

Good day Mary-Anne

Please find responses, highlighted in yellow below.

Responses:

Commitment to Universal Accessibility

PRASA is firmly committed to advancing universal accessibility and has identified it as a key priority within its infrastructure modernisation and station upgrade programmes. The organisation recognises that accessible public transport is essential to ensuring that all passengers, including persons with disabilities, older persons and those with reduced mobility, are able to travel safely, independently and with dignity.

To strengthen this commitment, PRASA has established a **Universal Access and Design (UAD) Committee**, which is responsible for ensuring that universal accessibility principles are incorporated into infrastructure planning, design and implementation. The Committee facilitates the alignment and coordination of infrastructure projects undertaken during the Recovery Phase to ensure that accessibility requirements are integrated in accordance with applicable standards and best practices.

In addition, PRASA has established the **PRASA Disability Sector Forum (PDSF)**, comprising organisations representing persons with disabilities and other affected stakeholder groups. The Forum provides an important platform for ongoing engagement, consultation and collaboration, enabling stakeholders to receive regular updates on accessibility initiatives, provide input into projects and contribute to the development of programmes that promote inclusive passenger rail services.

The implementation of universal accessibility measures forms an integral part of PRASA's Station Upgrade Programme. As stations are upgraded and modernised, accessibility features are being incorporated in line with available funding, technical feasibility and applicable regulatory requirements, with the objective of creating a more inclusive, accessible and customer-centred rail network for all passengers.

Status of Universal Accessibility at Stations Visited by GroundUp

Kuyasa and Langa Stations:

Both Kuyasa and Langa stations are equipped with lifts, enabling commuters, including persons with reduced mobility and persons with disabilities, to access the train platforms directly from the ticket office level. These accessibility features form part of PRASA's ongoing commitment to improving access to passenger rail services.

Rondebosch Station:

Rondebosch Station is currently not fully universally accessible. However, the station forms part of PRASA's broader Universal Accessibility Programme, which seeks to progressively improve accessibility across the rail network. The required infrastructure upgrades will be implemented as part of future station enhancement projects, subject to the availability of funding and the approval of the necessary capital budget.

PRASA remains committed to progressively creating an inclusive and accessible rail environment that enables all passengers to travel safely, independently and with dignity.

- In terms of the new PRASA/Metrorail trains, it is difficult for a person using a wheelchair to easily get onto the train from the platform, because the space between the platform and carriage is far too wide and it is high. A lot of maneuvering and help from others is needed for a person using a wheelchair to get onto the actual train. Please comment on this.

Response:

PRASA acknowledges that the interface between station platforms and train carriages presents accessibility challenges for some passengers, particularly persons using wheelchairs and those with reduced mobility. Addressing these challenges remains a priority as part of the organisation's broader commitment to universal accessibility.

To this end, PRASA has established a dedicated **Platform Rectification Programme**, which is separately funded to address platform infrastructure deficiencies across the rail network. A comprehensive audit of **988 platforms** nationwide was undertaken to assess the extent of the required interventions. The estimated capital investment required to implement the long-term platform rectification solution is approximately **R10 billion**.

Given current funding constraints, PRASA is exploring practical and cost-effective interim measures that can be implemented while longer-term infrastructure upgrades are being planned. A team of specialist consultants has been appointed to investigate suitable solutions that will reduce the gap between platforms and train carriages and improve accessibility for passengers with disabilities.

A number of potential solutions have already been identified and are currently undergoing detailed technical, operational and railway safety assessments to ensure they comply with applicable engineering standards and safety requirements.

PRASA anticipates that a preferred interim solution will be identified by the end of October, following which an implementation programme will be developed. This initiative forms part of PRASA's ongoing efforts to progressively improve accessibility and provide a safer, more inclusive and customer-centred rail service for all passengers.

- Which stations are fully accessible for people using wheelchairs in the Western Cape/Cape Town?

The audit results for the Western Cape are as follows:

1. Fully Universally Accessible - 7 Stations

These stations provide accessible routes from the station entrance through to the concourse and platforms, enabling persons using wheelchairs to navigate the station independently. However, depending on the platform configuration, some passengers may still require assistance when boarding or alighting from trains due to the platform-to-train gap.

The seven stations are:

- Salt River Station
- Chris Hani Station
- Cape Town Station (Main Concourse)
- Woodstock Station
- Century City Station
- Strand Station
- Mutual Station

2. Partially Universally Accessible - 85 Stations

These stations have accessibility features in place but do not yet provide full universal access throughout the station. In some instances, accessibility is available only on one side of the station, while in others, passengers can access the station entrance, concourse or ticket office but not the train platforms.

Rondebosch Station falls within this category, as accessibility is currently available on only one side of the station.

3. Not Universally Accessible - 29 Stations

These stations currently do not provide the infrastructure required to support universal accessibility for persons using wheelchairs and other passengers with reduced mobility.

PRASA remains committed to progressively improving accessibility across its network through ongoing infrastructure upgrades and the implementation of its Universal Accessibility Programme. As funding becomes available, accessibility enhancements will continue to be incorporated into station modernisation projects to create a more inclusive, safe and customer-centred passenger rail system.

The magnitude of compliance of Universal Access for Railway Stations.

Achieving full universal accessibility across PRASA's rail network is a significant and long-term undertaking, given the scale of the infrastructure portfolio, the age of many station facilities, and the substantial capital investment required. PRASA operates **495 stations nationally**, of which **121 are located in the Western Cape**.

Many of these stations were designed and constructed before universal accessibility standards were incorporated into infrastructure planning. Consequently, only a limited number of stations currently meet all the requirements for full universal accessibility.

Recognising these challenges, PRASA has prioritised universal accessibility as a key component of its infrastructure modernisation programme. Accessibility improvements are being progressively incorporated into station upgrade and refurbishment projects, subject to available funding and approved capital budgets.

One of the most significant technical challenges remains the platform-to-train interface, particularly the gap and height difference between station platforms and the new train fleet, which affects safe and independent boarding for passengers using wheelchairs and those with reduced mobility.

To address this, PRASA is currently undertaking detailed technical investigations to identify practical, safe and cost-effective engineering solutions that can be implemented across the rail network within available budget constraints. Once a suitable solution has been identified and approved, a phased implementation programme will be developed to progressively improve accessibility and enhance the travel experience for all passengers.

Kind regards

Zinobulali Mini