

THE RECOVERY OF PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICES ON THE CENTRAL LINE, WESTERN CAPE, FOLLOWING AN UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF THEFT AND VANDALISM OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND STATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The passenger rail service came to a halt in Nov 2019 on the Central Line in the Western Cape following a rampant theft and vandalism of infrastructure and stations at a scale never seen before in South Africa. The suspension of the train services on this corridor has had a severe impact on the business of PRASA to support commuters that depend on the train service as a means of transportation and the company's ability to collect revenue. The proliferation of the construction mafia culture and gangsterism has not helped matters in this part of the country.

During the hard covid-19 lockdown period in 2020 informal dwellers occupied the line between Nyanga - Philippi, making the resumption of the train service even more difficult as the dwellings needed to be removed first before the recovery work can resume.

PRASA decided to introduce a Service Recovery Programme specifically aimed at fixing the infrastructure along this corridor with rehabilitation of the power supply network forming an integral part of that programme. By early June 2024 a portion of the line was ready to resume the train service following the rebuilding of the line.