

PanSALB to launch Sign language Charter

The Pan South African Sign Language (PanSALB) Board will today launch the South African Sign Language Charter (SASL Charter) which is aimed at removing barriers to enable deaf people equal opportunities to information and services.



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The Charter was conceptualised to address issues that relate to communication, access to information, facilities, and social justice for the deaf community, including the type of service provided by SASL interpreters in general.

The SASL Charter articulates and affirms the linguistic rights of deaf persons in South Africa and is aimed at creating conditions for the development of SASL.

The charter compels all government departments and other organs of state, as well as private sector to make provisions for SASL interpreting and guarantees access to services by deaf people, through ensuring essential service staff such as social workers and police officers receive advanced level training in South African Sign Language.

PanSALB Board Chairperson, Dr David Maahlamela, said the SASL Charter is premised on the 'nothing about us without us' disability movement.

“It is a product of years of extensive consultation with the deaf community that has culminated to this call to action for our government and civil society to rally together and pledge their commitment to the principles of multilingualism and social cohesion that underpin the provisions of this charter,” Maahlamela said.

Maahlamela added that South African Sign Languages is a language with its own distinct grammatical structures and lexicon.

“The launch of the charter is a giant stride towards ensuring the officialisation of South African Sign Language as the 12th South African Official language,” Maahlamela said.

September is Deaf Awareness Month and the SASL Charter Launch will kickstart various activities that will be undertaken by PanSALB in various parts of the country to raise awareness about South African Sign Language and the charter.

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