges and operational contexts of different administrations, which would have been a fundamental requirement for balanced and objective reporting. Without such context, readers are denied a fair and informed understanding of the issues at hand," he added.

NSFAS is stakeholders dependent with 26 universities and 50 TVET colleges, which span South Africa. This therefore means that engaging stakeholders is an intrinsic part of his job.

"But to ensure prudence, Mathebula always assesses these engagements carefully and where

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possible, he invites stakeholders to his office, in Cape Town. It is therefore unreasonable to expect him to refrain from meeting the very people NSFAS serves,” said Mnisi.

Professor Mathebula is appropriately appointed by Government Gazette No. 54607 as issued on 4 May 2026 wherein his conditions are clearly stipulated. He has a legitimate contract with the Department of Higher Education and Training. Therefore, any suggestion that his actions are unauthorised is untrue and far-fetched.

Mathebula is hard at work to restore this vital asset to its optimal operational capacity, consistent with the relevant Government Gazette.

End.

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Issued by the **National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)**

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