###### National Assembly

###### Question Number: 1432

**1432. Mr A R Figlan (DA) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

(a) Why has the Metrorail Chatsworth and Durban service been suspended, (b) how are passengers being accommodated whilst the service is suspended, (c) what is being done to reinstate the service and (d) by what date will the service be reinstated? NW1574E

**REPLY:**

1. The Metrorail commuter service between Crossmoor (Chatsworth) and Durban was suspended from 22 February 2017 due to the general shortage of serviceable rolling stock experienced by the PRASA KZN Region. As at February 2017, only 32 train sets out of the required 57 train sets were in-service, due to major overhaul/upgrade and maintenance program requirements of the ageing fleet. PRASA was also losing 5 coaches on average per month due to vandalism. As a consequence the in-service fleet is under pressure and run more kilometres than usual, with less time to effect day to day maintenance, having an adverse effect on the performance of the fleet. The over extension and poor performance of the available fleet create serious risks in terms of commuter dissatisfaction and overcrowding.

 In balancing the available in-service fleet with overall demand across the KZN region, the Chatsworth and Bluff services were suspended in order to make rolling stock available on higher demand corridors in areas where alternative bus services are not viable due to objections from the taxi industry.

1. A replacement bus service was provided by PRASA between Crossmoor and Merebank, making it possible for commuters to connect with trains travelling to and from the South Coast and Umlazi.
2. Although a partial recovery of the KZN Metrorail fleet availability towards the end of March allowed the train service between Durban and Crossmoor to be reinstated, limited spare trains sets still affects service capacity and performance, resulting in frequent cancellations. Buses are arranged on an ad-hoc basis to augment the train service as far as possible.
3. The train service between Durban and Crossmoor was officially reinstated on 30 March 2017. The train service between Durban/Umlazi and Wests (Bluff) remains suspended due to the ongoing shortage of rolling stock. PRASA is in a process of accelerating the return of additional rolling stock (train sets) to improve the fleet availability across all services in the KZN region.