

Eskom loadsheds Metrorail in the Western Cape

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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Amidst its ongoing cash-flow issues and struggle to provide the country with power, Eskom appeared to have taken a new strategy to conserve resources and force payment on an overdue account this afternoon, as it disconnected the supply to Metrorail in the Western Cape, leaving thousands of commuters stranded in the process.



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A Metrorail Western Cape internal communicate addressed to Prasa employees from acting regional manager Raymond Maseko, which was shared on social media, confirmed that the entire regional network had been temporarily suspended as Eskom cut the public transport provider's traction power supply.

This was a result of a payment being 34 days overdue. In a media statement, Prasa said it was "not aware of Eskom's action as the rail agency was in constant contact with the power utility regarding the account." It went on to say that Eskom was expecting payment within 14 days of invoicing, which Prasa said "is currently practically impossible."

Although the rail company did "wish to assure affected commuters and other stakeholders that while Prasa is facing a cash-flow crunch, it is however not bankrupt."

At around 5.30pm, a regional announcement was released on social media and commuter groups announcing that service

recovery was underway and a limited afternoon peak service would be operating, but passengers should expect residual delays of 60+ minutes.

Commuters are no strangers to such delays as technical problems, theft, arson, and its failing infrastructure continue to impede regular service.

Messages over commuter Whatsapp groups requested that passengers not take their frustrations out on ground staff and drivers, while others took to Twitter to vent:

“ Shouldn't commuters be brought into the loop re payment BEFORE the [#Metrorail](#) switch is flipped? Sis [#Eskom](#).
Kids stranded at daycare, tickets worthless, night walking.

Western Cape train chaos: Eskom starts restoring power after [#Prasa](#) pays up <https://t.co/oQjsfR4FRl>— Jenni Evans (@itchybyte) [February 27, 2020](#) ”

“ The Government is blaming the Government for the Government not paying itself. Go figure... [#PRASA](#) [#Metrorail](#) [#SuspendedServices](#) <https://t.co/xd8EAe4j3b>— Simon Grindrod (@SimonPGrindrod) [February 27, 2020](#) ”

A further update issued at 6.30pm confirmed the train service will operate as planned tomorrow morning.

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