



Legal Aid Board employees marched in the city centre yesterday to protest low wages.

PICTURE: ETIENNE CREUX

Legal aid lawyers march for better pay

HANTI OTTO
COURT REPORTER

Legal Aid Board employees have marched on the Department of Justice offices, calling for better wages.

Attorneys, paralegals and administrative staff yesterday said they had been promised salary increases since 2005, but still earned so little that many of them had to walk to work as they couldn't pay

for transport.

They are now threatening industrial action – a move that could delay court cases even more.

"We know the poorest of the poor will suffer, as it is them we serve. But we can't keep working on empty stomachs and wallets," said one protester.

In April 2006, they were told that it would cost about R66 million to restructure their salaries.

According to the memorandum, they were told that a task team had been set up to align the salaries of legal professionals within the governmental departments.

But, they said, while salaries in the National Prosecuting Authority and the Justice Department were boosted, "they were left behind".

They were informed in April 2007 that they were covered by the

Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) for the readjustment of salaries.

The implementation of the OSD was set for July 2007, but Legal Aid Board employees were told that it had yet to be extended to their organisation.

Protester Daisy Swele said: "There are legal people who don't have degrees, yet they earn more than us with degrees."

