



MyLine recently caught up with Poovi Gurriah and Jill September, two of the leading ladies in the Cape Metrorail Operations Control Centre. Words: Alicia English

FRONT (FROM LEFT) Grace Swartbooi, Nomvuyo Mabaleka, Elizabeth Mavumbe, Poovi Gurriah, Jill September, Monique Conradie, Thandi Siwela and Zethu Hlongwa.
BACK (FROM LEFT) Victoria Ndhohlo and Nomntu Makapela.

When Jill September, acting duty manager of the Cape Metrorail Operations Control Centre (CMOCC), joined Metrorail's command centre in 2011, it was not on her own accord. "I was employed with the company as a train driver when I was diagnosed with leukaemia. My doctors advised me to quit being a train driver immediately, and the company transferred me to CMOCC," Jill recalls.

Five years later, Jill is passionate about her job

and the people she works with. As acting duty manager, she is responsible for coordinating all communication into and out of the control centre. "I have been in full remission for seven years, and I simply love the hustle and bustle of CMOCC. It can be tiring, but it's also what keeps me going. I have a sense of purpose working in CMOCC, as we have a responsibility to ensure the safety of our commuters. I also love working here because we are like a family," says Jill.

Dynamic duo

Jill works closely with representatives from various departments in Metrorail, especially Poovi Gurriah, the senior office administrator at CMOCC. Together, they lead a formidable team of women.

"Our job can be very stressful so you need to have a sense of urgency at all times. Our whole service depends on the work we do in the centre. Every time information is needed, CMOCC is the port of call. To deal with the demands of this job, you need to be bold and a people's person, as we are in constant contact with key role players," says Jill.

Duty calls

Poovi heads up an all-women team in customer service. "We always strive for excellence. We work 12-hour shifts and have a very dedicated team. Sometimes, our customers don't understand that some delays are beyond our control. No matter the severity of the incident, our people work around the clock to get the service back to normal again. All that we ask is to be respected and appreciated for going the extra mile," says Poovi.

Jill and Poovi agree that teamwork is the key factor to their centre's success. "We really want to thank our colleagues, especially our female staff, who go the extra mile and sacrifice time with their families," adds Poovi.

Uitsonderlike vroue

Jill September, waarnemende diensbestuurder van die Cape Metrorail Operations Control Centre, het in 2011 daar begin nadat sy met leukemie gediagnoseer is. Vyf jaar later is sy steeds passievol oor haar werk. Sy is verantwoordelik vir al die kommunikasie na en van die beheersentrum. Sy sê haar werk is vervullend, juis omdat hulle verantwoordelik is vir pendelaars se veiligheid. Jill werk nou saam met Poovi Gurriah, die senior kantoorbestuurder by die sentrum, waar hulle 'n formidabele span vroue lei. Poovi is aan die hoof van kliëntediens. Hulle werk 12-uur-skofte en die span is toegewyd aan hul werk, selfs al beteken dit hulle moet langer ure werk om die treindiens glad te laat loop.

Vir Jill en Poovi is spanwerk die sleutel tot die sentrum se sukses. "Ons wil graag ons kollegas bedank, veral die vroue, omdat hulle bereid is om tyd op te offer om probleme op te los," sê Poovi.

OPERATIONS



1. Selina Mabaleka is responsible for train traffic operations in the Cape Metrorail Operations Control Centre (CMOCC). 2. Andre Brasler, section manager of Metrorail's train operations department and Jill September, acting duty manager of CMOCC.

Keeping an eye on operations

The Cape Metrorail Operations Control Centre in Cape Town is an integral link in Metrorail's rail service in the Western Cape.

Words: Alicia English

As soon as you step into the Cape Metrorail Operations Control Centre (CMOCC) in Cape Town you know this is the engine room of Metrorail's rail service. Every few minutes you can hear a train number being called out, which is usually followed by a flurry of commotion as people get onto their phones to respond to matters arising.

Nothing happens without the information first coming to the men and women in CMOCC. The centre is manned by representatives from six of Metrorail's key departments, namely customer service, train operations, metro technical service (MTS), electrical control, protection services and facilities.

"This is the heart of Metrorail. When there is any incident, for example, commuter related incidents, collisions, crime, technical failures or vandalism, we will get the call. Each representative will let his or her department know immediately so that they can activate a response team. When there is any incident, we also inform the Metrorail management team immediately," explains Poovi Gurriah, the senior office administrator of CMOCC.

Call for help

Poovi says commuters have a key role to play in helping Metrorail respond to incidents as soon as possible. "We want commuters to report incidents to the Transport Information Centre on 0800 65 64 63 immediately. The sooner we get the call, the sooner we can send out our response teams. This is especially critical if people are being robbed on trains between stations. If commuters let us know while it happens, management can authorise our protection services to stop and search the trains when they arrive at the stations and apprehend the culprits," she explains.

CMOCC is not a customer service centre. Its sole



function is operations. "While we appreciate commuters' feedback, it is important for them to report incidents to the Transport Information Centre. Every time our team members are called away to deal with walk-in commuter queries or complaints, they are not available to respond to incidents in the environment," Poovi says.

Purpose driven

Poovi says while each of the six departments represented in CMOCC have their respective functions, they are all motivated by a common goal when it comes to running an effective operation control centre.

"Our number one priority is the safety of our commuters. We are here to ensure that commuters are able to get to their destinations on time and to keep our service moving at all times."

At your service

Let's take a look at the role of each department represented in CMOCC.

Customer service

Responsible for announcements at Cape Town Station, assists with regional announcements and communicates regional service updates to the Transport Information Centre, Metrorail's SMS database and GoMetro.

Train operations

Train traffic officers oversee Metrorail's train operations and channels information between CMOCC and the train drivers and metro guards on the trains. Section managers assist train drivers with first line maintenance during train failures and technical problems.

Metro technical services (MTS)

MTS technicals are responsible for all repairs and logging signalling and track equipment, as well as personal announcement systems and fire alarms. MTS representatives in CMOCC also send out response teams accordingly.

Electrical control

Facilitates all callouts to repair overhead electrical equipment across Metrorail's rail network. When Metrorail's electrical teams are called out to do repairs or maintenance, the representatives in CMOCC will inform relevant parties to deactivate and activate the power supply for safety reasons.

Protection services

All incidents on trains and railway lines and at stations, including vandalism, crime and suicides, fall within the jurisdiction of protection services. When such incidents occur, the representatives will place a call to the nearest protection services unit, and inform the relevant law enforcement agencies.

Facilities

Representatives in CMOCC are responsible for communicating key information that relates to Metrorail's facilities, including stations.

Safety is our concern

SAFETY CORNER

Report all safety and other train incidents immediately to 0800 65 64 63.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Protection services	021 449 4336
Claims office	021 449 2041/3645
Transport info number	0800 65 64 63
RAILWAY POLICE	
Philippi	021 370 1000
Cape Town	021 443 4325/7
Bellville	021 941 6800
Retreat	021 710 5120/9



FRIENDLY SERVICE AT ST JAMES

Here's what a commuter had to say.

"The stationmaster at St James Station is the friendliest and most helpful Metrorail employee I have every met. He makes my journey to work every morning a lot more bearable. He always warns us when trains are running late or if they've changed platforms. His station is always clean and the security guards are always alert and friendly. A big thank you to the St James Station staff."
- Sarah Jean (via Facebook)



We'd love to hear from you

To ensure your voice is always heard, send an email to myline@mikatekmedia.co.za or alicia.english@mikatekmedia.co.za. You can also send us your story ideas and photos.



ASK METRORAIL

Megan Tompkins

Q. "Can someone please explain why train # 0112 has been removed from the train service on the southern line?" - Sonica de Ridder

A. "Thank you for your query. Train #0112 has been temporarily removed from our service on the southern line due to vandalism. The train was defaced by graffiti artists, and will be returned to service once it has been repaired." - Megan Tompkins, communications and marketing officer of Metrorail Western Cape

IMAGE: COURTESY IMAGE

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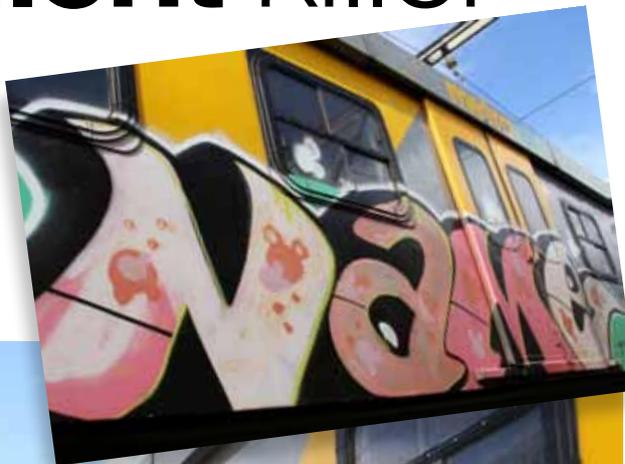


OPERATIONS

The silent killer

While many people see graffiti as an important form of expression and art, this form of visual expression is costing Metrorail and commuters dearly.

Words: Yonga Balfour



REWARD
A reward of **R50 000** is offered to anyone who provides information that leads to arrests and successful prosecutions of offenders.

Grffiti on trains and stations is hampering Metrorail's rail operations. Moreover, it's costing Metrorail money and robbing commuters of receiving an improved service. "Grffiti is considered to be a silent killer in our operations. It is a willful and deliberate act of damaging state assets. Whenever we remove a carriage from service to remove the graffiti, it means there are fewer trains to transport our commuters. This leads to overcrowding, which has a direct impact on our commuters' safety. It also fuels the perception of disorder within our rail system," explains Louis Beukes, senior manager of Metrorail Western Cape's projects programme office.

Counting up the cost

Metrorail spends millions of rands on restoring trains

that have been defaced by graffiti artists. "It's draining our financial resources, which could be applied elsewhere for higher priority issues. It costs us nearly R150 000 to repaint one carriage. We spend an estimated R2.5 million every year on repainting trains alone. This excludes a further R100 000 that we spend on prevention each month. This money could have been paid on maintenance work or other priority areas," says Louis.

Teamwork

Grffiti on trains is common along the southern line, on newly refurbished trains and at stations. Metrorail works closely with other stakeholders to curb graffiti. "We are working with the City of Cape Town, which faces similar problems. Arrests have been made, with some resulting in convictions," adds Louis.

The Criminal Matters Amendment Bill, which criminalises "unlawful and intentional tampering or destroying of essential infrastructure", including transport, came into effect on 1 June 2016.



HELP CURB VANDALISM
Report incidents of vandalism to 0800 65 64 63, at your nearest train station, or to the following numbers:
- Crime Stop: 08600 10111
- Crime Tip-offs: 32211 (SMS)
- Metrorail Protection Services: 021 449 4336

Have your say

Here's what commuters have to say about graffiti on trains.



Ayanda Kakaza travels from Khayelitsha to Cape Town.

"Grffiti is a form of art for people to express their feelings. It looks good and the artists are gifted. Art on trains doesn't affect people. Metrorail should not focus its resources on

clearing graffiti, but rather on other operations such as fixing tracks and signals."

Zodwa Payiya travels from Nyanga Junction to Cape Town.

"I think graffiti is beautiful but should be done in a legal way. When the trains are vandalised we get uncomfortable and scared. I don't know how Metrorail and the community can control this but it should stop."



Asive Dumile travels from Langa to Cape Town.

"Metrorail and the community should come together as one and have awareness campaigns that inform people that graffiti on private property is illegal. Graffiti artists are dangerous and we cannot do anything

about them on our own."

Kevin Loick travels from Bellville to Cape Town.

"I like graffiti, it is beautiful. People just need to understand it as an art. However, graffiti artists should get permission and practise it in places where graffiti is allowed. Metrorail should get people who do graffiti on the trains arrested."



IMAGES: YONGA BALFOUR AND - COURTESY IMAGES

SAFETY

Weather alert

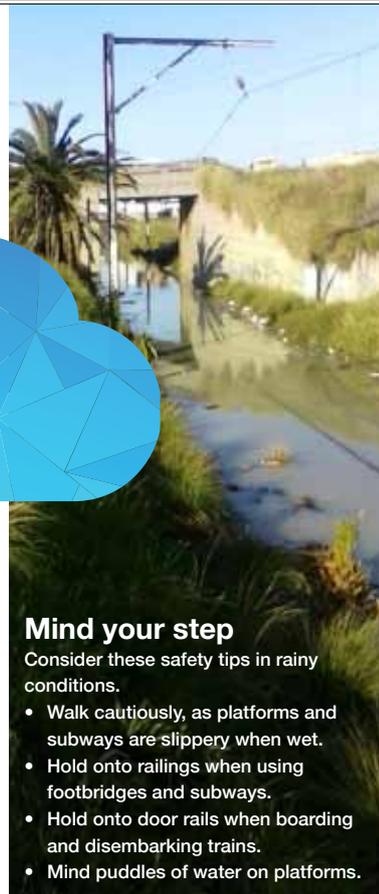
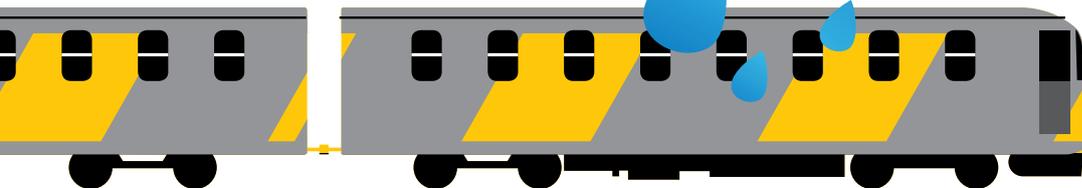
Commuters can expect minor delays in the region due to severe weather conditions.

Words: Alicia English

Metrorail is continuing with speed restrictions across its rail network, especially in areas impacted by heavy rain, wind and mist. This is to ensure train drivers maintain safe travel speeds, in the same way that motorists would slow down when driving in rainy weather.

The areas most affected are Fish Hoek to Simon's Town, Woodstock, where the railway line has been flooded, and the farm areas along the northern line, where dams are overflowing onto the railway line. Train signals may also be affected due to dampness.

Meanwhile, all departments in Metrorail have been placed on high alert. "Given the extreme weather conditions in the region over the past few days, we are paying close attention to the instances and areas where the service could be adversely affected. While our normal contingency and business continuity plans will be implemented when we experience such events, we are giving special attention to activities that would mitigate the risk we could face during such extreme weather conditions," says Richard Walker, regional manager of Metrorail Western Cape.



Mind your step

Consider these safety tips in rainy conditions.

- Walk cautiously, as platforms and subways are slippery when wet.
- Hold onto railings when using footbridges and subways.
- Hold onto door rails when boarding and disembarking trains.
- Mind puddles of water on platforms.

ABOVE The railway lines in Woodstock have been flooded, following the recent heavy rains.

IMAGES: COURTESY IMAGES

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 D 021 417 1184

TRAVEL

Working holidays

Words: Yonga Balfour

Working abroad can be exciting, as you will be exposed to new environments, new faces and new opportunities while earning money. However, it is not as easy as it sounds. Consider the following tips before you travel abroad.

1 Is it real?

Research the job to make sure it is genuine. Consider how long the company has been running. Look into its credentials, registration numbers and number of employees, and check contact details and the truth of their success stories. Ensure that all contracts are signed before you leave the country. Make sure you know your employment rights in the country you're travelling to.

2 Preparation

Find out the language and common phrases of the country you'll be visiting. Understand its economic structure, culture and values, health status (yours as well as the country's), religion, laws and customs, safety and security and import regulations. It is also advisable to get travel insurance in case you need medical assistance while you are abroad.

3 Travel papers

Apply for a passport six months before travelling. Find out if you need a visa.

HOT TIP

Never leave your identity document with anyone, as it is the only thing that identifies you in a foreign country.

www.dfa.gov.za

4 Work papers

You are required to have a work permit if you will be working in a foreign country. Compile all your work documentation in a way that meets that country's tax requirements.

5 ROSA

Registration of South Africans Abroad (Rosa) is an online system to keep track of South Africans when they travel abroad. The system registers your information in case of disasters or emergency.

6 Driving

Should you wish to drive when abroad, apply for an International Driving Permit from the Automobile Association of South Africa.

7 Make contact

Once you're arrived in your destination country, contact your nearest South African embassy to notify officials of your arrival. Be sure to pass on contact details of your next of kin.



TECHNOLOGY

Social media dos and don'ts

Social networks like Facebook and Twitter have revolutionised the way we relate to each other and the world around us. Many get caught up in the false anonymity of the medium and forget that they are using a public platform. Here are some of the dos and don'ts of social media.

DON'T



Post inappropriate images
Many companies use social media to do a background check on potential employees. That picture of you being drunk might seem funny now, but it could reduce your chances of getting hired in the future.

Be a troll
Certain topics will always be sensitive such as race or religion. Don't post content that you know others might find offensive.

Complain about your workplace
Posting negative remarks or insults about your boss or the company you work for can have serious consequences. If your actions damage the company's reputation it can be seen as grounds for dismissal.

DO

Update your privacy settings
Be careful of who can view your profile. A good principle is to only accept people on Facebook who you would allow into your home.

Pay attention to spelling and grammar
If you want to be taken seriously then pay attention to the details. Write a long post in a word processor first to check for mistakes before putting it online.

Use social media to look for work
There are a lot of Facebook pages dedicated to helping job hunters. Social networks like LinkedIn can also help you build new contacts and get updates from companies you want to work for.



IMAGE: COURTESY IMAGE



metrorail

SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



**DO NOT CLIMB ON TOP
OF MOVING TRAINS**



**DO NOT TRY
TO GET ON/OFF
A MOVING TRAIN**



**DO NOT STAND BEYOND
THE YELLOW LINE
ON THE PLATFORM**



**ALWAYS USE THE FOOT
BRIDGE TO CROSS
RAILWAY LINES**



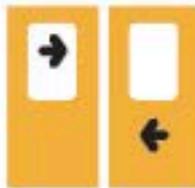
**TRAIN SURFING /
SPARAPARA IS NOT
ALLOWED**



**DO NOT CROSS
THE RAILWAY LINES**



**DO NOT TALK
TO STRANGERS**



**TRAIN DOORS MUST
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SOUTH: CAPE TOWN – SIMON'S TOWN AND CAPE FLATS

4 - 10 Aug 2016	Muizenberg - Fish Hoek	09:00 - 14:00	Platform changes will be announced. Train delays of 20 - 25 minutes can be expected.
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PERFORMANCE

AM ON TIME

69.7%

PM ON TIME

78%

CANCELLED (AM + PM)

33.1%

AM ON TIME

62%

PM ON TIME

70.1%

CANCELLED (AM + PM)

18.7%

AM ON TIME

30.6%

PM ON TIME

63.8%

CANCELLED (AM + PM)

28.8%



NORTH: CAPE TOWN – MONTE VISTA – BELLVILLE – WELLINGTON – STELLENBOSCH – STRAND

4 Aug 2016	Belville - Wellington	08:30 - 14:00	Platform changes will be announced. Train delays of 25 - 30 minutes can be expected.
5 & 6 Aug 2016	Dal Josafat - Wellington	08:00 - 18:00	Platform changes will be announced. Train delays of 25 - 30 minutes can be expected.
7 Aug 2016	Maitland - Koeberg	09:00 - 18:00	Platform changes will be announced. Train delays of 25 - 30 minutes can be expected.
9 Aug 2016	Oosterzee - Bellville	08:00 - 18:00	Platform changes will be announced. Train delays of 25 - 30 minutes can be expected.



CENTRAL: CAPE TOWN – KAPTEINSKLIP – KHAYELITSHA – CHRIS HANI – SAREPTA

4 & 5 Aug 2016	Langa - Bellville	09:00 - 14:00	Platform changes will be announced. Train delays of 20 - 25 minutes can be expected.
7 Aug 2016	Langa - Nyanga	08:00 - 18:00	Platform changes will be announced. Train delays of 20 - 25 minutes can be expected.
8 - 10 Aug 2016	Langa - Chris Hani	10:00 - 13:00	Platform changes will be announced. Train delays of 20 - 25 minutes can be expected.
10 Aug 2016	Nyanga - Bonteheuwel	10:00 - 13:00	Platform changes will be announced. Train delays of 20 - 25 minutes can be expected.

While we try our utmost to do maintenance during off-peak to minimise possible delays, connecting trains may be subjected to delays on all service lines. Your safety is our concern. We apologise for any inconvenience inadvertently caused. Performance reflects week of 21 to 27 July 2016.

CUSTOMER NOTICE

Public holiday train service

Customers take note that Metrorail will run a Sunday train service in all areas, excluding Malmesbury, on 9 August 2016. Malmesbury trains will follow a Saturday schedule on this day.



In case you missed it

Here are the contact details for Metrorail's customer service area managers in your areas:

AREA IKAPA
Herschel Smith
078 142 5033 / hesmith@metrorail.co.za

AREA SOUTH
Herdia Wicomb
082 420 3352 / hwicomb@metrorail.co.za

AREA CENTRAL
Cyril Bauer
083 351 2715 / cbauer@metrorail.co.za

AREA NORTH
Luleka Ndzuzo
082 376 0252 / lndzuzo@metrorail.co.za



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