



**BUSINESS
LEADERSHIP
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**4TH
EDITION**

BLSA BULLETIN

MAY 2022



**Research &
Initiatives**



Policy Update



BACSA Update



**PR, Comms
and
Marketing**

This fourth edition of the BLSA Bulletin highlights good progress in some areas while others, not surprisingly, are being held up by slow responses by government.

One area where we're making positive headway is in combating gender-based violence (GBV) while Business Against Crime SA also responded strongly to provide relief in the wake of the devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal. GBV is a perennial issue and an area that gets ample media coverage – unfortunately usually triggered by yet another horrific act of violence – but where progress appears to be dishearteningly slow.

Private sector donations to the GBV victim empowerment and support initiative have been strong (let's keep them coming!) and Business Against Crime will establish and upgrade victim friendly facilities in the Western Cape while non-government organisation NGO Mata A Bana will do the same in Soweto. Both will also be training SAPS personnel on how to deal with gender-based violence and provide logistical support.

At a national level, another major breakthrough in the fight against this scourge on our nation was made in February when President Cyril Ramaphosa signed into law three new pieces of legislation designed to increase protection for women and children while improving the chances for victims of receiving justice.

With one in five women having experienced physical violence by a partner in 2021, according to Statistics SA, there is clearly much more that needs to be done, including addressing the culture of violence in our society. But these are positive steps that will contribute to a better future.

In response to the floods, Bacsa, through the Eyes and Ears Initiative (E2), together with Fidelity Security and the SAPS worked together to provide relief. One notable rescue effort related to a school in Hillcrest where 35 pupils and 15 teachers had been trapped for two days, with the roads around the school having been washed away. Relief in the form of food, water and blankets was quickly dropped via helicopter and the children and teachers were later evacuated by emergency response services.

The one area where progress has been disappointing is in BLSA's efforts to combat illicit trade. We reported in the previous BLSA Bulletin that a steering committee for illicit trade had been established. Unfortunately, SARS did not attend the first meeting and is requesting that a memorandum of understanding first be signed with BLSA to establish a relationship prior to working together on specific projects. BLSA is working to get that done and to establish a recurring executive committee meeting to keep the SARS commissioner and the BLSA CEO informed.

The damage that the illicit trade inflicts on the wider economy is immeasurable but at a webinar hosted by BLSA last year, Zacharia Motsumi, the director of the SA Tobacco Transformation Alliance, said that before lockdown, illicit trading made up 24% to 28% of the market.

During lockdown and the ban on the sale of tobacco products, this grew to 100% as illicit traders were the only ones selling cigarettes. After the ban, however, the market share of the illegal traders had climbed to about 30% and R5.8bn was lost in tax revenue. The CEO of SA Liquor Brand Owners Association, Kurt Moore, said the fiscus lost about R6.45bn due to the alcohol sales ban.

BLSA will continue to vigorously oppose bad policy and much of the work outlined below is aimed at that. One areas where good progress is being made is with the critical skills list, where BLSA is assisting Operation Vulindlela to identify improvements that could be made to the policy framework and processes for work visas, a project that is nearing completion.

Another area that I'm keeping a close eye on is BLSA's efforts to provide assistance to the NPA in preparation for the avalanche of cases flowing from the Zondo Commission's reports. The NPA has proposed that BLSA support it by providing labour, equipment and skilled individuals at no charge.

Finally, I'd like to salute the numerous NGOs, which have expertise in specific fields, that are partnering with BLSA in many of the initiatives we're involved in. They are a key social partner in our endeavours to improve all aspects of South African society. Thank you too to the BLSA teams for working so hard to achieve that goal.

Yours sincerely,

Busiswe Mavuso

01

Research & Initiatives



1.1 Support to Operation Vulindlela on general and critical skills visa reform

Operation Vulindlela (OV) is a unit within the Presidency that works with the National Treasury (NT) to accelerate reforms, particularly by identifying and overcoming obstacles to ensure execution on policy commitments.

As reported in the previous BLSA bulletin, BLSA has partnered with the OV team to assist with general and critical skills visas, the raw water pricing strategy (RWPS) and the water use licence application (WULA) process.

With regards to the general and critical skills visas, BLSA is assisting OV to identify improvements that could be made to the policy framework and processes for work visas. The project is nearing completion with OV awaiting a final report from Deloitte.

The RWPS project is now concluded and it assisted the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) to develop a new draft of the RWPS (including actual drafting) which captures the agreed changes and additions.

Regarding the WULA, BLSA is supporting OV by providing technical assistance for the redesign of the WULA process to enable fast-tracking of the processing and issuance of water use licenses to promote investment in forestry, agriculture, mining and other sectors of the economy.

1.2 Civilian Commission on the professionalisation of the public service

BLSA believes that the professionalising and depoliticising of recruitment and promotions of senior management within the public service sector will contribute towards the development of a capable state through capacitating the state with civil servants selected purely on merit and beholden to the public good rather than narrow interests.

The Civilian Commission will examine national and international benchmarks on what constitutes a professional public service, consult a wide range of stakeholders and publicly release a set of recommendations.

BLSA, has partnered the government and the Public Policy Think Tank (GAPP-TT) over the course of nine to 12 months to perform work, which will:

- define a problem statement;
- analyse national and international benchmarks;
- ensure multi-stakeholder consultation; and
- provide detailed reform proposals.

1.3 Defend our Democracy campaign

The Defend our Democracy (DoD) campaign aims to curb the corruption plaguing South Africa and reinstate the democratic constitutional rights of its citizens through democratic deliberation.

The DOD was formed to counter corruption and state capture destabilisation in South Africa and promote participatory democracy. The campaign has accomplished some of what it set out to do through various public activations and cross-sectoral coalition building in its first year of existence.

However, it has not yet been able to establish a mass base around a common platform that envisions new politics towards a more participatory and inclusive democracy. With the DoD campaign aiming to capacitate civil society to serve as an extra-parliamentary “check and balance” on threats to SA’s constitutional order, BLSA – which became involved in the campaign in 2021 – has pledged to support it.

1.4 Support to DWS to improve its water use licence application processes

As reported in the previous bulletin, BLSA is providing support to OV and the DWS in the form of technical capacity to improve water use licence application (WULA) processes.

Professors from the University of Stellenbosch were contracted and are in the second month of the six-month project. The immediate work includes the costing of the proposed WULA organisational structure, refinement of the WULA training manual, development of training modules and methods and the finalisation of the WULA templates revision. Thereafter, monitoring and enhancements of optimising WULA utilisation will take place.

1.5 Presidential SOE Council support (resourcing PSEC workstreams)

The Technical Assistance Mentorship Development (TAMDEV) is conceptualised as giving institutional form to a collaboration between government and business. These collaborations aim to build on tested, workable practices and the deployment of appropriate retired expertise and technical skills from both the private and public sectors to strengthen vulnerable public institutions and address infrastructure provisioning and service delivery constraints.

BLSA is supporting SOE reform processes with a view to ultimately improving government service delivery and South Africa’s fiscal (macroeconomic) position. TAMDEV has been appointed to oversee the resourcing of the Presidential SOE Council (PSEC). The National Business Initiative (NBI), including TAMDEV, has been invited to the next board meeting to provide an update on various projects.

1.6 Support Presidential Red Tape Reduction Team

Work is under way to cut red tape in an effort to enhance the business environment and create much-needed jobs in South Africa. The reduction of red tape aims to increase the ease of doing business.

Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) together with BLSA met with Siphon Nkosi, head of the Presidential Red Tape Reduction Team, to offer assistance to support areas of red tape reduction identified by BUSA members. BLSA contributed extensively to the BUSA input. At the meeting the likelihood of setting up an office with BLSA and broader business support to maximise the impact of the office was discussed. A follow-up meeting has also been scheduled.

1.7 Beyond Advocacy Fund

BLSA continues to partner with USAID in managing the Beyond Advocacy Fund (BAF). As reported in the previous version of the bulletin, the four projects are: National Business Initiative, Afrika Tikken Services, 22 on Sloane Capacity Building Programme, and the EnterpriseRoom EnterpriseFund Township SMME Development Programme. These projects target job creation and youth unemployment as well as the enhancement of delivery and maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure. They focus on the following priority areas:

1.7.1 EnterpriseRoom’s Township SMME Development Programme

EnterpriseRoom is a transformation and business growth consultancy. It is dedicated to achieving socio-economic transformation by starting, sustaining, growing, and developing small and medium businesses. Through BAF, EnterpriseRoom’s Township SMME Development Programme aims to source finance from different partners to provide a blended financing product to SMMEs that is affordable and focuses on driving growth and sustainability.

The development programme has completed a study on SME bottlenecks and a funding analysis. EnterpriseRoom is currently selecting SMEs for the Funding Readiness Programme. R1,050,000 of the budget has been disbursed with R1,050,000 remaining.

1.7.2 22 On Sloane’s Capacity Building Programme

22 On Sloane’s Capacity Building Programme’s key offering is the accelerator model which is delivered through tailored programmes. It aims to support start-up businesses and help integrate them into the mainstream economy of the country by creating opportunities for them to access markets, and access funding.

The City of Johannesburg, the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and BAF have provided 22 On Sloane with a list of township hubs that could potentially benefit from the Capacity Building Programme.

To date one masterclass and business clinic have been hosted for SMME and entrepreneurs. R1,050,000 of the budget has been disbursed with R1,050,000 remaining.

1.7.3 Afrika Tikkun Services

Afrika Tikkun Services exists to create sustainable economic empowerment through skills training, job placement and entrepreneurship. Afrika Tikkun Services gives numerous students digital skills training.

To date:

- 105 desktop support technicians have completed training and 84 have been placed for work experience,
- 71 data analysts have completed training and 49 have been placed for work experience,
- 45 software developers have completed training and 44 have been placed for work experience,
- 106 cloud and cybersecurity specialists have completed training and 78 have been placed for work experience.

R1,446,295 of the budget has been disbursed with R1,353,705 remaining.

02

Policy Update



2.1 Electricity Amendment Bill 2022

Unprecedented loadshedding and power outages highlight South Africa's urgent need for energy security and reform. The proposed amendment to the Electricity Amendment Bill (ERA) is a definite step towards transforming South Africa's electricity sector and aligning it with international standards. The key objective of this amendment is to move away from a predominantly single-buyer electricity market to a competitive multi-market structure. This will strengthen the performance of the electricity industry and ultimately create a conducive environment towards growing the economy.

Further to the above, on 10 February 2022 the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy published the second Amendment Bill to the Electricity Regulation Act 4 of 2006 for public comment. The key area that the Bill provides for is a competitive, multi-market structure for the South African electricity industry through the establishment of the transmission system operator (TSO) and the formation of a central purchasing agency within the TSO.

The Bill seeks to strengthen the role of the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) as the regulatory body mandated to monitor the electricity sector and ensure better governance by further clarifying NERSA's role and powers.

BLSA together with BUSA obtained technical responses from various members on the ERA Bill. On 25 March 2022 our member Webber Wentzel and the BUSA office consolidated these inputs and provided the final submission to the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE).

While we remain broadly supportive of the amendments contained in the ERA Bill we urged the DMRE to consider the comments set out in the final submission. Business is committed to creating an electricity market that is transformative, equitable, transparent, competitive and efficient for the benefit of South Africa.

2.2 BLSA engagement in the Nedlac Energy Security Workstream

On 1 March 2022, Nedlac held a meeting whereby stakeholders BUSA, Eskom, and the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), presented on interlinked issues affecting the energy sector. In a series of meetings these presentations were delivered by the different partners.

BLSA has kept members abreast of the issues addressed in the workstream meetings by circulating each presentation to members for noting.

On 17 March 2022 the Nedlac Energy Security Workstream held a special meeting to discuss the 2022 carbon tax budget proposals and their effect on the estimated pricing of electricity. In summary we indicated that what was particularly concerning was the lack of engagement between business and National Treasury on the carbon tax design and alignment of the carbon budget and carbon tax.

Previously meetings were repeatedly requested by business but not reciprocated by the NT. This has resulted in the stalling of investment decisions and with regard to the recent carbon tax announcements it has caused substantial uncertainty.

In the special meeting the NT presented on the future of the carbon tax and a detailed discussion was held between all the stakeholders. It was concluded that Eskom's carbon tax liability is estimated to be zero until December 2025 due to electricity price neutrality commitments.

Subsequently BUSA has provided a briefing note wherein it requests clarity on the issues raised through a consultation and engagement process with the NT and the DFFE. Members were invited to provide inputs on the briefing note for further engagements with the NT and the DMRE.

2.3 BLSA and BUSA process of engagement with the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) on licensing procedures

On 1 March 2022 BUSA presented on self-generation projects at the Nedlac Energy Security Workstream meeting. BUSA reached out to BLSA to participate in a formal engagement with NERSA to address its licensing constraints for the approval of self-generation projects. The red tape hinders energy security and the implementation of 100MW self-generation projects.

The overall objectives of the proposed engagements with NERSA are to address and simplify the processes in relation to distributed/embedded generation and generation for own use in order to open up the grid. Furthermore, the development of relevant policies and legislation to ensure electricity security must be put in place resulting in affordable, reliable and sustainable energy to meet current and future needs.

As such, BLSA and BUSA held a briefing meeting on 11 April 2022 to discuss an aligned approach and a way forward for the NERSA engagement. An agenda together with written points of reference for the meeting will be prepared prior to approaching NERSA for the engagement. It is anticipated that the meeting with NERSA will take place in the upcoming months.

2.4 Draft Preferential Procurement Regulations 2022

The procurement process is a critical part of a functional government service delivery mechanism. In accordance with Section 5(2) of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 2000, the draft Preferential Procurement Regulations (PPR) 2022 were published for public comment by the Minister of Finance on 10 March 2022. The draft Regulations propose to prescribe the threshold amounts in which the 80/20 and 90/10 preference point systems must be used, together with the formula to be applied and other matters necessary or expedient to achieve the objects of the Act.

Prior to the publication for public comments on the draft regulations on 16 February 2022 the Constitutional Court (CC) handed down judgement in the matter of the Minister of Finance against AFRI business. The issues raised in this matter related to the validity of the PPR promulgated by the Minister on 20 January 2017 in terms of Section 5 of the Procurement Act. The CC held that the Minister had failed to act within the scope of his powers under the Act. In addition, the court held that it can neither be necessary nor expedient for the Minister to make regulations that seek to achieve that which is already achieved in terms of Section 2(1) of the Act.

Members were invited to submit inputs on the draft PPR for consideration by the NT before the deadline on 11 April 2022. On 8 April 2022 BUSA with the support of its members, addressed an urgent letter to the Minister to highlight several concerns raised by business in the application of Section 5(2) of the Act and the draft PPR as well as the negative implications on businesses upon government's enactment of the new PPR. Despite BUSA's concerns raised to the NT and request for extension on the public consultation process, government proceeded with its request for public comments; thereafter BUSA submitted the final position on the PPR on 11 April 2022.

2.5 Draft Companies Amendment Bill 2021

There has been no engagement on the Draft Companies Amendment (CAB) Bill in Parliament post the public commentary period towards the end of last year. There was a Trade and Industry Chamber meeting at NEDLAC towards the end of April where Minister Ebrahim Patel provided members with an update regarding the status of the CAB.

2.6 National Minimum Wage update

As reported in the previous bulletins, business submitted its recommendations on the annual review of the National Minimum Wage (NMW) in accordance with section 6(2) of the National Minimum Wage Act, No. 9 of 2018. Business recommended a zero increase in the minimum wage for 2022 due to the financial strain on the business environment resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The business environment is currently operating under additional pressure due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine which has increased the price of goods and services. Despite the under performance of the South African economy in 2021, on 7 February 2022 the Minister of Employment and Labour published the amended NMW. The NMW is now R23.19 for each ordinary hour worked, effective from 1 March 2022.

2.7 Business response to Covid-19

On 4 April 2022 the president declared the end of the national state of disaster. The Department of Health published the proposed health regulations to deal with Covid-19 and other medical conditions outside of the national state of disaster for public comment.

This effort is part of government's Covid-19 transition and recovery plans, which aim to manage the pandemic through existing legislation and regulations together with the regulations currently contemplated in the National Health Act.

Once approved, these regulations will be implemented within the National Department of Health with the support of some of the public entities reporting to the department and will not be tabled before parliament as these regulations are subordinate legislation.

The proposed amendments to the regulations of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 were published on 15 March 2022 for public comment. The new closing date for the submission of comments has been extended to 5 July 2022. This extension will afford the department sufficient time to consider all comments and representations on the regulations.

2.8 Expropriation Bill

In March 2022 the National Assembly Public Works Committee continued its clause-by-clause deliberations on the Expropriation Bill (EB). The Committee deliberated on the various clauses and considered the public comments received on the EB.

As previously reported the Constitutional Amendment Bill failed to garner the requisite number of votes to be passed in parliament. As a result, the re-draft of the EB was required to ensure its consistency with the Constitution as it stands. Parliamentary legal advisers were requested to provide a formal legal opinion on the EB.

If passed the EB will head to the National Council of Provinces for processing and further deliberations. We continue to monitor the EB parliamentary processes and further deliberations scheduled to take place on the EB.

As such, BLSA and BUSA held a briefing meeting on 11 April 2022 to discuss an aligned approach and a way forward for the NERSA engagement. An agenda together with written points of reference for the meeting will be prepared prior to approaching NERSA for the engagement. It is anticipated that the meeting with NERSA will take place in the upcoming months.



3.1 Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations (DPCI or Hawks)

As reported in the previous bulletin, various meetings initiated by BACSA between the DPCI and private sector service providers have resulted in the consensus of the training modules. Over a six-week period from 28 January 2022 to 18 March, Deloitte and DataDot facilitated virtual sessions where 18 people including the presenters were in attendance.

The cybercrime training programme supported the required standard in terms of the four cyber disciplines, namely:

- Legislative framework/digital forensics
- Open source and social media
- Online investigation
- Intrusion/ authorised access investigation

The prospect of further training will be explored in the future.

3.2 Extortion businesses (construction mafia/ business forums)

As reported in the previous bulletin, extortion is a nationally prioritised crime, thus the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster in government has implemented a joint strategy to address the problem.

Since July 2021 BACSA has facilitated monthly meetings of the National Priority Committee. Some of its milestones are:

- Provincial task teams were confirmed in place and plans announced to create specialised units.
- Provincial priority committees focusing on operational collaboration with all stakeholders to convene monthly.
- BACSA commissioned a public facility on the E2 web portal for reporting incidents of extortion to follow up these incidents in the committees.
- Contact details of provincial task team members were made available.

At the national meeting held in March 2022, the following was reported:

- Gauteng: three cases are in progress in court and 12 suspects have been arrested.
- KwaZulu-Natal: six cases are in progress in court and at least 43 suspects have been arrested.
- Free State: one case that was deemed undetectable now has a complainant and suspect identified and an arrest is pending.
- Western Cape: a specific plan is in operation to address protection fees levied.

With regards to extortion, BACSA aims to review the comments on the draft guideline for business regarding the prevention of extortion and the practical management of incidents if they occur. It also aims to review the standard operating procedures, and draft and implement a communication plan which will include a joint press statement.

3.3 Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and victim empowerment and support

Donations amounting to R687 500 have been received from Anglo Gold Ashanti, Momentum and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange for the GBV victim empowerment and support initiative. The effective utilisation of the current funds available were explored. It was decided to use Business Against Crime Western Cape and the NGO Matla A Bana for the establishment and upgrading of victim friendly facilities.

Both organisations have established GBV programmes in place with the SAPS. Matla A Bana will establish a victim friendly facility at Moroka SAPS in Soweto to train the SAPS and provide assistance with logistical requirements. Business Against Crime Western Cape will utilise the funds to upgrade facilities and train SAPS members.

3.4 Eyes and Ears (E2) Programme

The E2 Programme is a joint venture between BACSA, the SAPS and willing private security companies to coordinate operational crime fighting efforts.

As reported in the previous bulletin the purpose of E2 is to:

- Use the private security industry's geographical deployment footprint, technology and other sources of information to enhance the situational awareness (incident) of the SAPS.
- To enhance operational response to crimes with specific emphasis on crimes which are heavily dependent on situational information and a shared concern.

To date, the initiative has been successfully implemented in eight of the nine provinces namely, Gauteng, the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, the Eastern Cape, the Free State, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape. Implementation of the E2 Programme in the North West Province has been planned for 2022, depending on the SAPS' readiness.

3.5 Predictive Analysis

Predictive Analysis is a new initiative that is currently being explored. This is a collaborative effort between BACSA, the South African Banking Risk Information Centre, Consumer Goods Crime Risk Initiative, the Minerals Council SA, the Petroleum Security Initiative and the Cash-In-Transit Association of SA.

The draft objective of this initiative is to address crime as a collective with the motivation to enhance growth through the prevention of crime that affects business by collecting and collating information, analysing the information and disseminating insights to the relevant businesses and the SAPS.

3.6 Illicit trade

As reported in the previous bulletin, a steering committee for illicit trade assembled for the first time on 18 November 2021; however SARS representatives although invited did not participate.

SARS requested that a memorandum of understanding (MOU) first be signed with BLSA to establish a relationship prior to working together on specific projects. The agreement would be broadened to include vehicle trade regulation which SARS and BACSA worked on previously. It would also set up a recurring executive committee meeting to keep the SARS commissioner and the BLSA CEO informed.

3.7 NPA support

The objective is to capacitate prosecutorial and law enforcement authorities to address the scourge of corruption and the legacy of state capture.

Two meetings were held with the NPA and a draft MOU was received from the NPA. BLSA is reviewing the draft MOU.

The NPA has proposed that BLSA support it by providing labour, equipment, and skilled individuals at no charge.

04

Public Relations, Comms and Marketing

BLSA HUB

4.1 BLSA Hub

Between 28 January 2022 and 11 April 2022, BLSA Hub's audience consisted predominantly of users based in Africa. They made up 2,727 users of the total of 3,415. Of the 2,727 users in Africa, 2,223 are based in South Africa and of those, 1,563 are based in Gauteng.

On average three articles are posted on the BLSA Hub every week. To track the impact, the Hub is filtered on a weekly basis.

In the period under review there were more than 5,837 pageviews with an average time of 52 seconds spent on each page. The pageview stats for quarter two were higher than those of the last quarter which were 4,948 pageviews. The stats for the average time spent per page for the period under review are lower than the previous quarter's 2 minutes 7 seconds.

The week of 7-13 February 2022 was the top-performing week with 1,199 pageviews. This stemmed from the CEO weekly newsletter and media release focused on the state-of-the-nation address (SONA). The timing of the media release immediately after the SONA increased traction dramatically.

The next-best week was 7-3 March with 604 pageviews. These were influenced by BLSA's media release on former BLSA CEO Michael Spicer's passing.

The trendline oscillates throughout the quarter but remains above 250 pageviews, which is up from the previous quarter's 60 pageviews.

In terms of content the home page has had the greatest number of hits with 590 pageviews. Readers often click on "home" after accessing a Hub piece or they land on the Hub home page after accessing the website using organic searches.

The 7 February 2022 BLSA CEO's weekly newsletter that contained predictions on the SONA was the second-most visited page with 398 pageviews. The media release on the impact of loadshedding first published on 15 November 2021 was the fourth-most visited page with 294 pageviews.

The acquisition trend largely shows a positive relationship between social media and Hub users. Of the 3,415 users over the past two-and-a-half months, 978 were directly due to social media and 1,409 were due to direct searches, which are visits that arrived on the Hub either by typing the website URL into a browser or through browser bookmarks. Direct links are also links from platforms such as Mailchimp, through which the CEO weekly newsletter is sent. This is followed by organic searches (903 users), which is supported by the search engine optimisation (SEO) component.

4.2 BLSA CEO weekly newsletter

Recipients of the CEO weekly newsletter grew from 1,233 to 1,253 from 24 January-11 April. The unsubscribe rate fairly low.

The top-performing article disseminated via Mailchimp are the 7 March 2022 CEO weekly newsletter on the latest volume of the Zondo Commission report, which had 398 opens. Next was the 11 March 2022 CEO press release on former BLSA CEO Michael Spicer's passing with 382 total opens followed by the 28 March 2022 CEO letter on the 4th Annual Investment Conference with 351 total opens.

4.3 Media exposure, tonality and public sentiment

For the period under review, BLSA had 218 editorial mentions across media publications throughout South Africa. This accounts for a 32% share of voice for BLSA in the SA News. BLSA CEO Busisiwe Mavuso was the most frequently cited of the BLSA leadership team.

Ms Mavuso's op-eds on the public wage ruling and President Cyril Ramaphosa needing to clamp down on corruption were the most popular.

During the period under review BLSA's top 25 articles from News24/Fin24 combined had a total reach of 108-million.

4.4 BLSA social media overview (28 January 2022 – 11 April 2022)

BLSA's digital marketing strategy relies mainly on social media and search engine optimisation (SEO). Direct media clearly is the key driver in the acquisition of Hub visitors, accounting for 1,409 users in the past two-and-a-half months. Social media is a close second with 978 users.

The number of followers on all BLSA social media platforms have climbed consistently. Facebook increased from 31, 043 followers to 31,947 in the past three months.

BLSA Twitter followers are a combination of BLSA's corporate account as well as BLSA CEO Busisiwe Mavuso's Twitter account. Ms Mavuso's personal Twitter account has 7,209 followers, while the BLSA corporate account has 13,461 followers. These two social media accounts complement each other, thus generating stronger traction. BLSA's LinkedIn connections increasing and now stand at 3,500 connections. The BLSA Instagram page has 2, 567 followers.

Engagement remains a key metric to track because it shows interactions with each post. Twitter had 4,300 engagements, Facebook had 106 and LinkedIn had 24.

The top-performing tweet in the past three months was on Ms Mavuso's personal Twitter account. This tweet was posted on 5 April 2022 and highlighted Shamila Bathoi's briefing to parliament on corruption. The performance of this tweet suggests that BLSA's audience is interested in the prevalence of corruption in South Africa and business' opinion on it.

Ms Mavuso's personal account continues to receive more traction and engagement mileage than BLSA's corporate account. Varying factors are at play as to why. These include:

- Content being more personalised and more relatable,
- Readers reacting on a more personal level,
- New social media users might not be aware of the BLSA page.

The Facebook post that received the most engagement was the one regarding Ms Mavuso being a panelist at the World Bank seminar on SA's trade potential on 8 March 2022.

The BLSA audience on Facebook appears to enjoy content and reminders relating to videos that they can watch either on Facebook or if they are provided with a link.

BLSA official's top post on LinkedIn was published on 28 February 2022 reflecting on the positive outlook both the SONA and Budget 2022 have for business.

4.4.1 Twitter Spaces

On 23 February 2022, Ms Mavuso had her first ever Twitter Spaces interview which was hosted by the Mail and Guardian. South African broadcaster Ashraf Garda and Mail and Guardian editor-in-chief Ron Derby were the facilitators.

During the two-hour long session various experts engaged with the facilitators dissecting the Budget Speech of 2022. Over 200 people were on the Twitter Space while Ms Mavuso was delivering her review of the Budget.

4.4.2 New additions to the social media pages

During the period of review, posters celebrating or commemorating various national holidays were created and uploaded onto the various platforms, while posts showing how BLSA strives for inclusivity by publishing its op-eds into three different languages were also issued.