

# APOLOGY

City Press apologises to vice-chancellor Professor Peter Mbatlana and the University of Venda (Univen) for reporting in three articles (two news stories and an opinion piece) the allegation that former dean of the School of Education, Professor Thidziambani Phendla, was charged with corruption only after she had brought a complaint of sexual harassment against Mbatlana, and that the latter had hounded her out of a job on trumped-up charges without giving her a right to reply.

City Press further apologises for omitting to report the content of a court order, specifically the fact that the agreement stipulated that all the negative statements made in the Commission for Gender Equality's report against Mbatlana be excised. This includes that there was sufficient evidence of a romantic relationship between him and Phendla.

City Press apologises for the unnecessary damage these reports, statements and omissions have done to Mbatlana's dignity and the university's reputation.

The Office of the Press Ombudsman and a panel of adjudicators also reprimanded City Press for not asking Mbatlana and the university for comment on statements that Phendla had been hounded out of her job on trumped-up charges; for largely failing to verify Phendla's version of events; and for not capturing Univen's response to the effect that charges were brought against Phendla only after she had brought a charge of sexual harassment against Mbatlana.

Other complaints, such as the reference in the opinion piece that Phendla had been vindicated by the court; the reporting that the Commission for Gender Equality's report was "scathing" on Mbatlana; that the court enforced the Commission for Gender Equality's recommendation to be implemented; and that Univen did not comply with the court order, were all dismissed.

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