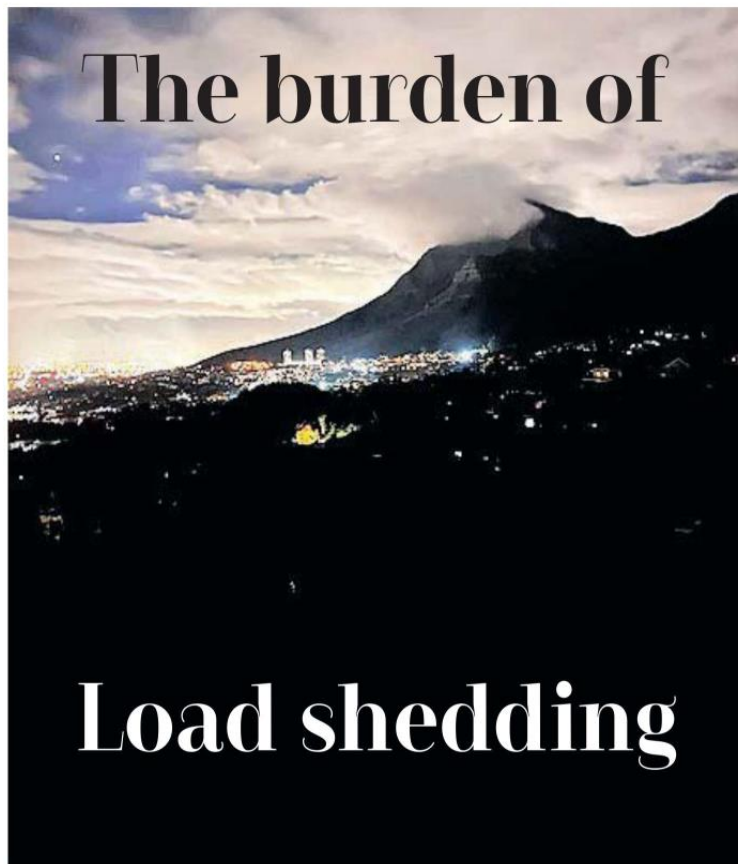




Publication: Weekend Argus (Saturday) - Main
Title: The burden of load shedding
Publish date: 24 Sep 2022
Page: 5

Reach: 33996
AVE: R 44230.45
Author: RIYADH KARODIA



PARTS of zone 7 in Cape Town remain lit in the distance while other parts are in darkness. | WILLIAM S GRIMES Facebook

Anger over parts of Cape Town being excluded from load shedding

RIYADH KARODIA
riyadh.karodia@fnl.co.za

FOLLOWING stages 5 and 6 of load shedding, questions have been raised about the exclusion of certain parts of Cape Town's City Bowl from rolling blackouts.

Social media was abuzz with queries and rants over the "unfairness" of certain areas remaining lit while others have experienced up to nine hours of darkness a day.

Some residents have accused the City of Cape Town of ignoring their queries in this regard. While some indicated that they were making light of this situation, others were angered.

"Shockingly, in both Vredehoek and Gardens, the areas around the nursing homes, are lit up, but the nursing homes are switched off," said Jackie Hayman, a resident who informed *Weekend Argus* of her concerns regarding the high health and safety risk of nursing homes receiving load shedding.

Francine Higham, councillor for ward 77, issued a statement to explain the circumstances that have led the City to keep the lights on in some areas.

"In most cases, the decision to keep certain substations on during load shedding is because the City is trying to reduce risks and avoid disasters," read Higham's statement.

"High density and high traffic areas, such as the CBD, for example, are less likely to get load shedding because we need to keep people moving quickly through these areas, and we need traffic lights to work.

"Some areas may not be high risk but don't get load shedding because they happen to be on the grid for a substation within an area that is high risk, and then they're just lucky."

Higham explained that parts of Tamboerskloof have recently been excluded from load shedding due to network upgrades taking place in the area.

Mayco member for energy, Beverley van Reenen, said that the City is guided by the national standards for load shedding referred to as Regulation NRS048-9, and takes into account safety of people, safety of the environment, and potential damage to plants associated with a critical national product, and technical constraints on executing load shedding.

"Parts of the CBD are excluded due to the volume of the population in the CBD at certain times – this is in line with the national requirements and also safety and health considerations," said van Reenen. "For instance, traffic congestion affecting commuters is considered."

Van Reenen said the City would also consider excluding an area from load shedding if it is prone to high levels of violent crime or gang activity.

"We have to see if it is technically possible (due to the way the grid is structured) and the broader implications that the exclusion will have for the whole city," she said.

"The City's Electricity Generation and Distribution Department also consults the metro police for their advice on an exclusion."

Van Reenen would not answer questions regarding whether the offi-

cial residences of the president, premier and mayor receive load shedding or if any gated estates within the City have been exempted.

"The City of Cape Town remains an area where all of its citizens are not treated as equal," said Sandra Dickson of Stop CoCT.

"When the load shedding schedule are drawn up, non-transparent decisions are made as to who is load shed and who is not. It is, therefore, of concern that the areas excluded from load shedding are not openly disclosed to the public. This leaves room for corruption and favouritism.

"Stop CoCT asked the City in the past to behave in a transparent manner, but time and time again, the City chooses to be opaque in implementing its policies. It is, therefore, the City's own doing that uncomfortable questions are asked and that there are fingers pointed around regarding which areas receive load shedding and which do not."

The Department of Public Works confirmed that the official residence of the president and all ministerial homes in Cape Town, as well as all three parliamentary villages do receive load shedding but could not comment on whether the official residences of the mayor of Cape Town and Premier Alan Winde were exempted from load shedding, as these are not managed by the department.

Higham admitted that this entire situation is unfair but blamed the national government for having not "managed Eskom in a way that ensured consistent and reliable electricity to all residents".