

# Call for probe into mental hospital delays

**SANDI KWON HOO**

CHIEF REPORTER

THE NATIONAL Prosecuting Authority (NPA) has been requested to investigate the never-ending delays that are preventing the opening of the R2 billion Kimberley mental health hospital.

While the practical completion of the building was completed last year, after construction began in 2006, the facility remains shut and has been collecting dust.

Expenditure on the project has escalated to almost R2 billion from an initial R290 million.

Eyewitnesses who were recently on site stated that the garden was overgrown with weeds

and that recent rains had flooded the building.

“Contractors were called back to the site but many refused due to a history of non-payment.”

It is believed that a large sum of money is still owed to the contractors and sub-contractors.

Spokesperson for the NPA, Phaladi Shuping, said yesterday that an investigation that was conducted by the police had been handed over to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions for a decision to be made last week.

“There were some queries pertaining to the investigation and it was sent back to the police. We are not able to reveal who lodged the complaint as it might jeopardise the investigation,” said Shuping.

Spokesperson for the provincial Department of Roads and Public Works, Crystal Robertson, said the practical completion date for the mental health hospital was in June last year.

Spokesperson for the provincial Department of Health, Lulu Mxekezo, stated that the department would implement the commissioning process at the new mental health facility.

The MEC for Health, Fufe Makatong, had committed to announcing a date for the operationalisation of the mental facility by the end of February this year, but no specific date has been provided as yet.

The department had not indicated whether these funds have since been made accessible.