

■ PUBLIC WORKS

No decision on state-owned construction firm

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PUBLIC Works Minister Thulas Nxesi says the establishment of a state-owned construction company was not yet on the cards.

The priority for the Department of Public Works was to help the Property Management Trading Entity (PMTE) manage state properties optimally, and to leverage the portfolio for economic development, job creation and empowerment initiatives.

“Government has not, at this stage, come to a decision to establish an end-to-end, state-owned construction company.

“With the little technical capacity at our disposal, our priority is to facilitate programmes for training and employment (to get) the necessary skills and capacity to properly manage contracts with construction companies to ensure that the state and the public derive



Thulas Nxesi

value for money from projects commissioned by the government,” Nxesi said.

He was responding in a written reply to a parliamentary question from the EFF’s Leigh-Ann Mathys.

Mathys had wanted to know whether Nxesi had found an opportune moment for the government to establish a state-owned construction company, in light of President Cyril Ramaphosa’s focus on the stimulus

package for the country’s infrastructure development.

Nxesi said his department, through its Professional Services Branch and the Council for the Built Environment, was implementing programmes aimed at developing young professionals for the built environment industry.

“The stimulus package, if it were to focus on infrastructure development, would certainly contribute positively to creating the much-needed construction jobs, as well as opportunities for emerging black contractors and professionals,” he said.

In September, Ramaphosa announced what is now called the stimulus and recovery plan aimed at igniting economic activity and restoring investor confidence, among other things.

Nxesi said there was ongoing work in the department and the PMTE to address performance challenges, including by way of developing systems and controls.