NAPTOSA NATIONAL NEWSFLASH 32

WORKERS CANNOT KEEP ABSORBING RISING LIVING COSTS

NAPTOSA rejects the proposed 8.83% average electricity price increase for Eskom direct customers for 2027/28, which would take effect on 1 April 2027 if approved. This follows increases of 12.74% in April 2025 and 8.76% in April 2026. Electricity is an essential service, and each increase leaves workers with less for food, transport, housing, education and healthcare.

A squeeze from every direction

- ***Fuel:*** Petrol is heading for a record high in October 2026, with late-September projections putting 95 octane petrol price within cents of R30 per litre (R26.92 in September). The new price takes effect on 7 October. Many educators commute long distances to rural and township schools with no alternative to driving.
- ***Interest rates:*** On 23 September, the Reserve Bank raised the repo rate by 25 basis points to 7.25%, taking prime to 10.75%. This is the second hike this year.
- ***Inflation:*** Higher fuel and electricity costs push up the price of food and everyday goods, eroding salaries that have not kept pace.

Impact on schools and learners

Schools must pay for electricity, placing the greatest burden on poorer communities. Every rand diverted to utilities is a rand not spent on learning materials and learner support. Rising costs also hit the families of our learners, affecting attendance, nutrition and learning outcomes.

Eskom's finances

NAPTOSA accepts that Eskom must be financially sustainable and keep the lights on. However, Eskom reported a R30.3 billion profit after tax for 2025/26, its second consecutive profitable year, plus R22.4 billion in savings and revenue contributions. This must be weighed against what households can bear. How much more can ordinary working people be expected to pay?

2 OCTOBER 2026

BL Manuel
Executive Director

SERVING EDUCATION SINCE 1887