

Cronin apologises to Lekota in Nkandla row

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DEPUTY Minister of Public Works Jeremy Cronin has apologised to COPE leader Mosiua Lekota for claiming that the security upgrading at President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla home was started under the former defence minister's watch.

"I am happy to apologise to him; it was wrong. It was in a draft

speech which I did not deliver. I was wrong on the department factor," said Cronin yesterday.

In a speech prepared for delivery in the National Assembly on Wednesday, Cronin claimed that the security assessments that led to the costly security upgrading at

Zuma's private homestead had been initiated by the Department of Defence when Lekota was its minister. He also said that Lekota had failed to amend the National Key Points Act, which the government has used to justify keeping secret details about Nkandla security.

But, when he spoke in the National Assembly, Cronin made no mention of either Lekota or the National Key Points Act.

Lekota said the act and the security arrangements were strictly the responsibility of the minister of police. He dismissed claims that

he was responsible for the Nkandla security work as "blue lies".

But Cronin said: "There was a time in 2004 when the National Key Points Act passed [across Lekota's] desk and he did not use the opportunity to ask if the act was still relevant."

● DA MP Anchen Dreyer said Cronin should "explain why he censored his own speech".