

# Quest to make boys to men

## PROJECT AIMS TO DEVELOP AND EMPOWER CHILDREN

**Victor Mecoamere**

**ALL South Africans, particularly companies and organisations, are invited to support a youth development project aimed at recognising, acknowledging and empowering the boy child.**

It is known as Men in the Making. Nation-building partners are Tracker, *Sowetan* and Metro FM and the project is endorsed by the Department of Education.

Tracker corporate social investment and responsibility director Koos Radebe said: "We initiated Men in the Making to draw society's attention to the plight of developing boys and young men at high school and beyond."

The project also:

- Creates a platform for boys to find expression and meaning in their lives;
- Levels the playing fields for boys'

growth and advancement opportunities; and

- Corrects the distortion that it is cool to commit crime, erroneously believing that you are not a man until you have been to prison.

Radebe explained: "Men in the Making is a concept inspired by the realisation that the boy-child in South Africa is calling out for attention, help, recognition and acknowledgement as he grapples with the challenges of life and the suppression that he sometimes experiences as more and more focus and glamour is placed on girl children."

He said Tracker – in line with the company's mantra, "Taking Back Tomorrow", seeks to educate and positively impact on boy-children and to help them develop into South Africa's future leaders.

Radebe said it was hoped Men in the Making would establish a long-lasting partnership with corporate



**BOY POWER: Young boys deserve nurturing to help them towards meaningful leadership roles in society.**

South Africa "as we drive this initiative together and we also hope to build a powerful private-public partnership with the government to ensure the project is supported throughout the country".

Men in the Making will be rolled out countrywide on March 25 when company heads, managers and other key representatives will host high school boys in Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12, conduct tours, highlight career options and hold impromptu motivational and mentoring ses-

sions.

In its first year, 32 companies hosted 500 boys. Radebe said the Men in the Making partners hoped that more companies will support the initiative this year.

"We also hope that the boys we are targeting will embrace this concept and allow it to change their lives in a positive manner," Radebe said.

"Also to establish a lasting partnership with corporate South Africa as we drive this initiative

together, build a powerful private-public partnership, especially with the government and the education authorities, which is all aimed at ensuring that Men in the Making is supported equally in all the provinces."

Radebe said it was also hoped that the boys would impress participating companies and organisations' leaders, which will lead to the awarding of bursaries, scholarships and future job opportunities.