



# A Christmas wish-list

*If the new Information Regulator Pansy Tlakula had a Christmas wish-list, this would be it*

## Dear Father Christmas

(Or should I call you Santa Claus? People have called me lots of different names, especially after my time at the IEC.)

It's been a busy few months here, what with Brexit, the Donald and a fond goodbye to your friend Thuli grabbing the headlines – not to mention the Zupta saga and the search for the Saxonwold *shebeen*. While you are helping Eishkom keep the lights on for the festive season after Brian left, maybe you can spare a few thoughts for me in my new role as the beloved country's new Information Regulator.

My name is Pansy Tlakula, and my friends are already calling me "POPI Pansy" in honour of my new job. Here's my wish-list in time for Christmas, as I start my new job on 1 December 2016.

1. **Give me a chance** – there has been a great deal of speculation about my role at the IEC. We are starting a new chapter in SA history now, so let's look forwards not backwards.
2. **Top up my budget** – like everyone I need decent funding. It is clear that my Regulator's office is currently underfunded compared with similar bodies in other countries. Earning income from fines is not necessarily the right approach, so please put in a good word with whoever our Finance Minister is by the time you read this.
3. **Please take POPI seriously** – this is not a joke. Privacy has been in our new Constitution from the beginning, and in other legislation but without much guidance. The POPI Act provides good guidance for putting privacy into practice. POPI is the only law that prescribes Security Safeguards as a

requirement. In the world of increasing security risks and threats, this is a big issue, so please help security to be taken seriously by all my stakeholders.

4. **Don't wait for me** – I can lead but the country doesn't need to follow. Please ask all those involved to start their POPI initiatives sooner rather than later, and not have the usual last-minute scramble to comply after there is case law. Help me to learn from privacy practices in other countries (UK and Australia) as they provide a great deal of helpful information.
5. **Help yourself** – learn from each other. Please ask the private sector, the public sector and everyone else in between to work with those in their sector for the good of the country on POPI. We need this for our status as a trusted trading partner.
6. **Make POPI your friend** – look for the upside. Good privacy and security practices can offer businesses a competitive advantage. I have already seen examples of new POPI-related products and services being developed. Please help people not to see POPI as just more red tape.
7. **Bring me some Codes of Conduct (CoC)** – let my inbox be full of CoC proposals. Please help me by making people realise they can take the initiative and help shape their own future. I'll talk to you more about this when your festive season rush is over.
8. **Make us shine for Africa** – people are watching. The Rainbow Nation can set a good example for our neighbours and trading partners.

We are not the first to have privacy legislation enacted, but let's make this POPI law count for Africa, not just this side of the Limpopo.

9. **Help me build trust for our country** – we need credibility. We are part of the international community, but some partners still don't trust us like they should. For example, European countries (tourists in particular) want confidence that their personal information is being protected when they travel to SA.
10. **Make PAIA bring value to all** – balance the scales of justice, openness and privacy. Nkandla disclosures proved that the Promotion of Access to Information Act is good for the country. Give me strength as I take on those duties as well from the SAHRC.
11. **Let me be humble** – I too can learn. I won't have all the answers about privacy. In these early days let me listen more than talk. Help me to learn about personal information privacy from those more experienced at home and abroad.
12. **Give me an early success** – nothing succeeds like success. Please surprise me with an early success in my first hundred days that shows my new job is more than just a new lease on life.

Thanks Santa, I will be sure to leave out an extra helping of milk and cookies for you, Prancer, Dancer and the rest of your reindeer. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all! ■

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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