

An Open Letter to Minister Gayton McKenzie

Subject: Protecting Jobs, Supporters, and Long-Standing Rugby Institutions at Loftus Versfeld

Dear Minister McKenzie,

I write to you on behalf of Loftus 200, an institution that has been part of the fabric of Bulls rugby for 42 years. Loftus 200 was established as a home for former Bulls players and loyal supporters who have dedicated their lives to the game. Over four decades, it has grown into a community that celebrates the heritage of rugby while actively supporting the sport and the stadium that houses it.

Today, however, we find ourselves facing a situation that threatens not only our club, but also the livelihoods of the people who work within it and the long-standing relationships that have sustained rugby at Loftus Versfeld for generations.

We are appealing to you publicly because you have consistently positioned yourself as a minister who stands up for the people on the ground. In this case, the people affected are the staff, service providers, and rugby supporters whose ability to participate meaningfully in the sport, either by offering supporting services or as supporters, is being taken away.

A Policy That Removes Income From Stadium Workers

The recently circulated hospitality regulations for the upcoming Greatest Rivalry Tour introduce operational rules that prevent suite holders such as Loftus 200 from managing their own suites on the day of the match. Instead, the suites are to be operated entirely by SARU-appointed staff and suppliers.

For a club like Loftus 200, this has immediate and serious consequences.

Our staff have worked in our suite for many years. Match days are not simply social occasions. They are work opportunities. They provide vital income for the people who prepare the facilities, serve members, coordinate hospitality, and ensure that guests experience the standard that Loftus 200 has become known for.

Removing our ability to operate our own suite removes that income opportunity from the very people who have helped build the suite's hospitality culture.

At a time when South Africa is working hard to protect and create employment, it is difficult to understand why a policy would deliberately remove work from people who are already part of the system and performing that work successfully.

Damaging Relationships That Took Decades to Build

Loftus 200 also has long-standing relationships with suite members and supporters who have invested in season tickets and membership over many years.

These relationships are built on trust, familiarity, and the personal hospitality experience that Loftus 200 provides. Members join because they know the staff, they know the environment, and they value the culture that has been carefully built over decades.

By removing suite holders from the operation of their own spaces and placing them under external control, those relationships are placed under strain.

What is particularly concerning is that this approach risks damaging relationships between the stadium, its suite holders, and the rugby unions themselves. These are relationships that have taken decades to build and can be lost far more quickly than they were created.

There Must Be a Better Way

We fully recognise that international events require coordination and commercial management. However, the current approach appears to take control away from the very organisations that already have the infrastructure, systems, and experience to run their suites effectively.

Rather than removing suite holders from the process entirely, surely there must be a way to work with them.

Suite holders like Loftus 200 already have the infrastructure, trained staff, operational systems, and established hospitality standards in place. Working with these structures would allow SARU to achieve its commercial goals without dismantling existing relationships or removing income from the people who currently operate within the stadium.

Partnership, rather than replacement, would strengthen the event rather than weaken the ecosystem around it.

The Indemnity Requirement Is Neither Fair Nor Acceptable

Another serious concern is the requirement that suite holders sign indemnity agreements that effectively release SARU from liability for damages occurring within the suite.

This is deeply problematic.

Suite holders are being asked to accept legal liability for spaces that they are not permitted to operate, manage, or control on the day of the event. In other words, responsibility is being transferred without control.

This is neither fair nor legally sound, and it places suite holders in an impossible position. Loftus 200 cannot accept liability for damages or operational risks when the suite is being run by SARU staff and suppliers.

It is also important to note that Loftus 200 has invested significant resources over many years into maintaining and improving the suite. This includes major refurbishments, new installations, and continuous upkeep funded by our members.

To require indemnity under these conditions disregards both our investment and basic principles of responsibility.

Protecting a 42-Year Rugby Institution

Loftus 200 was created to honour former Bulls players and to provide a place where the legacy of the game could live alongside the supporters who continue to sustain it.

For more than four decades we have supported the Bulls, Loftus Versfeld, and South African rugby through every stage of the sport's evolution.

The current hospitality structure, however, places enormous pressure on our ability to continue operating. If we cannot provide value to members, if we cannot operate the facilities we have built, and if our staff cannot work on match days, the long-term sustainability of a club like ours becomes uncertain.

That would be a loss not only for Loftus 200, but for the culture and history of rugby at Loftus Versfeld.

A Request for Your Intervention

Minister McKenzie, we are therefore asking for your assistance.

We ask that you help facilitate constructive engagement between the relevant parties so that a workable solution can be found. One that allows international events to succeed commercially while also protecting jobs, respecting long-standing institutions, and preserving the relationships that have sustained rugby in this country.

Your voice has consistently been one that defends ordinary people and ensures that decisions made at the top do not unintentionally harm those on the ground.

In this situation, we believe your leadership could help guide a fair and balanced outcome.

In Closing

Loftus 200 does not oppose progress, and we are not seeking conflict. We are simply asking for a framework that respects the people who have invested their time, resources, and passion into supporting rugby at Loftus Versfeld for over 42 years.

We remain committed to the sport and to the stadium we proudly call home.

But we cannot stand by while policies remove jobs, damage long-standing relationships, and place unfair legal burdens on the very organisations that have helped build the rugby community.

We respectfully ask you to step in and help ensure that a better, fairer solution is found.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of **Loftus 200**