

THE TASK OF RESTORING TRAIN SERVICES IN PRIORITY CORRIDORS AMID AN UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF THEFT AND VANDALISM

F MARUTLA

PRASA

ABSTRACT

The passenger rail infrastructure has experienced an unprecedented level of theft and vandalism at a scale never seen before in South Africa, particularly during the hard lockdown period. This has resulted in temporary closure of some of the busy corridors for passenger services across the various regions in South African, more so in Gauteng and the Western Cape. The task at hand is to restore these passenger services as most South African rely on this mode of transport for their own economic activities due to its affordability.

At the State of Nation Address (SONA) in 2020 the President of South Africa, Mr Matamela Ramaphosa identified Mabopane – Pretoria and Western Cape Central Line routes as the presidential programmes earmarked for close monitoring and speedier implementation of service recovery. Twelve (12) other corridors across the country are receiving a focused attention for service recovery. The urgent task is the restoration of electrical traction on the lines, refurbishment/repairs of vandalised station buildings, modernisation of depots and the rollout of the new “Stimela Sabantu/Setimela sa Batho” trains in the regions in a phased manner. This will improve the quality of passenger services and will assist PRASA with its mandate of providing a safe, reliable, affordable commuter rail, long-haul passenger rail services and thereby supporting the National Developing Plan objectives of an integrated public transport system.