

Question over Prasa boss's changing age

By **KYLE COWAN** and **NEO GOBA**

● The acting CEO of Prasa, Cromet Molepo, has been accused of fraudulently changing his date of birth to prolong his stay at the passenger rail agency.

Molepo submitted a letter to Prasa's human resources department this week, claiming it was proof the Department of Home Affairs had amended his date of birth, pushing his birthday from March to September.

According to the Prasa pension and provident fund regulations, Molepo is required to negotiate his contract or retire when he turns 63 on Tuesday. The changes he made to his date of birth would delay his retirement to September.

The reasons for Molepo's request to extend his stint at Prasa remain unclear.

In a response to questions, home affairs officials said the document that Molepo submitted to the Prasa HR department, confirming the change of his birthday from March 20 1955 to September 19 1955, was not genuine.

The letter, which is dated March 14 2018, bears a home affairs stamp and letterhead.

The document further bears a reference number and is apparently signed on behalf of the director-general by one "C Mohlolo", whom home affairs confirmed is employed as a senior administration officer in the status services chief directorate.

But home affairs, when sent the document this week, said it was not authentic.

It also emerged that Molepo had previously changed his date of birth, in 1987, from September 19 1951 to March 20 1955.

The Sunday Times has seen a letter, dated March 8 2018, addressed to Molepo from Marilyn Ndhlovu, a senior administration officer in the identity documents amendment section of home affairs.

Ndhlovu turned down Molepo's latest application, saying that after investigation, home affairs could not determine, based on the documents he had provided, whether his request was above board.

"In view of the fact that you also previously had a change of date of birth from 19 September 1951 to 20 March 1955, it is unclear why, if the previous change of date of birth . . . was incorrect, you did not raise this matter with the department before."

If born on September 19 1951, Molepo would be turning 67 this year.

He denied that there was anything untoward, saying he had applied for the change last year and it had been granted based on supporting documents – including an affidavit by his siblings.

But Ndhlovu's letter proves his application was not granted.

Molepo told the Sunday Times yesterday that home affairs had made a mistake when he changed his age in 1987. "Yes, it was [a mistake]. It has taken time because to have it corrected at each stage they would ask for this and ask for that, and essentially they said I have to submit an affidavit from all the siblings, which was done in support of that application. It was done last year."

At Prasa, he was implementing remedial action from four forensic investigations, so it was understandable that "people wanted to see the back of him", Molepo said.

Home affairs spokesman Thabo Mokgola said yesterday the department would launch an investigation into the matter.