



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Councillor Jack Sekwaila

MMC: Environment and Infrastructure Services

ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

MMC MEDIA STATEMENT

12 December 2025

THE IMPACT OF THE RAINY SEASON, INFRASTRUCTURE PRESSURES ON CITY POWER'S OPERATIONS

The City of Johannesburg continues to experience significant pressure on the electricity network as the rainy season intensifies. The heavy and persistent rainfall has resulted in a surge of weather-related outages across multiple regions (Service Delivery Centres), placing additional strain on an already overstretched system. Moisture-related cable faults, damaged overhead lines, and compromised equipment have become increasingly common, leading to prolonged interruptions in several areas.

As a result of these harsh weather conditions, the rate of equipment failure has escalated. Substations, transformers, mini-substations, and cable networks are enduring heightened pressure, with many units reaching the end of their operational capacity far sooner than expected. In addition to weather-related failures, vandalism, cable theft, illegal connections, and meter bypassing remain some of the most destructive contributors to outages. In areas such as Lyndhurst, Rembrandt Park, and Woodlands Estate, transformers and Ring Main Units have been vandalised or stolen, resulting in large-scale outages that require complete replacement of equipment rather than simple repairs. Similar incidents in Fleurhof, Ennerdale, Lawley, and other regions continue to undermine restoration efforts.

Illegal connections and overloading have also permanently damaged mini substations in areas such as Vrededorp, where the unit failed due to sustained unlawful usage, leaving customers without supply until a replacement can be sourced. These actions not only compromise the network but also accelerate the depletion of critical material stock. The MMC for the Environment and Infrastructure Services Department (EISD), Cllr Jack Sekwaila, emphasised that transformers and mini-substations are highly specialised equipment. Unlike general electrical materials, they are not manufactured daily nor readily available on shelves for immediate replacement.

They are designed to last for years under normal conditions, making the current rate of failure, largely caused by vandalism and illegal connections, highly unsustainable. This has created a widening gap between the escalating demand for materials and supply, resulting in delays in restoring certain outages across the city.

Across the SDCs, several prolonged outages continue to affect communities:

In Alexandra, particularly around 12th and 15th Avenue, City Power has been battling to restore supply to an outage that was reported a week ago, caused by weather-related faults and vandalism. The delay has been linked to the process of sourcing a new transformer, which is increasingly becoming difficult to procure under the current conditions. In the Hursthill, Mayfair, and Vrededorp areas, we have been encountering a high volume of calls linked to an outage caused by failed mini-substations and multiple cable faults. That outage had affected Pageview, Braamfontein Werf, and the surrounding areas. However, last night, the team finally managed to fully restore supply.

City Power has also reported challenges in the Inner City, particularly around the City & Suburban, Marshalltown, Denver, and Bruma. Those outages were caused by cable faults and vandalised high-voltage chambers. In Midrand, we also have some challenges, with multiple cable faults reported in Noordwyk and Country View. We have a case of stolen cables in the Lenasia area affecting Lawley, Olifantsvlei, and Ennerdale. Roodepoort remains under the most pressure, with 704 calls reported yesterday afternoon. Those outage queries are linked with multiple major cable faults, cable theft, and vandalised infrastructure in the Wilropark, Wilgeheuwel, Fleurhof, and Florida areas.

By the close of business on Thursday, 11 December 2025, City Power ended the day with thousands of open outage calls across the city, with a combined total of 3 358 open calls. SDCs such as Roodepoort, Hursthill, and the Inner City are carrying the highest load. This week, the outage queries have been averaging over 3000 daily, showing the pressures that we are currently under. The current conditions have also placed enormous strain on City Power's human resources. Technicians are working extended hours, attending to multiple faults with minimal rest, and responding to high-pressure environments daily. With the festive season approaching, some staff will require time to recharge and spend with their families, and this may worsen resource constraints.

To mitigate this, City Power has activated contingency plans, including reallocating teams from SDCs with fewer outages to those with higher pressures, such as Roodepoort, Hursthill, and Alexandra. This approach will ensure that no area is left unattended despite the strain.

"As the government of local unity, we acknowledge the difficulties that our residents are feeling during this period, and we wish to assure them that we are working around the clock to address these outages. The teams at City Power are working under challenging conditions, especially with the heavy rains, which sometimes lead to road closures and often disrupt technicians from carrying out tests and repairs that are crucial in restoring supply," said MMC.

While there is a temporary shortage of certain materials due to extraordinary demand, we assure customers that City Power has secured key equipment, including transformers and mini substations, to ensure that areas that have been battling prolonged outages are attended to urgently. However, the replenishment rate remains slower than the demand created by theft, vandalism, and illegal connections.

Furthermore, we are aware of the delays in the payment of contractors, which is adding more strain to the already limited resources. As the City, we would like to assure residents and contractors that we are working on resolving the payment issues.

The MMC has reiterated that in areas where fewer than 80% of customers are legally purchasing electricity, power supply will not be restored until compliance improves. Illegal connections are a direct threat to network stability and to the availability of critical materials needed across Johannesburg.

"We urge residents of the city to report illegal connections, cable theft, and vandalism on 011 490 7900/0800 002 587 to help support efforts to stabilise the electricity network during this high-pressure period," MMC said.

"We would also thank all residents for their patience and assure them that City Power teams continue to work around the clock to restore supply safely and efficiently," he concluded.

Issued by the Office of the MMC for Environment and Infrastructure Services
Cllr Jack Sekwaila.
