Newsflash Highlights
26 – 30 October 2026

Each week, Lee's Compliance and The Legal Team round up the legal and regulatory news that affects South African businesses. Here's a snapshot of what stood out this week. Our subscribers receive the full Newsflash, with every story and its practical implications.

Diary dates: the fruit producers' urgent application against Premier is set down for **9 November 2026**, and medical scheme contribution increases of up to 8.9% apply for **2027**.



AGRICULTURAL

Fair value, not zero, for culled chickens

The Supreme Court of Appeal has ruled that compensation for chickens culled during avian flu outbreaks must be based on their fair value, rather than set at nothing because the birds were sick. The case involved more than 387 000 chickens and 5.39 million eggs destroyed in 2021. The SA Poultry Association says farmers affected by the 2017, 2021 and 2023 outbreaks were also given zero compensation, so more claims may follow.

How we can help: *we can help you check your animal disease control records and compensation claims under the Animal Diseases Act.*



BUSINESS

Heineken reviews its SA wine business and faces a Strongbow dispute

Three years after buying Distell, Heineken is reviewing its South African wine brands, including Nederburg and JC Le Roux. Cider House Investments, which took over Strongbow as a merger condition, says Heineken ran the brand down before handing it over, and the Competition Commission issued Heineken a notice of apparent breach of its merger conditions on 31 August 2026.

Agricultural trade surplus up 11.6%

South Africa's agricultural trade surplus reached US$2.14 billion in the second quarter of 2026. Exports rose 9.1% to US$4.12 billion, led by horticulture, although the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak keeps key red meat markets, including China, closed.



CONSTRUCTION

CIDB cracks down on contractor gradings

The CIDB has removed 75 contractors from its register since June 2024, against only one in the previous 22 years, including 13 removed on 15 October 2026 for misrepresentation in upgrade applications. Higher-grade applications now face an extra audit and verification step, and the CIDB plans to require directors to be in good standing. Government departments that fail to register their construction projects face fines of up to R100 000; compliance is currently below 30%.

How we can help: *we can review your CIDB registration documents and help public sector clients put compliant project registration in place.*

COMPETITION

Premier challenged in court, at the Tribunal and by its union

Five Western Cape fruit producers have gone to court to force Premier to honour supply contracts for the 2026/27 harvest. The Competition Commission wants the Tribunal to revoke its approval of Premier's R6.5 billion purchase of Rhodes Food Group, saying the plan to close the Tulbagh cannery was not disclosed, and the union AFADWU is challenging the retrenchment process. Premier denies withholding information.

FlySafair sale cleared with conditions

The Tribunal has approved Harith's purchase of FlySafair on condition that Lanseria and FlySafair have no common directors, that Harith stays out of Lanseria decisions affecting other airlines, and that there are no merger-related retrenchments for three years.

How we can help: *we can help you prepare accurate merger filings and monitor compliance with merger conditions.*



CYBERCRIMES

Stronger laws to protect children online

The SAHRC is calling for amendments to POPIA, the Children's Act, the Films and Publications Amendment Act, the Cybercrimes Act and the ECT Act to deal with addictive platform design, age verification, default data-sharing settings and the commercial profiling of children.



DATA PROTECTION

FNB fined R1 million under POPIA

The Information Regulator has fined FNB R1 million. A 2022 system error exposed the personal information of 88 people to 696 unauthorised individuals. The bank also collected information on politically exposed persons from newspapers, which the Regulator says are not a "public record", and kept some records indefinitely without justification.

How we can help: *we can review your access controls, sources of personal information and retention schedules against POPIA.*



ENVIRONMENTAL

R15 million fine for building a lodge without authorisation

VEA Group Holdings has been fined R15 million, R10 million of it suspended, for building a 23-unit luxury lodge near Bonnievale without environmental authorisation. It also paid a R1.75 million administrative fine to apply for retrospective approval. Separately, El Niño is expected to bring a hotter, drier summer, adding pressure on already fragile municipal water systems.

How we can help: *we can check that your projects have the environmental authorisations they need before work starts.*



FOODSTUFFS

Supermarkets in the spotlight

The SAHRC will examine the role of supermarkets and other large retailers in food pricing in the third phase of its National Food Systems Inquiry, and is asking retailers that did not take part in the second phase to engage.



MEDICAL

Medical aid increases of up to 8.9% for 2027

Major medical schemes will raise contributions by between 7.35% and 8.9% for 2027, citing higher use of healthcare services, ageing members, chronic illness and the cost of new medicines.



PROPERTY

No BEE certificate needed for FFC renewals, for now

The PPRA says no applicant will be refused a Fidelity Fund Certificate solely for lacking a BEE certificate while the Constitutional Court considers the Sakeliga ruling. In a separate case, the Johannesburg High Court declined to give estate access fees, which can range from R5 000 to R50 000, a blanket clearance; each arrangement will be assessed on its merits.



TRANSPORTATION

AARTO phase 3 still coming, and RAF reform on the way

Phase 3 of AARTO, covering 151 municipalities, has no confirmed start date, and the demerit system is unlikely to start before April 2027. The Transport Minister is reviewing the RAF legislation to set out who may claim, and is researching other ways to collect the RAF levy, such as on licence renewals, as more drivers move to electric vehicles.

How we can help: *we can help fleet operators prepare for AARTO and track the RAF changes into your legal register.*

Also in this week's Gazette Watch: ICASA has proposed biometric checks for every SIM and a five-number cap, a draft Bill would allow environmental fines of up to R50 million without going to court, new CCMA Rules are in force, and the Competition Commission has published final guidelines on when minority vetoes amount to control.

STAY AHEAD OF REGULATORY CHANGE

Subscribe to our weekly Newsflash and Gazette Watch, or contact our offices for help with compliance audits, legal registers, compliance matrices and staff training.

Tel: 011 476 3217 (ext 2) | Email: admin@compliancetools.co.za

This summary is for monitoring and awareness purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. News items are summarised from published media reports.