

## **eNCA Responds to the ‘Pieter Groenewald’ Mask Issue**

Johannesburg – On Wednesday 24 February 2021, during the coverage of the 2021 Budget Speech, eNCA’s Reporter Lindsay Dentlinger became central to an incident relating to her alleged inconsistent behaviour when applying Covid-19 protocols during a live broadcast.

eNCA understands how an excerpt of Dentlinger’s coverage could have created a space for general public conjecture. However, eNCA Management, after meeting with Dentlinger to discuss the matter concluded that her conduct was not racially motivated or with malicious intent.

Dentlinger is a seasoned journalist with over 21 years of experience, 9 of which has been with eNCA. In her tenure with eNCA, she has primarily focused on political news. Having worked in print, radio and television, Dentlinger has interviewed many high-profile politicians from all sectors and parties without anyone calling her conduct into question. This incident represents an inaccurate and unfair image of her work.

“In an intense live broadcast environment like the Budget Speech coverage, our journalists are under pressure to remain compliant while delivering fair, accurate and balanced news. The journalist had to contend with being live on air and taking producer instructions via her earpiece and unfortunately failed to request that the interviewee wear a mask. Criticism to this extent leveled at a journalist under these circumstances is unfair and unfortunate. Comments and some video content that are currently being shared is maliciously misleading.” said John Bailey, Managing Editor of eNCA.

When it comes to adherence to Covid-19 protocols, eNCA has broadcast extensive content to educate viewers while journalists are regularly urged to ensure that they and all interviewees remain compliant.

“After carefully analyzing the situation, we understand that given the pressure of the live TV environment such unplanned occurrences can occur. Through our deliberations, we have found that there is no mal intent on the part of the journalist. We further found that the way the journalist and eNCA has been perceived through this incident is unfair and not a true reflection of the journalist or our channel. We also appreciate the sensitivity of the matter and people’s concerns and reaffirm our commitment to encouraging compliance with regulations designed to inhibit transmission of Covid-19 across our population irrespective of race, colour or creed” Managing Director, Norman Munzhelele stated.