

uShaka Marine World shuts down amid wage dispute

Durban's renowned uShaka Marine World closed its doors on Monday, February 12, as employees, represented by the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu), initiated industrial action due to wage disputes. The strike was prompted by a deadlock in wage negotiations.



Source: Balou46 via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Over the past few months, uShaka Marine World has been in negotiations with the union representing its bargaining unit employees regarding salary adjustments. Unfortunately, the parties have failed to settle, leading to the intervention of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA). Despite the involvement of the CCMA in intervention, a resolution remains, impacting both visitors and the local economy

uShaka closure

According to [IOL](#), uShaka CEO Ndabo Khoza expressed his concern over the potential impact of the industrial action on the park's ability to deliver a quality guest experience, adding that uShaka's management respects the constitutional right of employees to strike and emphasised the need for peaceful and lawful demonstrations.

As per [Tourism Update](#), a document leaked to Samwu showed that an independent salary audit had been completed by 2016 and had made recommendations for increased wages. but these suggestions were never applied.

Salary benchmarking

According to [Times Live](#), when the union found out about these recommendations in 2020, they requested wage adjustments for the 2022/2023 financial year. In negotiations with the CCMA, Samwu declined a management offer of R1.5m to be divided among 333 employees, seeking R2.5m.

Another work study faced financial constraints from uShaka, leading to delays.

Despite protests, uShaka offered a R1,300 increase for general workers, with other grades offering 5%-6% raises, but all declined. Samwu claimed uShaka managers had gotten raises. Dumisani Luthuli, a Samwu representative acknowledged uShaka's financial struggles but alleged that managers had given themselves raises.

Luthuli revealed that discussions about benchmarking recommendations with the employer were dismissed as rumours. The recommendations included a grade 17 cleaner's suggested salary of R9,500, which currently stands at R3,500.

The closure is anticipated to continue until there is a resolution between the workers and management.

The closure is expected to significantly impact tourism in Durban, with businesses in the surrounding area also likely to be affected.

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