

Precis of *Saturday Star* article headlined “R50bn road shock”, published 16 February 2008:

The South African Road Federation states that South Africa’s municipal and provincial roads infrastructure is in crisis because of poor maintenance, bad planning and a lack of professional engineers.

SARF executive director Malcolm Mitchell says the situation, which will cost tens of millions of rands to resolve, is comparable to the electricity crisis facing the country. This view is borne out by a senior Transport Department official, quoted anonymously by the *Saturday Star*.

Mitchell continues that bad roads are costing road users over R200-billion a year in costs due to road conditions and congestion. In addition, only R13-billion of the R43-billion in taxes paid by road users was earmarked for roads. Reinstating the road network to its condition of 15 years ago would require funding of R10-billion a year more than is presently allocated.

DA transport spokesperson Stuart Farrow says the country faces a backlog of repairs and maintenance work of up to R200-billion, even though Transport Minister Jeff Radebe pegged the backlog at more than R50-billion. The major concern is a lack of expertise to rescue the situation.

The Automobile Association, which in 2003 estimated that eliminating the roads backlog would cost R64-billion, agrees with the current R200-billion estimate. Spokesperson Gary Ronald says not even basic maintenance is being done.