

Mantashe: Just the man to mend fences in the mining industry

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

27 Feb 2018

The appointment of African National Congress stalwart and former unionist, Gwede Mantashe, as mineral resources minister will hopefully end the prickly relationship between the mining houses and the department over various issues, including the stalled Mining Charter and the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act.



Gwede Mantashe, newly appointed minister of mineral resources

Mantashe has a long history with the mining sector, having started out as part of the labour force, firstly at Western Deep Levels mine in 1975 as a recreation officer and then at Prieska Copper Mines, where he was welfare officer until 1982.

He also co-founded and became the Witbank branch chairperson of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), a position he held until 1984. After holding various positions within the union before becoming its first general secretary in 1998.

The South African Chamber of Mines says it welcomes Mantashe's appointment. "He is a man of integrity and dignity, and who brings with him a sound and fundamental knowledge of the industry he will lead and enable. He is a person with whom our industry has long held a constructive and respectful relationship. He is an extremely tough negotiator, demonstrated both during his time as general secretary of the NUM and in his subsequent political positions. We look forward to the many engagements with him that doubtless lie ahead."

Last week, the chamber withdrew its judicial review application after President Cyril Ramaphosa's undertaking to engage with stakeholders on the problematic third iteration of Mining Charter, which was pushed through by the previous minister, Mosebenzi Zwane, last year.

"Ultimately, a new Mining Charter must be developed and resolved through negotiation, with representation by a broad range of stakeholders – government, business, labour and communities," a statement from the chamber says.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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