

**Parliamentary Budget Vote Debate 35**  
**Transport**  
**By**  
**Hon. KP Sithole, MP**

National Assembly: 5 May 2015

Honourable Chairperson

At the outset let me state that that the IFP supports Budget Vote 35.

Road Transport infrastructure in South Africa remains precarious at best with a recently advised total value of road maintenance backlogs being approximately R150-billion rand.

10% of all good roads in South Africa are mostly under SANRAL as our provinces do not have enough budget to conduct the required road maintenance and have therefore no other alternative but to turn to SANRAL for its E-tolled assistance. This all comes at the additional expense and payment of our road users.

E-Tolls must be scrapped! The South African public must not be held liable for the incompetence and ineptitude of government.

There are still too many deaths on our roads which can be avoided. Take the R573 for example, this is a notoriously well-known 'killer' road which requires urgent reconstruction. We only hope that 1.1 billion Rands allocated to it will not escalate as happened with the President's Nkandla road construction.

Our Rail infrastructure, which is one of our most important means of transport is old, in a state of great disrepair and near collapse. Yet the Minister has advised that government will invest billions of Rands in South Africa's transport infrastructure over the next three years in a bid to reduce road deaths and traffic congestion in the country. This needs greater impetus, minister.

Our ports require maintenance and constant dredging. Durban port authorities have confirmed recent incidents of grounding of ships in Durban harbour due to the movement of harbour bed material and inoperative port dredging vessels. This must not be allowed to occur as it is an additional unnecessary hindrance to economic growth by retarding the flow of goods in and out of one of this country's main ports.

South African Airways has failed this country and will continue to keep failing this country all at the expense of the taxpayer. The question is - When will government accept this fact and say enough is enough?

How many more times must we hear "just one more" bail-out; SAA can be turned around" – it cannot as long as it is not being run as a for profit business.

We are of the strong opinion that this parastatal should be sold and placed in private hands where it can be run as a for profit business and be subject to market constraints of supply and demand, competitors' and shareholders' oversight.

Taxi recapitalization has become synonymous with "daylight robbery" being perpetrated by the state against taxi business owners. A mere sum of R70 000,00 per taxi is nowhere near current market value of many of the vehicles and this must be urgently reviewed.

The aim of this programme was to encourage minibus taxi owners to sell their old and un-roadworthy vehicles and purchase new ones to improve the safety of their passengers, but due to lack of accounting and financial mismanagement by the department this programme is nowhere near completion and is wildly over budget.

The Department itself has many shortcomings which stem in part from its failure to fill vacant posts. Currently there approximately 200 vacant posts. When will these vacant posts be filled?

In conclusion, this Department has many challenges which must be overcome. The first step, Honourable Minister is to acknowledge those challenges and then work towards surmounting them.

The IFP looks forward to working together with you and your department in keeping transport in South Africa safe, reliable and well maintained.

I thank you.