

Introduction

This report is an annual update that is meant to provide an overview of developments in industrial action in South Africa in 2006 compared to 2005. It covers the basic measures of strike activity such as the number of strikes, working days lost, working hours lost and number of workers involved. Using data collected by the Department of Labour, this report briefly examines trends in work stoppages, workdays lost and time-loss ratio over the past five years. Particular attention is paid to the most recent years (2005 to 2006) in an examination of their incidence by industry and province, the main areas of disputes, and how the strikes ended.

Time lost to strikes and lockouts has always attracted widespread attention because of the economic and social upheavals that often accompany industrial disputes. Investors, in general, can be influenced by the strikes statistics with regard to whether to invest on plant or office location.

The major strikes in 2006 (i.e. security, Shoprite/Checkers, contract national cleaners and Karan Beef strikes) were characterised by violence, and clashes between police and workers. Ree Grawitzky (Pretoria News: Thursday, 12 October 2006) stated that “This year’s security strike was reminiscent of some of the most violent strikes of the 1980s, such as the railway and miners’ strikes of 1987. Comparisons extend beyond the violence to the relationships, which reflect elements of the old 1980s style of labour relations. The same could well be argued in the case of the Shoprite Checkers and contract cleaning strikes”. Ree went further to say that “The strike also reflects new struggles emerging due to the changing nature of the labour market, where work is increasingly casualised and outsourced...”

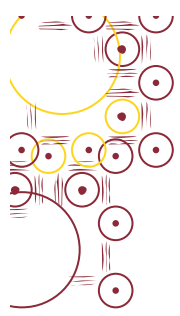
Considering the strike history, it appears that in the past (traditionally) strikes have been associated with wages and conditions of work but because of economic diversity at present, one can also associate strikes with job security, occupational health and safety issues, managerial policies as well as the basic economic concerns of unions. To the extent, the security guards, contract cleaners and Shoprite-Checkers workers have been the most disposed to resort to brute force to settle disputes.

Worker violence, even if for a valid cause, erodes public sympathy and support just as police coercion can do. Unions may be generally accepted for safeguarding employees’ economic and working conditions but they are vilified if industrial action turns violent.

Overview of industrial action in 2006

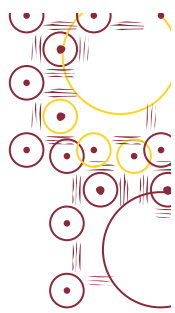
A number of strike cases were reported in the media in 2006 and the Department of Labour's media monitoring system captured most of them. These kinds of labour disputes affected both small and big companies. This overview will cover both high profile and low profile cases since they all add to the overall workdays lost. The Department of Labour's media monitoring system reveals the following:

- Early in the beginning of January 2006, five men working for a contractor renovating the Walter Sisulu juvenile prison outside Soweto downed tools. This was after their employer paid them only a small portion of their supposed R1 650.00 wages every fortnight. It was reported that the problem started in December 2005 when a subcontractor and their employer promised to pay them R150.00 per day, but reneged on the agreement and only paid them R160.00 for two days
- On 19 January 2006, NUMSA marched to the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry to protest against alleged exclusive practices adopted by short-term insurers, which it said compromised Black panel beaters
- On 23 January 2006, NUMSA embarked on a wildcat strike at Macsteel service centre in Bellville, Western Cape, after being offered an average R50.00 a week extra for changes to the working schedule as a result of a move to continuous operations. Members of NUMSA were demanding that night shift workers be compensated for transport after a rotating 50-hour week was introduced. They had withdrawn their hold on vehicles leaving the premises after being warned by police that the action was illegal
- On 25 January 2006, more than 300 teachers in the North-West Province took part in a sit-in protest over what they called the North-West Education Department's failure to improve service delivery in their schools. Sit-ins took place in GaRankuwa, Hebron, and Mabopane
- On 30 January 2006, trade unions at Transnet started a campaign of mass action to protest against restructuring. The protest started in KwaZulu-Natal and Free State and proceeded to other provinces. Workers were protesting against Transnet's restructuring strategies and tactics, which they said would strip workers of their jobs and fringe benefits
- Late in January 2006, security guards at GaRankuwa Hospital embarked on protest against the privatisation of security services. The guards accused the hospital's CEO of failing to consult them on the decision to replace them with personnel from a private security company and to redeploy them from their posts at the hospital's gates to internal security
- On 2 February 2006, services in the Johannesburg Magistrates' Courts were disrupted because interpreters and administrative staff stayed away from work. They were involved in a dispute over performance bonuses that the Department was to have paid from March 2005
- On 6 February 2006, the University of KwaZulu-Natal was hit by the start of a strike by staff and academics, timed to coincide with the beginning of registration for the new academic year. The protest was against the refusal of management to negotiate wage increases
- On 14 February 2006, social workers from Dimbaza, King Williams Town, Peddie, Komga and Mdantsane staged a sit-in at the Offices of the Department of Social Development in East London. They claimed that the government owed them about R27 million in back-pay



- On 12 February 2006, East London ambulance workers embarked on a work-to-rule go-slow which cost the Department tens of thousands of rands in private ambulance fees
- On 16 February 2006, workers at the Crocodile River Platinum Mine near Brits in the North West Province decided to embark on an illegal and unsafe strike underground. The miners were accusing management of not making their contracts permanent as promised the previous year
- On 19 February 2006, Impala Platinum mineworkers in Rustenburg downed tools in protest against unfair labour practices by management. Their complaints ranged from being forced to work underground and beaten up by their supervisors. The situation was fuelled further by the suspension of an influential shop steward. Management was also accused of firing workers fighting for workers' rights
- On 23 February 2006, SATAWU members went on strike at Nationwide Airlines. The industrial action was concentrated at Durban and Johannesburg International Airports. The union accused the airline of dividing workers on racial grounds. The union reported that Nationwide management has agreed to recognise the union Solidarity, but refused SATAWU the same right
- On 27 February 2006, officers at Kutama-Sinthumule Maximum Prison in Makhado downed tools. It is understood that labour problems at the prison date back to 2002 when officers began raising concerns about discrepancies in their salaries, with some warders "being under-paid by almost R25 000.00 a year". The management was allegedly reluctant to resolve the problems which also included the non-payment of danger and housing allowances as stipulated in the officers' contracts
- On 28 February 2006, Mdantsane taxi drivers embarked on a strike. The drivers were demanding that, among other things, respect from Buffalo City Traffic officials, that their taxis should not be stopped during peak hours and to force the municipality to stop commuters from hitch-hiking
- On 7 March 2006, workers from Kwa Mampela Construction at Carouselview, went on strike demanding their salaries, this was after their boss failed to pay them the previous month
- On 15 March 2006, security guards who are members of the National Security and Unqualified Workers Union (Nasuwu) marched through the streets of Durban. They were protesting against the CCMA, saying the mediation body delays their cases of unfair dismissal and unfair labour practice against security companies
- On 23 March 2006, security guards embarked on a national wage strike. They were striking over higher wages and better working conditions, including the right to have lunch breaks and to use toilets without being charged for deserting a position while on duty. The unions have demanded an 11.0% and additional 4.0% increase for the lowest paid workers. An average urban Grade C security guard was reported to earn about R2 400.00 a month and the lowest rural Grade E guard about R1 080.00. The strike officially ended on the 22 June 2006, 96 days later
- On 27 March 2006, Telkom workers embarked on a strike action after rejecting a 6.2% offer from management. The two unions, i.e. CWU and Solidarity were demanding an 8.5% wage increase for the lowest paid workers and 7.5% for those in supervisory positions. The unions also demanded a bonus of R50 000.00 for all Telkom employees including managers. It was reported that Telkom's salary bill continued to be skewed in favour of a handful of managers





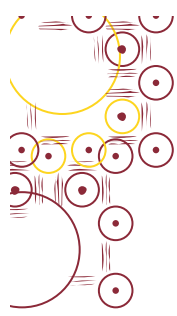
- On 30 March 2006, workers of a Reconstruction and Development Programme housing project in Winterveldt embarked on strike after it was allegedly reported that they were not paid by their employer from Zimbabwe
- On 30 March 2006, contract workers at Tongaat Food Distribution Network downed their tools over the return of three men accused of assaulting their colleague at work
- Late in March 2006, workers of Mnquma municipality (Butterworth) in the Eastern Cape went on strike after the appointment of former Mayor as the new municipality's boss



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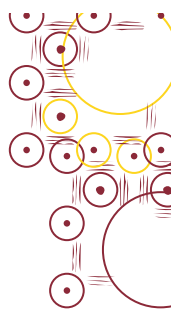
- The outraged employees of Tshwara-Makoloi Joint Venture downed tools on 3 April 2006 and left the Rustenburg city centre in a mess. The employees were responsible for cleaning the city centre. It was reported that workers now earn less than what they used to get at the end of the month. Hence the strike was related to pay. However, it was further reported that wage was not their only problem since they worked in terrible conditions. After months of failed negotiations with their employers, the workers decided to go on strike
- Masithembe Bus Company in Empangeni experienced some protest actions on 2 April after police started arresting some drivers for stealing bus fares.
- Bus workers called off a strike that was due on the night of the 12th April after a last minute revised wage offer from employers. SATAWU accepted an 8.0% pay rise offered by employers on the 12th April 2006.





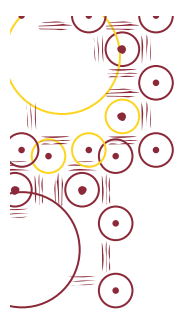
- Thousands of Telkom workers downed tools in towns and cities countrywide on 19 April 2006 as strike-settlement talks deadlocked. In KwaZulu-Natal, disgruntled employees complained about poor working conditions. They picketed outside Telkom's regional offices in Durban, Chatsworth, Pietermaritzburg, Port Shepstone, Empangeni, Vryheid and surrounding areas. Union members also demonstrated in Johannesburg and Pretoria. The union decided to embark on a strike after a breakdown in negotiations with Telkom. The CWU was demanding an 8.0% increase for lower paid workers and an increase of 7.0% for better paid workers, whilst the employer's offer was 6.25% across the board
- Mngquma municipal workers in the Eastern Cape downed tools on 2 May 2006 in protest against the council decision to withdraw criminal charges against the Municipal Manager
- Workers of Tydstroom Chicken farm in Durbanville, Cape Town, embarked on a protected wage strike on 2 May 2006
- FAWU members in Gauteng protested against Tiger Milling in Randfontein on 4 May 2006. It was reported that the company was exploiting workers and handed over memorandums to the company and the Department of Labour. This was after a dispute that began in November 2005 when two shopstewards and three members were suspended for taking part in industrial action against employment equity and casualisation of workers
- Employees of Pick and Pay, one of South Africa's biggest supermarket chains embarked on a nationwide campaign on 8 May, apparently in support of their wage demands. It was reported that there were sporadic go-slows across the country. It was further reported that the company was busy with wage negotiations with SACCAWU
- Teaching at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) was halted on 11 May by an academic and administrative staff pay strike. The lecturers vowed to continue the workstoppage until they got a 12.0% across-the-board increase. The strike affected all three institutions that merged in 2005 to form WSU. Wage negotiations had been under way since October 2005, four months after the merger, but deadlocked on 11 May when unions declared a dispute, claiming management was negotiating in bad faith and with arrogance. It was reported that the deadlock was reached when union representatives disputed the composition of the university negotiation team and clashed over increases on "substantive demands", housing allowances, commuter allowances and encashment leave
- Members of FAWU went on a protected strike since 10 May 2006 at the company's Coca Cola Wadeville, Germiston, plant allegedly because the company undermines collective agreements and implements restructuring exercises unilaterally. It was reported that workers were also demanding that the company comply with employment equity and skills development legislation
- COSATU called a national strike against poverty and unemployment on 18 May 2006, curbing production at several operations. COSATU wanted government and business to do more to address a jobless rate of 26.7%
- Members of NEHAWU at the University of Zululand embarked on a strike on 23 May 2006. Management of the university reported that the strikers were demanding a 7.0% wage increase. The university had offered them 5.0%
- Johannesburg Metro Police officers took to the streets on 24 May 2006 to protest against a "corrupt Internal Affairs Department". The key demand of their protest was that the Internal Affairs Department in the metro police unit be abolished. They were also demanding the dismissal of the Metro Police Chief, and for the city to speed up investigations in a number of sexual harassment cases against male officers





- Several testing stations in Gauteng were closed on 23 May 2006 because of the strike by municipal workers as reported by the Deputy Director of the Johannesburg Licensing Department. It was reported that the only testing stations that operated were Midrand, Randfontein and Roodepoort
- Tiger Brands' fishing plant at Saldanha Bay was shut after 1 800 workers went on strike on 22 May to protest against job cuts. It was reported that employees at the Sea Harvest plant had stopped work in protest against severance packages awarded to 52 workers whose jobs would be cut. The union wanted all affected workers to get full bonuses, management, instead, had offered an amount commensurate with months worked until 30 September 2006
- While the Public Service Minister visited Chris-Hani Baragwanath hospital on 29 May 2006, a disgruntled crowd of hospital workers protested outside against poor working conditions. NEHAWU called on government to take urgent steps to provide adequate resources to all State hospitals
- Hundreds of employees of the Cross Border Road Transport Agency embarked on a strike on 30 May 2006, leaving companies that needed border permits stranded all over the country. Demonstrating under the banner of POPCRU, the group from Zeerust and Nelspruit joined their colleagues in Pretoria over a salary dispute. POPCRU reported that management had failed to sign an agreed 8.5% pay rise, even though the strikers had compromised from 12.0%. It was reported that employers had come up with an offer of 5.5%, which was not negotiated
- Members of the South African Fishermen's Trade Union (SAFTU) protested outside parliament on 31 May 2006. Organisers reported that 145 members of SAFTU of about 6 000 people, mostly from the Eastern Cape came to the protest. They reported that they were fed up with meagre wages and poor working conditions of the Eastern Cape's fishermen. The fishermen said their most pressing concern was fluctuating wages that were often too little to live on
- Workers at Kraft Foods' South African unit were striking over pay as reported by the union. About 480 members of FAWU stopped work at the Elandsfontein plant in May 2006 after its demand of an 8.0% wage increase was not met
- A group of about 36 placard-waving workers, employed in a municipal project to lay sewerage and water pipes at Wells Estate in Motherwell, alleged on 6 June 2006, that they had been unfairly dismissed
- Workers at Foskor, which is owned by the Industrial Development Corporation embarked on a strike on 5 June 2006. Workers were protesting for an increase in the housing subsidy. CEPPWAWU was asking for a housing subsidy to be increased from between R860 and R1 415 a month to R2 000 a month for 1 660 employees, but management maintained it was not affordable
- Employees of a subcontractor at Middelburg Ferrochrome went on strike on 9 June 2006 demanding better working conditions, particularly transport assistance. Workers belonging to NUM, demonstrated outside the back entrance of the company throughout the day
- More than 200 transport industry workers marched on the Department of Labour on 15 June 2006. The marchers wanted the Minister to ensure that the Roadfreight Employers Association abide by the 6.5% wage increase agreement signed by employers and union representatives on 6 February. The workers also demanded that the wage increase be backdated to 1 March





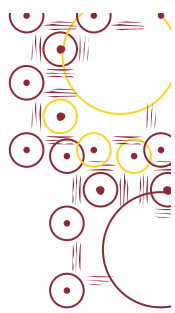
- About 500 workers at the Cullinan Diamond Mine, east of Tshwane, marched to the mine offices on 16 June 2006. Among their demands were that workers who were unfairly dismissed recently be reinstated. Workers accused the company of racism and failure to promote some of their colleagues on racial grounds. Workers were also opposed to polygraphy testing at the mine
- On 21 June 2006, Fedics employees held protest actions and sit-ins at the company's Head Office in Walmer Boulevard, Port Elizabeth
- Allegations of racism brought metro police services in Ekurhuleni to a complete halt on 28 June 2006. More than 150 officers abandoned their posts to protest against their Police Chief, after he was reported to have stripped many of them of their firearms
- Officials of the Department of Labour's Compensation Fund and Unemployment Insurance Fund took to the streets on 5 July 2006 to demand re-introduction of an incentive scheme scrapped two months ago. Employees affiliated to the Public Servants Association (PSA) gathered outside the City Hall in Pretoria for a march to hand a memorandum to officials of the Department of Labour



During strikes various messages are signalled to emphasize specific issues.

- On 7 July 2006, the four-star Kariega Game Reserve was hit by a strike involving more than 12 of its staff. The group, who are also members of the Association of Trade Unions of South Africa (ATUSAW), were demanding an increase of R350 a month, which was rejected by

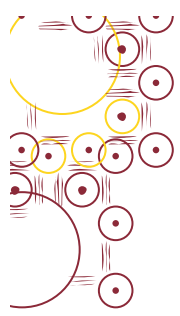




management. The ATUSAW Provincial organiser reported that the union had over the past five years been locked in negotiations with management and had been offered increases far below the amount demanded. It was further reported that the group at the Lodge were being paid R1 000 a month, and not according to the stipulated minimum wage of R1 200 for Chamber. Management reported that the strike was illegal

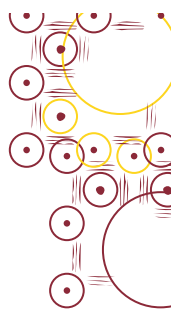
- Academic staff of the Mafikeng campus of North-West University went on an illegal strike on 7 July in the morning. It was reported that staff congregated at the Mafikeng campus for two hours before dispersing and going back to work. Management informed the staff that the correct procedures to strike had not been followed by their union
- On 13 July 2006, CEPPWAWU started a protest action outside the entrance of Lithotech Afric Mail, a print and postal service company in Airport Industria in Cape Town
- More than 240 employees of the George Construction company in Giyani, Limpopo, refused to work since 17 July 2006 because they said they had not been paid for three months. It was further claimed by workers that the company had not given them protective clothing as required by law
- On 18 July 2006, about 120 fieldworkers of Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) went on strike in central Johannesburg protesting the removal by Stats SA of a R22.00 daily subsistence allowance without consultation. The industrial action outside the old JSE offices was part of a national strike by Stats SA contractors
- Refinery workers at plants owned by companies including BP, Royal Dutch Shell and Chevron revised their wage demands on 18 July in an attempt to end the strike that started on 18 July. The union previously sought an 8.0% pay increase while employers, which also include Total and State owned Petro SA, offered 6.0%
- On 19 July 2006, Shoprite Checkers workers began lunch-hour picketing at the national retailer. SACCAWU members went on strike after a deadlock in wage negotiations which started in April, with the union demanding a 10.0% increase. The lunch-hour pickets continued until a full blown strike started
- On 18 July 2006, about 2 000 members of Solidarity went on strike at Sasol's Secunda plant, demanding better pay and working conditions. On 13 July, Sasol offered a 6.5% wage increase and a 1.5% housing subsidy increase. The union urged its members to accept the offer, but after a vote at a meeting on 17 July, union members decided to strike. It was reported that union members were not happy with the training of artisans and the large salaries that the company's managers were earning
- Atamelang Transport company bus drivers dug in their heels in their two day strike in the Central District of North-West. Drivers were demanding better working conditions. The drivers were against what they called the unilateral decision of management to change their working conditions
- In the middle of July, the Department of Social Services and Health's members of Emergency Medical Services in Mpumalanga were reported to be on strike. They were on strike in the Gert Sibande and Nkangala regions. Two lowveld emergency services stations, i.e. Shongwe and Tsonga later joined the action. It was reported that the strike was about salary notches. Apparently, EMS has different levels and within each there are 16 notches. The workers were unhappy about certain discrepancies surrounding salaries and felt that payment was not calculated on a fair basis





- On 19 July 2006, bus drivers employed by Ikhwezi Transport in the townships of Esikhawini and Empangeni in northern KwaZulu-Natal went on strike. Drivers were demanding higher wages and improved conditions of employment
- In July 2006, employees of Schoonbee Landgoed grape and citrus farm in Groblersdal (Mpumalanga) embarked on a wage related strike. Unions and management agreed on a bonus, but failed to reach an agreement with management on a wage increase
- Most of the teachers in Moutse district deserted their classrooms on 25 July and spent the day staging “sit ins” at circuit offices, demanding to be paid
- On 30 July, about 4 000 employees of Kumba Resources, who are members of NUM and 500 from the Building Allied Mining Construction Workers Union (Bamcwu) downed their tools. On 31 July, Solidarity joined the strike after its members rejected the latest wage offer. Management reported that it had given the unions a 7.0% wage increase, from 6.5% previously, and 8.0% for lower grade miners. It further reported that it offered to raise the housing allowance for all employees in the bargaining units by 10.0%. The three unions demanded that Kumba increase wages by 9.0% at higher grades and 10.5% at lower levels
- On 31 July, approximately 800 NEHAWU members working at the Provincial Roads and Transport Department in Mpumalanga embarked on a strike, because of a “unilateral” change to conditions of employment by the Department. The long “established” practice agreed on between the Department and the union was that every Friday after the monthly pay-day would be granted to workers as a day. The arrangement was that workers would pay for this day by working extra hours until the hours made up for a full day
- Thousands of cleaners belonging to 16 unions started a national wage-related strike on 1 August 2006. The workers were demanding a 10.0% wage increase for urban workers, and a 15.0% increase for rural workers. They also demanded a full months pay as an annual bonus and full contributions to provident funds. It was further reported that employers were offering an across the board increase of 6%, which would include any increase in bonus or provident fund payments
- Thousands of employees of Shoprite Holdings began a strike on 10 August 2006. SACCAWU downed tools over wage increases. The company was offering a R265 increase across the board to all permanent full-time employees, with a new minimum wage of R1 800 a month. SACCAWU was demanding an increase of R300 or 10.0%, whichever is greater
- Ocon Bricks’ 950 workers embarked on a strike in their two Vereeniging plants. The workers, represented by the Bricks and General Workers Union, were asking for an R1,50 an hour increase on wage earnings across the board but only R1.10 an hour increase was offered to all
- In the middle of August, employees at the giant bread making company Sasko, started a strike. Workers demanded a 9.0% increase, but the employers were offering 6.0%
- In late August, members of POPCRU at the Forensic Science Laboratory started picketing to protest against what they call a lack of transformation at the centre. It was reported that the senior and middle management posts were reserved for White colleagues and their careers were doomed. POPCRU allegedly reported that external training preference was still being given to non-designated members and there was no skills development plan at lower levels





- Chaos prevailed in Mohlakeng on the West Rand when employees of the Vukuzenzele refuse removal project in the area threw rubbish all over the township's streets and blocked the entrance to the township with big rocks and burned tyres. This was after complaining that they only received a R3 increase
- About 220 of Legalwise's estimated 800 staff took to the streets of Johannesburg over a wage dispute. Banking Insurance Finance and Assurance Workers Union (BIFAWU) said they were unhappy with the average salary of R4 000, working conditions and the company's medical aid policy. The union reported that the company made profit last year and could afford better. It was further reported that the group's medical aid only covered workers, and not spouses and children. The company reported that in some cases they had actually given more than the 10.0%, which was what the union was asking for. It was further reported that more than 70.0% of the staff had accepted the offer
- In August, workers at Pioneer Foods' Bokomo unit went on strike, demanding higher wages, FAWU reported. The union wanted an 8.0% wage increase for the KwaZulu-Natal plant and a 7.0% increase for plants in other provinces. Bokomo offered 6.0%
- Cleaning staff employed by the Prestige Cleaning Company at Sun City embarked on a go-slow in August. Workers were demanding that their then salaries of R6.89 an hour be increased by R1.11 an hour. Prestige was offering them an extra 38 cents an hour. The union rejected the offer
- About 1 000 workers at a State owned arms factory went on strike on 31 August 2006 over wage demands. NUMSA wanted Pretoria Metal Pressings, a division of Denel, to close the "huge" gap between what management earn and what the lowest paid worker gets. NUMSA wanted a 20.0% increase for the lowest earners
- In the middle of August, JHB Metro Bus drivers went on strike against working conditions. SAMWU claimed that the new roster would result in drivers working a 14-hour shift. Management reported that they would continue working an 8-hour shift-four during the morning peak-hour, and another four in the afternoon peak hour
- More than 50 disgruntled municipal workers in Kokstad downed tools on 4 September 2006 demanding that the municipality deal with several labour issues. The issues included municipal grading, unfair dismissals, encashment of leave, grievance procedure and disciplinary procedures, overtime and two-year contract workers
- More than 240 permanent staff of cosmetics manufacturer Beige Holdings at its Quality Products factory in Durban, which largely handles product orders for blue chip multinational Unilever, illegally downed tools in sympathy with casual workers on August 24. It was further reported that this was an illegal strike and all workers who participated were suspended on full pay pending a disciplinary hearing
- On 1 September 2006, members of POPCRU staged a demonstration in Pretoria, demanding a larger wage increase. The group of about 100 protesters wanted an 8.5% wage increase and were made up of security personnel normally stationed at SA border posts
- Bus drivers of the Masithembe Bus Company in Empangeni embarked on a strike after one of their colleagues was fired for ignoring management's instructions. The employee took a bus to KwaDlangezwa, without permission, to an unprescribed destination. The drivers were demanding an immediate re-instatement of their colleague

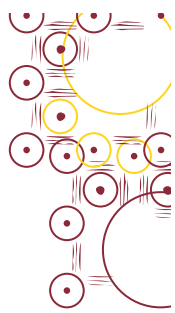


- Taxi drivers in Johannesburg embarked on a strike on 13 September 2006. They were demanding that Metro buses be withdrawn from townships
- Workers at Bongani TB Hospital, outside Hazyview in Mpumalanga, went on strike on 14 September 2006 because they said they risk their lives to get to work. The crime level around the hospital was reported to be so high that workers do not feel safe going to and from work
- In the middle of September, Karan Beef workers in City Deep, JHB went on a wage strike. It was further reported that workers were also complaining about alleged racism and unfair labour practices. The striking workers, members of SACCAWU had demanded a 12.0% increase for all permanent staff and the permanent employment of casual staff



Most grievances were about wages.


- On 27 September, Eastern Cape paramedics protested outside the province's Health Department offices. NEHAWU was protesting against bad working conditions. The health workers accused the Department of locating emergency medical services far from the people they serve
- On 30 September, employees of Sun International embarked on a strike action. The union was asking for a 10.0% wage increase and for union members who were ranked below departmental heads to be included in bargaining units and for increased pay on Sundays and public holidays. The union rejected the first offer of 8.0%, which was linked to an acceptance on the scope of the bargaining unit, hours of work issue, and a two year deal. The union refused this offer, and Sun International reverted to its 6.5% offer
- On 10 October, all staff, including prosecutors, orderlies and magistrates, embarked on a go-slow at the Garankuwa Magistrate's Court building to protest against the killing of the



Inspector, and highlight what they see as an unsafe workplace. It was reported that staff were deeply concerned at the lack of security at the Court. It was further reported that Court officials had addressed their grievances to the Department of Justice “for too long” without results

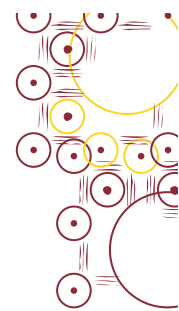
- On 11 October, Petro SA plant in Mossel Bay was hit by a strike. About 2 000 workers who carry out maintenance, downed tools. It was reported that their grievances were about wages, and the quality of food and housing they received in their temporary quarters adjacent to the plant
- On 12 October 2006, workers at Emfuleni Local Municipality downed tools and protested at the municipality’s offices in Vanderbijlpark, Vaal. SAMWU members demanded the dismissal of about 55 workers who they claimed were employed without their posts being advertised externally
- Almost 3 000 Provincial Public Works Department employees in KZN went on strike after claiming that the Department failed to pay them performance bonuses that was due in August 2006. Those who embarked on the strike included inspectors, clerks and engineers. The management was handed a memorandum demanding that it refrained from compelling workers to submit motivation reports as to why they should be paid performance bonuses. Workers were demanding to be trained on technical skills as per the Skills Development Act and say management should create a tool for upward mobility and upgrading of staff
- On 23 October, Pikit Up workers went on a go-slow. The staff were objecting to overtime and some of their working conditions
- On 30 October, contract workers at a Coca Cola bottling plant embarked on strike to demand full-time posts. Production and distribution workers in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, submitted a memorandum to management demanding an end to 90-day contracts that are renewed every year
- In October 2006, teachers in an Eastern Cape Primary school went on strike for two weeks after complaining that they were being accused of mistreating their pupils
- On 3 November, about 400 SAMWU members took to the streets of Bela Bela in Limpopo. Workers embarked on a strike after the municipality advertised posts externally instead of internally
- In early November, hospitals and clinics in Mpumalanga were left short-staffed as health workers marched in protest against the head of the department. Staff including nurses and administrators from the province’s clinics and hospitals congregated in Mhluzi outside Middelburg and marched to the Middelburg Hospital. They wanted the head of the Department to be fired and claimed that he was to blame for the resignation of two CEOs who administered the province’s four biggest hospitals
- On 7 November, Fidelity Cash Management Services drivers went on strike. The drivers in Polokwane Limpopo, claimed that the company’s management does not take them seriously and their lives were in danger. More than 40 drivers decided to sit in and not drive. They claimed that they were not getting support from the management and their members were dying every day
- On 9 November, tens of thousands of residents were left stranded for more than a week after one of East London’s biggest and busiest community health centres closed its doors, as nurses embarked on a strike over security issues. The normally bustling Empilweni Gompo Community Health Centre was deserted, after nurses started a workstoppage, following a strike over wages





by security guards. The nurses said they were working in a “very risky” area and feared they would be mugged and robbed

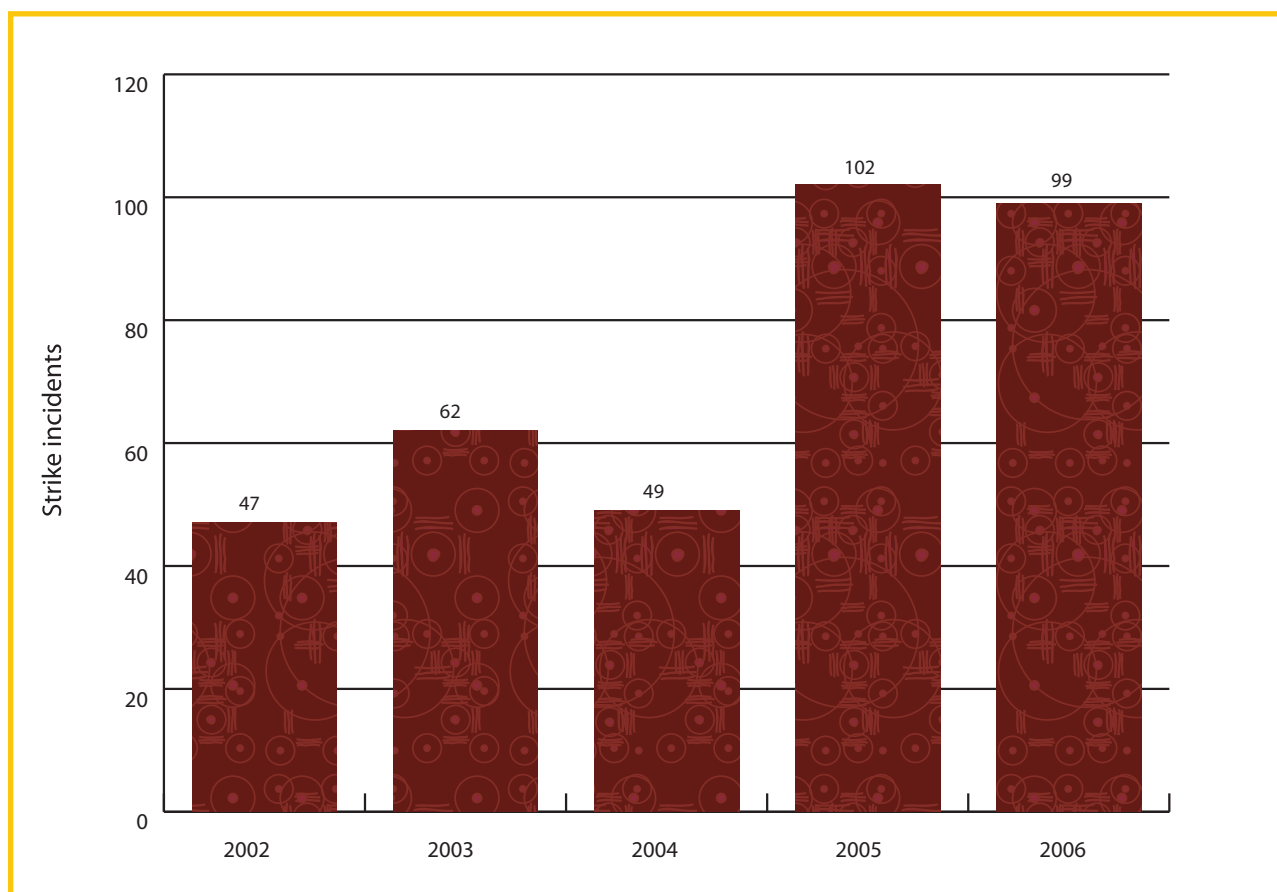
- In early November, Empilweni Gompo Community Health Centre’s security guards embarked on a strike. The strike centred on a three-month wage backlog. It was reported that the company had not paid them for three months when they went on strike
- On 12 November, interpreters in Cape Town went on an illegal strike because the State refused to give them a car to travel to a colleague’s funeral. The group of interpreters was absent from work a second time when they apparently went on a training course without telling magistrates. Dozens of cases were postponed as a result of their actions
- On 18 November, members of the Democratic Nursing Organisation of SA (Denosa) in Kimberley picketed outside the Kimberley Hospital complex, waving placards and singing to voice their dissatisfaction towards the Department of Health. Among the nurses grievances were the shortage of staff, the non-existence of policies concerning recruitment and retention, as well as several health and safety issues. Denosa also claimed that the Department had yet to pay the uniform allowances that were still outstanding for the 2006 financial year
- On 20 November, workers at Viljoen’s Farm wine estate in Upington went on strike after the union declared a dispute with management. FAWU reported that the company was misleading the union’s members by making them believe that they would receive incentives for hard work. It was further indicated that workers were under the impression that they would receive a harvest bonus, which none of them have never received. To make matters worse, the union found out that the employer had been deducting membership fees from the workers and not depositing it into the union’s bank account. It was reported that despite FAWU having the majority of permanent workers as members, the employer had only conceded to certain trade union organisational rights
- On 21 November, members of SAMWU handed a memorandum to the Ekurhuleni Mayor accusing the Metro Police Chief of harassing them
- On 22 November, employees of the Northern Cape Department of Housing embarked on a go-slow after four officials employed on salary level nine were promoted to salary level 10, apparently without being evaluated. Staff members, however, had to return to their posts after receiving letters informing them that their acts were illegal
- On 28 November, about 80 mine workers staged an underground sit-in at the Spring Lake Colliery in Dundee in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands. This follows a dispute with management over the suspension of other miners. Workers reported that their colleagues have been suspended after raising concerns regarding the re-arrangements of shifts without their consultation
- On 6 December mineworkers at the Centurion Gold Mine in Germiston downed tools in protest against working conditions. NUM reported that 600 workers had gone on strike because the new management had reneged on the conditions agreed with former employers JC Mining. It was reported that complaints included the nullification of death benefits and a decrease in annual leave
- On 14 December, South Africa’s Civil Aviation Authority employees, who are members of SATAWU went on strike after they were unhappy that annual bonuses were not paid in December, as was the usual practice of the organisation.



Trends in strike incidents, working days lost and time-loss ratio, 2002-2006

Chapter three is meant to provide information on the number of strike incidents, working days lost and time-loss ratio from 2002 to 2006. These are the most important measurements of strike activity and would in all likelihood point to the intensity of strike activity in any country. Each of these indicators refers to a different dimension of strike activity, which would be affected by somewhat different causal factors. Variations in each measure can be said to have a different significance. **Figure 1** shows strike incidents for the period 2002 to 2006. In 2006, there were 99 strike incidents due to labour disputes, slightly lower than in 2005, but higher than in 2002, 2003 and 2004. However, the number of strike incidents rose by 110.6% (52) between 2002 and 2006 from 47 to 99 respectively. The fact that the number of strike incidents is slightly lower in 2006 compared to 2005 shows that this indicator has been fluctuating for the past five years. The number of strike incidents was at their lowest in 2002 and 2004 and highest in 2005. Whilst six large strikes were recorded in 2006, as opposed to eleven in 2005, 2006 was also characterised by too many small strikes that involved a few workers. For example, the strike at Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape involved 24 strikers, the Kishare cc strike with 13 participants, Southern Wild Life College with 21 participants and Mykatrade strike with 7 participants.

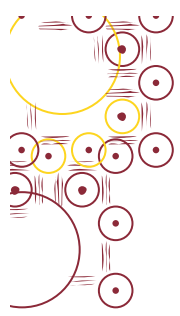
Figure 1: Trends in strike incidents in South Africa, 2002-2006



Source: Department of Labour, Strikes Statistics

Figure 2 indicates the most important basic measure of strike activity, i.e working days lost. It is calculated by multiplying the number of workers involved by the duration of the strike. The Department of Labour covers all workers involved in the strike, i.e. directly and indirectly involved. However, we do not make a distinction between working days lost by those directly involved and

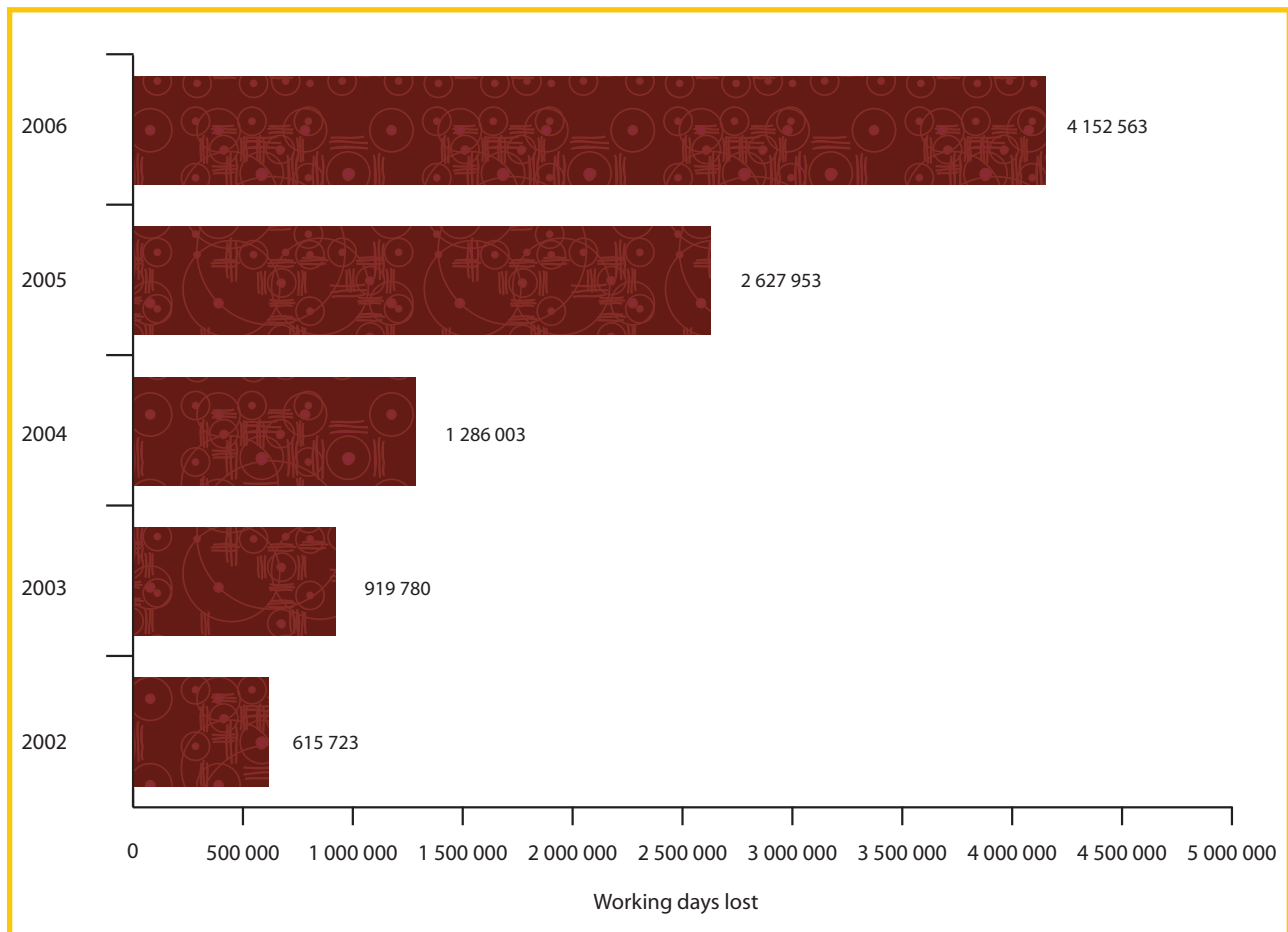




those indirectly involved, an aggregate figure for the affected establishments is all that is analysed. Given our aim of maximising comparability between the various strike series, we regard these aggregated figures for working days lost as a further justification for not separating workers involved directly and indirectly. Despite the progress achieved in South Africa's labour-relations statistics over the past decade, the slight decline in the number of strikes and the proportionately larger increases in the resulting working days lost, especially in the last five years, are a cause for concern.

In 2006, about 4 152 563 working days were lost from 99 stoppages of work that rose from labour disputes. The total number of working days lost during 2006 is the highest on record since 1998. The 2006 total of 4 152 563 working days lost through labour disputes is significantly higher than the 2005 (2 627 953), 2004 (1 286 003), 2003 (919 780) and 2002 (615 723). This represents an increase of 58.0% (1 524 610) in working days lost between 2005 and 2006 and 574.4% (3 536 840) between 2002 and 2006. The working days lost of 1 296 000 (31.2%) due to the security strike was higher than the total lost in 2002, 2003 and 2004. This shows the impact of the security strike in 2006. Some of the increase in working days lost recently can undoubtedly be apportioned to a rise in the number of workers involved (that is, relatively large unions were involved in the recent disputes) and also partly to the long duration of some of the stoppages.

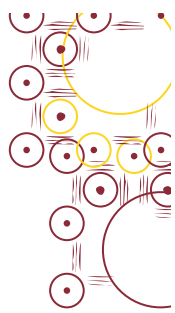
Figure 2: Trends in working days lost due to industrial actions in South Africa, 2002-2006



Source: Department of Labour, Strikes Statistics

One distinguishing feature of the strikes in 2006 is that four industries that were affected by labour disputes accounted for about 3 808 159 (91.7%) working days lost. The affected industries are: wholesale, retail trade; community, social and personal services; financial intermediation and manufacturing. The March 2006 Labour Force Survey shows that these industries have a high





proportion of their workers in flexible employment relations that are outside the reach of institutional safeguards. Of the total employees of 1 844 000 in the wholesale and retail trade, about 530 000 (29.2%) are in this kind of employment relations, whilst community, social and personal services had about 301 000 (17.6%), financial intermediation, 170 000 (19.8%) and the manufacturing industry, 313 000 (26.8%). Although the main cause of strikes by security guards, contract national cleaners, Shoprite/Checkers employees, Sun International employees, Pick and Pay employees and Sasko employees was related to pay, the very same workers were also reported to be complaining about poor working conditions, which raises the following questions: **Could continuing increase in casualisation have played a part in the resurgence? Could this development have spurred organised labour to flex its muscle in vulnerable sectors?** Workers in vulnerable sectors tend to be excluded from any productive partnerships within the labour market. They are prone to be victims of exploitation and indignities in the world of work.

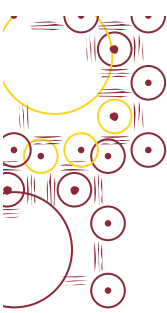


Unions would like to empower workers at the lower end of the labour market to gain access to a larger basket of rights.

What does this new development tell us? The labour movement is recently rising to the challenge of simultaneously addressing the concerns of all sections of the workforce. They are no longer focusing exclusively on the concerns of the workers at the high end of the labour market, since they risk their influence becoming circumscribed to a dwindling proportion of the workforce. They have started organising in these vulnerable industries and sectors.

Following this, unions would like to empower workers at the lower end of the labour market to gain access to a larger basket of rights. They would like to create new institutional safeguards for people working under flexible labour market relations. The fact that some labour market entrants will remain without regular full-time jobs, and therefore outside the protective umbrella of conventional labour market institutions, indicates a pressing need for new institutional safeguards that can guarantee portable safeguards to all workers, casual and subcontractors.

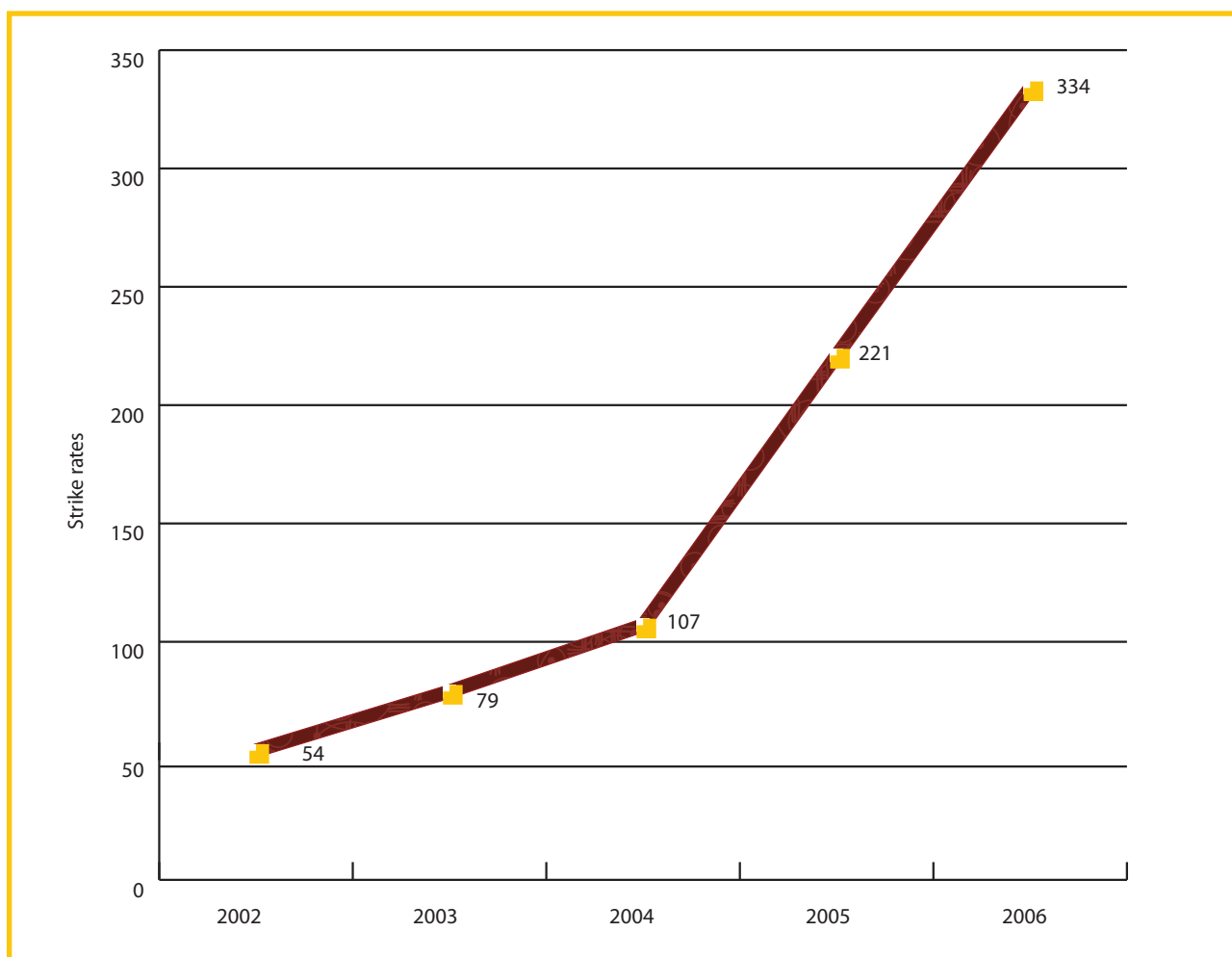




Unions are now building up organisational strength and the capacity amongst vulnerable workers. The high level of working days lost in these vulnerable sectors is an indication of the growing strength and influence of trade unions amongst vulnerable workers.

Using the number of working days lost per 1 000 employees (time-loss ratio) enables a meaningful comparison of annual workstoppages. Time loss-ratio is a standard measure that is used to convert working days lost into a strike rate that takes into account the size of total employment. After thus controlling for the rise in employee numbers, the time-loss ratio reveals an overall rising trend from 54 working days lost per 1 000 employees in 2002 to 334 in 2006 as shown by **Figure 3**. This is clearly in line with the overall increase in total workdays lost and could undoubtedly be attributed to the high profile strikes during the period under review.

Figure 3: Strike rates, 2002-2006



Source: Department of Labour, Strikes Statistics

