

## Media Release

15 December 2011

### **JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG, ITS MUNICIPAL ENTITIES, THE PROPERTY OWNERS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION AND ITS MEMBERS**

The City of Johannesburg, its municipal entities (including City Power and Johannesburg Water), and the Property Owners and Managers Association ("POMA") and its members (who own or manage numerous residential and commercial properties particularly in the inner city of Johannesburg) have agreed to issue the following joint media statement.

1 It is confirmed that :

1.1 The City and its municipal entities have a constitutional entitlement and obligation to collect revenue; and

1.2 The City and its municipal entities are empowered by law to effect disconnection and cut-off of services due to non payment.

2 The disconnection of services may only take place in accordance with applicable procedures. In particular this requires inter alia that:

2.1 Correctly billed accounts must be issued to consumers.

2.2 A reasonable opportunity will be afforded to consumers to settle arrear accounts or make appropriate arrangements satisfactory to the City and its municipal entities.

2.3 Prior to disconnection/restriction, consumers must have been given adequate and fair advance notice and an opportunity to challenge the accuracy of the accounts as per the City's bylaws.

3 In relation to a pending application brought in the South Gauteng High Court by POMA and its members, the parties have reached an amicable settlement to deal with the interim relief sought by the applicants. The parties will jointly request the High Court on Thursday [15 December 2011](#) to confirm the City's undertaking to adhere to its legal duties as set out above.

4 The City has already embarked upon a programme which deals with and will continue to deal with the revenue collection and customer relations services. The undertaken programme capacitates, optimises and streamlines the functioning of the revenue collection and customer relations services which includes:

4.1 Reminders to consumers to pay accounts. This will be in the form of the monthly statement and/or a telephone call advising customers to pay the account and the outstanding arrears within 20 days.

4.2 If this is not done, consumers will be issued with a pre-termination notice giving them 14 days within which to settle the account or make satisfactory arrangements.

4.3 Any consumers who lodge queries or challenges to the accounts will be allowed the opportunity to do so and the City will assess these queries, make any appropriate adjustments to accounts (if any) and notify consumers of the outcome and any reasons in relation thereto.

4.4 Where a consumer has lodged a legitimate revenue related query, services to which that query relates will not be disconnected until the query is resolved and the consumer notified accordingly.

4.5 The City must inform the consumer in writing of its decision as soon as possible and must give the consumer 21 days to pay the amount found to be due and payable.

5 These arrangements will be applied to all consumers.

6 Notice is specifically drawn to the provisions of the bylaws which are obtainable from any municipal office or the website of the City of Johannesburg and in particular that:

6.1 The municipality is entitled to raise charges in respect of an estimate for water and electricity for a maximum period of 180 days.

6.2 In the event of a query being logged the consumer must continue to make payments of a reasonable amount (equal to the average of the preceding three months account which are not in dispute) in relation to the amount in dispute. The consumer must, regardless of the query, pay all amounts that are not in dispute.

7 The City invites consumers who have not received their monthly statement by the seventh day of each month to contact the City for such statements.

8 The consumer must provide the municipality with their current contact, and postal details at the following email address: [statements@joburg.org.za](mailto:statements@joburg.org.za).

9 All queries and complaints are to be directed in writing supported by such relevant documentation to:

[joburgconnect@joburg.org.za](mailto:joburgconnect@joburg.org.za) or Thuso House, 61 Jorrisen Street, Braamfontein.

Neither party condones a culture of non payment and the parties urge the consumers to act pro actively by approaching the municipality to rectify any queries that they have