**National of Assembly**

**Question No: 1951**

**1951. Mrs N J Nolutshungu (EFF) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

Why does he keep on spending taxpayers’ money on Autopax and Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA), given that out of a fleet of 555 Autopax buses only 131 buses are operating and that PRASA did not have money to pay its employees in January 2020, whilst some of its competitors are delivering a good service and have been making a profit for years? NW2244E

**REPLY:**

One of the main objects of PRASA’s business, provided for in the Legal Succession Act of South African Transport Services (“SATS” Act of 1989 as amended), is to provide for long haul passenger bus services within, to and from the Republic in terms of the principles set out in section 4 of the National Land Transport Transition Act, 2000 (Act No. 22 of 2000).

The strategic role for Autopax is in the provision of long distance travel to passengers that are currently stranded and isolated from mainstream long distance public transport routes. There is a known demand for mobility from rural and poorer communities for affordable regional transport links as these communities are held to ransom by service providers that charges exorbitant fees at times of the payment of social pensions benefits and visits to healthcare facilities.

The majority of Autopax’s competitors only serve lucrative high passenger demand routes and have sustainable capital replacement programmes.The recapitalisation of the Autopax bus fleet is a priorityfor PRASA and has been disrupted by the COVID 19 pandemic, as buses were planned to be repaired/rebuilt with major units repaired/replaced, such as engines, gearboxes and differentials.