



**The department of education says the establishment of an infrastructure unit will ease the department from non-teaching and learning pressures.**  
/ MDUDUZI NDZINGI

## Schools infrastructure body plan

### Angie feels more focus on learning, teaching needed

By **Zingisa Mvunvu**

Basic education minister Angie Motshekga has called for the establishment of an education infrastructure unit. The unit, she said, should be equivalent to the South African National Roads Agency (Sanral), and would be used to ease the department from non-teaching and learning pressures.

Motshekga was speaking during an ANC manifesto briefing on social infrastructure at Luthuli House in Johannesburg yesterday. She said it was high time that the department no longer played a central role in the implementation of school infrastructure, which would give it enough time to focus on its core mandate of learning and teaching.

According to Motshekga, giving the infrastructure responsibility to the department of public works had proved fruitless because when it failed to do its job “there are strange rules in government that you cannot take another department to court, even when public works fails me”.

Motshekga said a statutory body similar to Sanral would handle the responsibility of school infrastructure better, and

that she was planning to canvass her government colleagues in the cabinet about this.

“I had a meeting with education officials from provinces and we agreed we have a lot of ongoing challenges around infrastructure. Public works is our client, DBSA [Development Bank of Southern Africa] is our client and costs are very high,” said Motshekga.

“One of the proposals I still have to take to cabinet people is saying maybe we should start looking into an education infrastructure unit like Sanral exclusive for us and they can source out who implements on their own, but we must have that statutory body. It might cost a lot of money to set up another administration when there is public works already in existence, but it is something that we must debate.”

Motshekga said the department ought to play a minimal role only in planning infrastructure, but should not be involved in the implementation, which had many technicalities.

The minister said the proposed statutory body would “improve efficiency and manage costs” in the area of school infrastructure, which she said in the current form was a free-for-all.

Motshekga said different provinces currently spent different amounts for the same infrastructure. – TimesLIVE