###### National Assembly

###### Question Number: 2566

**Mr. T E Mulaudzi (EFF) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

Did (a) her department and/or (b) any entity reporting to her conduct feasibility studies on Vuwani Airport in Limpopo, which is not in operation and remains a white elephant; if not, (i) why not and (ii) who is responsible for the maintenance of the specified airport?

**Answer:**

1. The National Department of Transport has not conducted feasibility studies on Vuwani Airport in Limpopo.
2. The Limpopo Department of Transport has conducted a pre-feasibility study for the Vuwani/P.R. Mphephu Airport during 2010. The study was part of the Limpopo Airlift Strategy, with the purpose of providing direction and guidance for the development of aviation in the province. Five generic strategies were identified in determining the status of each of the airports considered at the time, as follows:

1. Grounded: Nothing should be done as there is no, or very little potential, now or in the future, for aviation development.

2. Delayed: The development of aviation will only take place in the long term and is awaiting other matters to be put in place.

3. Boarding: There is some market potential, which should be left to the market to action and develop.

4. Take-off: There is good market potential which would be picked up by the market with minimum intervention.

5. Catapulted Take-off: There is market potential, but the development of aviation will only take place with significant intervention from government.

The Vuwani/P.R Mphephu Airport fell within the third category. The Limpopo Department of Transport decided to wait a few years so that further analysis could be done on the Vuwani/P.R Mphephu Airport as well as the other public airports within the province. Such analysis will consider developments that are taking place at, amongst others, Lephalale, Musina and its SEZ status, and the Tubatse area.

The Limpopo Department of Transport is currently collaborating with the Department of Public Enterprises in determining if some of these airports can be re-commissioned and the extent of improvements that are required to enable re-commissioning.  The *Limpopo Aviation Technical Stream* has been established and various meetings have already been held. The Province is currently developing the *Terms of References* for the viability assessment, which should be conducted no later than the 2017/2018 financial year. This will provide an indication if P.R. Mphephu Airport will be viable and the costs associated with its re-commissioning, should the indication be positive. Other options will be explored depending on the outcome of the viability study.

1. (i) N/A
2. The airport is an asset of the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, although the buildings are utilised by the Limpopo Department of Transport. The Limpopo Department of Transport has not allocated any maintenance budget pending the outcome of the viability study.