

Collective Bargaining

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Collective bargaining constitutes one of the most important member service delivery activities of SACTWU. Our collective bargaining vision, as resolved by the union's National Congress (our highest decision making structure) is as follows:

“...to provide a quality service to a diverse membership through improving the collective bargaining outcomes and strengthening service delivery. This requires that we build and strengthen bargaining structures, and direct them at improving the lives of members. Our vision of strong service culture for members is based on addressing the real, daily problems of workers on the shopfloor, and providing them with an excellent service as their voice and their organisation”.

The main focus of our national bargaining activities are on the strengthening of national bargaining structures, improving wages, strengthening organisational rights, improving member benefits (such as retirement fund provisions, primary health care), and the consolidation of organisation in non-metro areas.

We mainly negotiate nationally, in 3 national bargaining councils (in the clothing, textile and leather sectors respectively) and a number of national company groups. Over the last few years SACTWU achieved much improved union representivity in all our major bargaining councils and a strong and mobilised non-metro membership. We are the only trade union recognised for national collective bargaining in the clothing and textile sectors in South Africa. In the leather industry bargaining council, we are not yet the majority trade union but are making steady progress towards the goal of becoming the majority trade union.

We also negotiate in 2 provincial bargaining councils (rope and canvass in Gauteng and laundry in KZN) and 6 company groups. In addition, we conduct about 80 separate plant level negotiations each year. Our agreements cover over 100 000 clothing, textile, leather and distribution-related sector workers, in all parts of the country.

Our negotiations are annual and the new implementation date for the vast majority of agreements is on 1 July each year. In the Blankets textiles sector it is on 1 August each year and in the clothing sector the effective date for increases is 1st September each year.

Each year we collect over 16 000 living wage demands from about 80 000 workers employed

in just over 1600 workplaces nationally. These demands are consolidated into national ones at our Annual Bargaining Conference. Our Bargaining Conference is normally held at the beginning of March each year, and is attended by just over 200 shop stewards from all sectors and all parts of the country, representing all our members in all sectors in which our trade union is organised.

Our collective bargaining demands are normally submitted to employers in early April each year and negotiations normally commence in late April.

Our largest bargain covers the clothing sector, followed by textiles and then by leather. We are also the majority trade union which conducts national negotiations for the Service Product sector. We have 13 National Sector Co-ordinators, full-time staff, who lead our various sector negotiations. Our negotiating teams consist mostly of shop stewards from the specific sectors for which negotiations are conducted.

Over the period June 2007 to end July 2010 (our last 3-year National Congress review period), we conducted negotiations for 294 wage agreements, of which 18 per year were at central level and 80 at plant level. This will be updated for the 3-year period from June 2010 to July 2013 immediately after our National Congress, to be held in August this year.

All our Bargaining Council agreements have been gazetted and extended to non-party companies. Regrettably, a reactionary employer organisation has in March this year successfully petitioned the KZN-based Pietermaritzburg High Court to set aside our 2010 extension of the clothing industry agreement. We are appealing this court judgment.

SACTWU operates in three national bargaining councils, three regional bargaining councils and two national distribution forums which together cover almost 90% of SACTWU's membership. The bargaining councils are:

National:

- [The National Bargaining Council for the Clothing Manufacturing Industry \(NBC\)](#) ;
- The National Bargaining Council of the Leather Industry of South Africa (NBCLI), and
- [The National Textile Bargaining Council \(NTBC\)](#) .

Regional:

- The Bargaining Council for the Canvas Goods Industry (Gauteng), and

- The Bargaining Council for the Laundry, Cleaning and Dyeing Industry (Natal).

You can find the clothing agreements and wage schedules by clicking on the relevant province on the website of the [National Bargaining Council for the Clothing Manufacturing Industry](#) . Information about wage agreements in the textile and leather sectors can be found on the respective websites of the National Textile Bargaining Council and the National Bargaining Council for the Leather Industry of South Africa.