

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

Attention News Editors/Transport Writers/All Reporters

For immediate release: 09 January 2019

### **RAILWAY SAFETY REGULATOR ANNOUNCES FINDINGS OF THE MOUNTAINVIEW PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION**

09 January 2019 - The Railway Safety Regulator (RSR) has concluded its preliminary investigation into the collision between two Metrorail trains at the Mountainview station, north of Pretoria. The incident occurred when one train, enroute to Pretoria Station, collided with the rear of another train, destined for the Belle Ombre station. Both trains departed from the Mabopane station and were carrying passengers.

The findings of the RSR's preliminary investigation indicate that:

- Based on the data received from PRASA, the section from Pretoria North to Mountainview has been operating under manual authorisation since November 2018.
- There was a breakdown in communication between the Train Control Officer (TCO) and the train driver that was enroute to the Pretoria Station. After the train driver repeated the authority incorrectly, the TCO acknowledged the incorrect authority. This resulted in the train entering the section between the Pretoria North and Mountainview station wrongfully.

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- The train driver and TCO did not comply with the Language Policy when authorising.
- The damage observed on the coaches of both trains indicates that the train to Pretoria Station may have been travelling at a considerable speed. During abnormal trains working, in particular when trains are manually authorised, trains are required to travel at a speed of 30km/h. The exact speed will, however, only be confirmed once the event recorder data is received and analysed by the RSR.

As accentuated before, accidents like these indicate that PRASA is in contravention of its own standard operating procedures as well as the directives of the Regulator. The RSR has consistently highlighted the risks inherent to prolonged periods of manual train authorisations and continues to compel PRASA to provide proper control and supervision of manual train authorisation. However, we keep on seeing a recurrence of incidents attributable to this method of operation. Even after being issued with a court order to improve safety on its operations, PRASA continues to demonstrate the highest levels of lethargy and disregard for rail safety in their operations.

“The Regulator continues to execute its mandate by highlighting the risks in railway operations. It, however, remains the responsibility of the operator to mitigate the risk. This accident highlights failures at various levels. We, therefore, urge PRASA to address these shortcomings in all earnest” said the Acting RSR CEO, Ms Tshepo Kgare.

The RSR will continue its investigation in order to establish the contributing factors and the root cause of the collision.

The Regulator sends its commiserations to the families of the deceased and wishes those injured and admitted to hospital a speedy recovery.

**ENDS**

## **MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

The Railway Safety Regulator (RSR) was established in terms of the National Railway Safety Regulator Act No 16 of 2002 (as amended) to oversee and promote safe railway operations through appropriate support, monitoring and enforcement, guided by an enabling regulatory framework. In the interest of rail safety, RSR also collects and disseminates information relating to safe railway operations to the public by means of rail safety awareness campaigns.

### THE RSR'S MANDATE IS TO:

- Oversee safety in railway transport, while operators remain responsible for managing the safety of their operations.
- Develop an appropriate regulatory framework through the development of regulations and standards for safe railway operations.
- Monitor and ensure safety compliance by conducting audits, inspections and occurrence investigations.
- Collect and disseminate information relating to safe railway operations.
- Promote the harmonisation of the railway safety regime of South Africa with Southern African Development Community (SADC) railway operations.
- Promote improved safety performance in order to promote the use of rail.

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