

Call for commentaries for a discussion series

Even before South Africa became a democracy in 1994, there were major concerns about service delivery in the country, and it was not long into the post-apartheid era before service delivery was described as a 'crisis'¹. At that time, service delivery challenges were primarily understood as problems related to the provision of electricity, water, and refuse removal services.

Over the years, the *South African Journal of Science* has published a number of articles and commentaries on service delivery, and, in 2023, we hosted a Discussion Series on interdisciplinary perspectives on load shedding (<https://www.sajs.co.za/sajs-discussion-series#load-shedding>). Thirty years into our country's democracy, a key issue for political parties is the question of service delivery. If anything, the notion of there being a 'crisis' of service delivery has increased, with increasing concern nationally over crumbling infrastructure and challenges in a wide range of sectors affecting all of society, and all scientists. For example, 30 years ago there was less discussion about potholes, water cut-offs, polluted water, and sewerage issues in major urban areas, including wealthy areas, and of the impact of major challenges in parastatals (including in the transport sectors and the postal system, amongst others) on livelihoods, work, education, health care, public health, governance, and the practice of science.

Clearly, all these issues of service delivery and what to do about it are central to the future of our country, and of concern to scientists and researchers across a very wide range of disciplines. We at the *South African Journal of Science* are calling for a series of evidence-based and provocative commentaries on service delivery, in order to shape discussion and collaboration in this important overarching field. We welcome pieces of approximately 2000–3000 words on any aspect of scientific thinking and/or action around service delivery. We hope to receive a wide variety of submissions ranging from the most technical (for example, on the question of what the best and most effective and environmentally appropriate ways there may be to fix existing potholes) to more broad-ranging interdisciplinary discussions (for example, on the question of how various tiers of government can maximise the chances that services improve).

Closing date for submissions:
20 May 2024

All submissions will be considered subject to the usual assessment processes of the Journal. Please direct any enquiries about the series to sajs.editor@assaf.org.za

¹McDonald DA, Pape J, editors. *Cost recovery and the crisis of service delivery in South Africa*. London: Zed Books; 2002.

