

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

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One in eight people works in the public sector

One in eight people works in the South African public sector, according to the *South Africa Survey* just published by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg.

The total number of people employed in the broadly-defined public sector is at least 1.61 million, which constitutes 13% of the 12.8 million people employed in South Africa. This works out at a ratio of almost one in eight. The actual number of people working in the public sector is higher because these figures exclude employees of 280 public institutions.

The figures include 1.27 million people working in national and provincial departments, up from 1.01 million in 1999. In addition there are 240 000 local government employees and 94 000 employed in the eight state-owned enterprises which report to the Department of Public Enterprises (Alexkor, Boradband Infracol, Denel, PBMR, SAA, Safcol, SAX, and Transnet).

The figures exclude employees of 280 other public institutions listed in the Public Finance Management Act of 1999. These institutions include constitutional institutions, national public entities, national government business enterprises such as water boards, provincial public entities including provincial liquor and tourism boards, and provincial government business enterprises. There is currently no data available on the total number of people employed by these institutions.

Ms Lucy Holborn of the research department at the Institute said, 'It is important that we keep track of the size of the public sector. Personnel accounts for nearly a third of total government spending in the 2010/11 budget. Average public sector wages are also increasing at a faster rate than average private sector wages. In 2000, average public sector earnings were 12% higher than those in the private sector. In 2010, they were 44% higher than those in the private sector.'

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