



# NEWSLETTER

## Heritage in Action

Showcasing SAHRA's Impact in Conservation and Protection

1

### ABOUT SAHRA

SAHRA is a statutory organisation established under the National Heritage Resources Act, No 25 of 1999, as the national administrative body responsible for the protection of South Africa's cultural heritage.

### THE ROLES OF SAHRA

SAHRA is responsible for identifying, recording, and managing South Africa's heritage resources. It provides expert advice to all levels of government, ensures compliance with national heritage standards, and promotes an integrated approach to heritage management. SAHRA also works to raise public awareness and appreciation of the national estate.

### OUR MANDATE

South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) is a statutory organisation established under the National Heritage Resources Act, No 25 of 1999, as the national administrative body responsible for the protection of South Africa's cultural heritage. SAHRA, as an Agency of the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), has been tasked to manage and implement the National Heritage Resources Act (NHLA) of 1999.

### Empowering Communities

The National Heritage Resources Act promotes the management of heritage resources at local and provincial levels, ensuring decision-making is rooted in the communities they affect. It encourages public involvement through education, training, and the recording of living heritage and oral history.

By sharing this information, SAHRA aims to raise awareness of the public's right to protect heritage resources they value and to highlight the opportunities the Act provides for inclusive heritage conservation.

### Our Responsibility

- **IDENTITY**
- **PROTECT**
- **CONSERVE**
- **PROMOTE**



# Heritage Month Webinar

Celebrate Culture. Embrace Unity. Honour Heritage

2

## Day 1: Heritage at Risk

### The Climate Crisis and Our Cultural Legacy

South Africa's heritage is increasingly under threat from the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, extreme weather, and desertification. Day 1 will unpack the science and lived realities of climate-induced risks to both tangible and intangible heritage across the country. Experts will share insights on vulnerability assessments, site mapping, and case studies from coastal, rural, and urban contexts. This day sets the stage for understanding why urgent climate action is critical for safeguarding our cultural legacy.



## Day 3: Restitution of Cultural Property

SAHRA is proud to host a G20-focused webinar on the Restitution of Cultural Property, bringing together global voices to explore pathways for the return, protection, and circulation of cultural heritage. This dialogue will reflect on international best practices, highlight Africa's experiences in restitution, and consider how G20 collaboration can strengthen policy, diplomacy, and ethical stewardship.

By engaging experts, governments, and heritage practitioners, the webinar seeks to advance a shared commitment to justice, reconciliation, and sustainable cultural heritage management.

## Day 2: Disaster Risk Management in the Heritage Sector

### From Policy to Practice

Effective disaster preparedness is key to protecting heritage in a time of increasing climate volatility. Day 2 will focus on how South Africa's heritage institutions, local governments, and communities are integrating heritage protection into disaster risk reduction frameworks. Presentations will explore emergency planning, legislative gaps, inter-agency coordination, and recovery strategies following recent floods, fires, and other natural disasters.

The day offers a platform for strengthening policy, planning, and practical responses.

## Day 4: Innovating for Resilience Sustainable Solutions for Heritage Futures

As we look to the future, innovation and sustainability must guide how we protect heritage. Day 4 will explore cutting-edge tools and solutions from digital preservation and smart monitoring systems to green materials and sustainable conservation practices. The programme will also examine funding models and strategic partnerships that can enable long-term resilience. This closing day offers a forward-looking vision of how the heritage sector can adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world.



TIME  
09:30 – 13:30  
DATE  
16-19 September 2025  
VENUE  
Microsoft Teams

## INVITATION!

### HERITAGE MONTH WEBINAR

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) is pleased to extend an invitation to our Annual Heritage Month Webinar, a significant event on our calendar that celebrates and critically examines the preservation of South Africa's diverse heritage. This year's webinar, held under the theme "Resilient Heritage: Safeguarding South Africa's Legacy in a Changing Climate," will take place over four days in a fully virtual format. The programme is thoughtfully aligned with the broader G20 theme of Climate Change and Resilience, reflecting our commitment to engaging with global conversations on sustainability, climate adaptation, and cultural preservation.



#G20South Africa | www.g20.org.za



SOUTH AFRICA 2025

# Dubai Expo 2020

Connecting Minds Creating Future

3

## Programme Highlights

**October 2021:** The Pavilion launch highlighted South Africa's rich cultural tapestry, featuring performances and exhibitions that reflected our nation's diversity.

**December 2021:** Sport and Tourism Month will spotlight the excitement and economic impact of these sectors, while also addressing issues of diversity and inclusion.

**March 2022:** National/Honour Day will feature a cultural programme telling the story of South Africa's journey to liberation and beyond. Due to budget constraints, DSAC will provide expert input rather than lead this event.



Team South Africa's efforts are coordinated by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), with support from Brand SA, Government Communications and Information Systems (GCIS), the SA Embassy in the UAE, and other partners. DSAC worked closely with institutions such as the State Theatre, South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA), Freedom Park, National Heritage Council (NHC), National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), and Ditsong Museum. This collaborative approach helped reduce costs and ensured a high-quality, authentic programme.



South Africa's presence at Expo 2020 Dubai has not only strengthened our global connections but also reaffirmed our position as a vibrant, resilient, and forward-looking nation.

South Africa has been an active participant at Expo 2020 Dubai, which runs from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 under the theme "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future." This global event has offered a unique platform for nations to reconnect, share ideas, and collaborate on building a sustainable future especially in light of the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) was entrusted with leading South Africa's October programme, focusing on the launch of the South African Pavilion. This initiative introduced visitors to our country's vibrant identity through a celebration of culture, heritage, and creativity. The Pavilion's opening marked the start of a six-month showcase, positioning South Africa as a destination of choice for investment, tourism, sports, and the creative industries.

The SA Pavilion, located in the Opportunity District, also houses a Newzroom Afrika TV studio, which has extended the Pavilion's reach across Africa, including countries like Namibia, Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. This has significantly increased the Pavilion's visibility and impact.

The October programme was a resounding success, with daily visitor numbers rising from 400 to over 6,000. The Pavilion welcomed a diverse audience, from business leaders to families, all eager to experience South Africa's unique culture and explore opportunities for partnership and leisure. Over 200 artists from all nine provinces were given a platform to showcase their talents across music, dance, poetry, theatre, film, design, fine arts, and fashion. Importantly, this initiative also formed part of DSAC's Covid-19 Relief Plan, providing much-needed support to the creative sector.



### INVITATION

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

requests the pleasure of your company at the

OPENING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PAVILION

AT THE DUBAI EXPO 2020

Date: Friday, 1 October 2021

Venue: The South African Pavilion

Time: 12:00

Dress code: Traditional Wear / Dark Suit

RSVP by Wednesday, 29 September 2021 to  
Ms Aisha Mohamed Aliy on [Muhammad-Aliy@dsac.gov.za](mailto:Muhammad-Aliy@dsac.gov.za) and  
Ms Yvonne Tamboza on [tradmissions@ihsa.dha.ae](mailto:tradmissions@ihsa.dha.ae)



# EKHAYA 2024

Olympics and Paralympic Games in Paris

4



## Showcasing South African Heritage

At the Paris 2024 Olympics and Paralympics, our team was dedicated to promoting South Africa's national and world heritage on a global stage. Through collaboration and creativity, we delivered a dynamic experience for both international visitors and the local Parisian community.

### Graphic Design & Branding:

The designers created visually compelling flyers, posters, and digital graphics for daily events, maintaining brand consistency and ensuring all materials reflected South African cultural themes.

### Digital Communication:

They developed and managed user-friendly landing pages with real-time event schedules, making it easy for visitors to access up-to-date information and plan their experience at Ekhaya.

### Audio & Visual Management:

The team oversaw internal audio systems and coordinated screen displays, ensuring clear communication and effective promotion of events throughout the venue.

### Collaboration & Teamwork:

Daily briefings and open communication allowed them to share ideas, allocate tasks based on individual strengths, and maximize our collective impact. This collaborative approach fostered creativity and ensured the success of their promotional efforts.

### Community Engagement:

Through cultural exchange programs and targeted social media campaigns, we invited local Parisians to Ekhaya, resulting in increased participation and meaningful cultural connections.

## The Key Initiatives

### Heritage Site Promotion:

The team researched and curated digital content highlighting South Africa's most significant heritage sites.

By producing a series of short, engaging videos, they brought attention to our country's cultural landmarks, natural wonders, and historical locations, ensuring these stories resonated with a diverse audience.

### Ekhaya Event Coverage:

At Ekhaya, the South African House in Paris, the team documented daily activities, cultural performances, workshops, and exhibitions. They compiled highlight reels and event videos, sharing them across social media platforms to broaden their reach and foster a sense of community among attendees.

## JAMALI ALL GIRLS GROUP



## CLOSING EVENT



## Impact

The team's efforts at Paris 2024 not only showcased South Africa's heritage and culture to a global audience but also strengthened community ties and enhanced the visitor experience at Ekhaya. The experience deepened our appreciation for cultural exchange and highlighted the power of teamwork in delivering impactful results.

# Project: Know Your Heritage

Exploring SAHRA's Legacy: A Journey Through National Heritage Sites

5

## Know Your Heritage: A Visual Journey

The "Know Your Heritage" Project Series is a curated collection of educational video content that highlights various National Heritage Sites recognized and protected by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). Each episode in the series is dedicated to a specific site, offering viewers a visually engaging and informative exploration of its historical, cultural, and architectural significance.

The primary aim of the series is to raise awareness about the rich and diverse heritage of South Africa by showcasing the unique stories, features, and importance of these sites. Through immersive visuals and narrative storytelling, the videos provide audiences with a virtual experience of what each site looks like, its historical background, and why it holds national value.

In addition to promoting cultural appreciation, the series serves as an educational resource for learners, educators, and the general public. It supports heritage education by making information about these sites accessible and engaging, encouraging a deeper understanding of South Africa's past and the preservation of its legacy for future generations.



WONDERWERK CAVE

## Preserving Cultural Identity

Heritage sites are physical representations of a nation's history, traditions, and values. By advertising them, we help communities reconnect with their roots and foster a sense of pride and identity. This is especially vital in a diverse country like South Africa, where each site tells a unique story of struggle, resilience, and cultural evolution.

## Promoting Conservation and Protection

When people understand the value of heritage sites, they are more likely to support efforts to preserve and protect them. Advertising raises awareness about the threats these sites face whether from neglect, development, or climate change and encourages responsible stewardship.



Dive into South Africa's heritage!  
Watch the Know Your Heritage Series on YouTube and uncover the stories behind our National Heritage Sites.



## SUBSCRIBE TO OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

## Educating the Public

Many people, especially younger generations, may not be aware of the significance of these sites. Promoting them through videos and campaigns makes history accessible and engaging. It turns passive learning into active exploration, helping viewers understand the context, people, and events that shaped the nation..

## Encouraging Tourism and Economic Growth

Heritage tourism is a powerful economic driver. By showcasing these sites, we attract both local and international visitors, which supports surrounding communities, creates jobs, and stimulates local businesses. Well-promoted heritage sites can become iconic destinations that contribute to sustainable tourism.

## Fostering Unity and Dialogue

Heritage sites often reflect complex histories, including painful chapters. Promoting them can open up conversations about reconciliation, healing, and shared history. It's a way to acknowledge the past while building a more inclusive future.

**#Project:  
Know Your Heritage**

# Built Environment Unit:

Stewarding South Africa's Iconic Sites

6

## Heritage Agreements: Protecting the Past, Legally and Logistically

One of the most powerful tools in SAHRA's conservation toolkit is the Heritage Agreement (HA) a formal commitment that aligns property users and owners with national heritage standards. Throughout the year, BEU, in close collaboration with the Heritage Protection Unit (HPU), promoted the adoption of HAs as a mechanism to ensure both compliance and collaboration.

A major milestone was achieved when the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (NDPWI) agreed to enter into a Heritage Agreement for the Parliament Precinct. Severely impacted by the fire of January 2022, the precinct designated a national key point presents complex stewardship challenges. This agreement will help clarify responsibilities, manage multiple stakeholders, and ensure heritage-sensitive reconstruction and conservation.

## Strengthening Institutional Partnerships

BEU played a pivotal role in reactivating key relationships with major institutions:

Engagements at the Union Buildings with the Presidency strengthened SAHRA's standing at the highest level of government.

Re-established connections at Constitution Hill and Liliesleaf Farm, with support from Gauteng-based colleagues, helped position SAHRA more firmly in the management of Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites.

These engagements are part of a broader push to secure Heritage Agreements with Management Authorities of National and World Heritage Sites ensuring consistent standards and coordinated preservation efforts.

## Educating the Next Generation of Heritage Leaders

SAHRA continues to invest in future custodians of heritage. BEU collaborated with the Policy and Skills Development Unit (PSD) and HRM to deliver lectures to UCT Archaeology Honours students, capped off with an inspirational visit to Robben Island Museum (RIM). These educational touchpoints reinforce SAHRA's authority and help embed national heritage values within academic programs.

In addition, BEU contributed its expertise to the review of RIM's Integrated Disaster Risk Management Plan (2025–2030) helping safeguard the long-term resilience of this globally significant site.

Behind every landmark is a legacy and the Built Environment Unit (BEU) ensures that South Africa's most important built heritage is not only protected but activated as a living part of our national story. The 2024/25 financial year saw BEU at the forefront of safeguarding architectural heritage, building institutional partnerships, and reaffirming SAHRA's mandate in some of the country's most symbolically charged spaces.

## On the Ground: Inspections, Interventions, and Integrity

In the field, BEU conducted multiple site inspections and monitoring exercises, including joint missions with the Archaeology, Paleontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit in the Free State. These strategic collaborations allowed SAHRA to optimize resource use and widen its oversight reach. Each visit deepens our understanding of the challenges facing heritage infrastructure and informs future interventions.

## Everyday Excellence: Permitting, Policy, and Public Interface

Behind every listed building, excavation, or restoration, BEU is working diligently:

Issued several permits, cover letters, and formal comments on heritage applications.

Temporarily suspended a permit at Robben Island in response to evolving project parameters demonstrating flexibility and regulatory integrity.

Took corrective action to withdraw and revise a Government Gazette entry for Bo-Kaap, reaffirming SAHRA's statutory authority and commitment to precision.

## Built Heritage, Shared Responsibility

Our cities and cultural landmarks tell a complex, contested, and ultimately shared story. Through policy, partnership, and professional rigor, the Built Environment Unit ensures these narratives remain intact for generations to come.

With your support, SAHRA can continue protecting these historic spaces, transforming heritage sites into points of pride, platforms for learning, and symbols of unity.



# Heritage Objects Unit:

Safeguarding Our Tangible Treasures

7

## Permit Management & Innovative Solutions

This quarter, the unit maintained efficient and reliable processing of permit applications, supported by robust procedures.

A unique case required the creation of a new permit form, prompting a site visit to directly engage with the applicant and assess the artefact involved, demonstrating the unit's proactive and adaptable approach.

## Nelson Mandela Declaration & Public Engagement

In a significant collaborative effort with the **Nelson Mandela Foundation**, the unit advanced the ongoing investigation into the **Nelson Mandela** declaration. A newsletter was published inviting public input, which, although generating limited responses, highlighted the need to revisit and improve the declaration process to better reflect heritage values.

The Heritage Objects Unit (HOU) continues to uphold its commitment to the careful management and protection of South Africa's invaluable heritage artefacts, ensuring that every object's story is preserved for generations to come.



## Collaborative Efforts & Community Engagement

Representing SAHRA at the inaugural **NALEH workshop** in February 2025, the unit was entrusted with developing a plan for an upcoming in-person workshop, emphasizing its role in heritage conservation leadership. The unit also actively participated in cross-unit meetings, contributing to key heritage projects such as the **Duncan Village Massacre memorial restoration** and dialogues concerning the repatriation of **Zimbabwean artefacts**.

An officer from the unit strengthened ties within the heritage conservation community by attending the "**Coffee, Croissants, and Conservation**" event, fostering valuable networks.



## Upcoming Highlights: Return of Irma Stern's Artwork

Preparations are well underway for the highly anticipated return of **Irma Stern's Arab Priest** painting, expected in 2025. The unit is spearheading plans for a grand launch during **Heritage Month** in September, celebrating the restoration and repatriation of this iconic artwork to South Africa.

## Protecting Heritage, Connecting Communities

The Heritage Objects Unit exemplifies SAHRA's dedication to preserving South Africa's material culture by efficiently managing heritage permits, fostering collaboration, and facilitating the return of priceless artefacts. Through these efforts, the unit ensures that our tangible heritage remains a vibrant part of the national narrative.

# Communications and Marketing Unit:

Amplifying SAHRA's Voice Across the Nation

8

## Celebrating 30 Years of Democracy: The Road to Democracy Seminar

On 31 May and 1 June 2024, SAHRA hosted a two-day seminar at Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, to commemorate three decades of democracy in South Africa. The event provided a reflective space for national dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and celebration. The SAHRA Media Team traveled from Cape Town to document and live-stream the seminar, ensuring the public could engage with this historic moment.

### Why It Matters:

This event not only marked a milestone in the country's democratic history but reinforced SAHRA's commitment to preserving the memory of South Africa's socio-political evolution. The Media Team's coverage broadened public access, making the discourse around democracy and heritage more inclusive and nationally resonant.

## Sakhumzi: Reaching for Success Documentary

Between 3 and 16 August 2024, the SAHRA Media Team filmed a documentary across Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Eastern Cape titled Sakhumzi: Reaching for Success, in partnership with DSAC.

The film highlights the story of the iconic Sakhumzi Restaurant on Vilakazi Street and explores the link between heritage, tourism, and township economic development in the democratic era.

### Why It Matters:

The documentary showcases how heritage can serve as a catalyst for entrepreneurship and local economic empowerment. It emphasizes the importance of protecting township heritage while promoting sustainable tourism models that honour history and foster community upliftment.

## Indigenous Heritage: Ministerial Meeting with Khoi and San Leaders

On 19 October 2024, the SAHRA Media Team was commissioned by DSAC to film a ministerial meeting led by Minister Gayton McKenzie with Khoi and San leaders in Cape Town. The meeting focused on recognition, unity, and the preservation of Khoi and San cultural identity, including language, traditions, and leadership structures.

### Why It Matters:

This engagement forms part of a larger, long-overdue effort to include historically marginalised indigenous communities in national heritage discourse and policy. Documenting this dialogue ensures the visibility of these communities and supports their continued cultural revitalisation and political inclusion.

The Communications and Marketing Unit is central to advancing SAHRA's mandate to promote heritage to the South African public. By documenting and disseminating SAHRA's work, the unit ensures that the agency's efforts in preserving and celebrating national heritage are visible, accessible, and well understood. Beyond its core responsibilities, the unit plays a broader, often ad hoc role in supporting the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture SAHRA's principal by assisting with national projects that promote heritage awareness and foster a shared sense of identity and history across the country. Through strategic media initiatives and public engagement, the unit helps shape meaningful narratives around South Africa's heritage in contemporary society.



UNION BUILDINGS VENDOR

## Exile Repatriation and Exhumation Project: Honouring Struggle Veterans

In partnership with DSAC, SAHRA undertook the Exile Repatriation and Exhumation Project, returning the remains of 49 South African struggle heroes from Zambia and Zimbabwe. The SAHRA Media Team documented the exhumations, arrival ceremonies, and reburials, and live-streamed the national Homecoming Ceremony held at Freedom Park on 27 September 2024. A documentary capturing this historic process is in development.

### Why It Matters:

This initiative dignifies the memory of liberation veterans who died in exile and brings national closure to families and communities. The Media Team's work ensures this act of remembrance is preserved as part of the national story, offering future generations a visual archive of justice, remembrance, and healing.

## Telling South Africa's Story: One Frame at a Time

Each project led or supported by the Communications and Marketing Unit strengthens public engagement with heritage and history. Through these narratives, SAHRA continues to ensure that heritage is not only preserved, but powerfully told and deeply felt.

# Heritage Protection Unit:

Safeguarding Our Legacy

9



## Strengthening National Memory Through Declarations & Protection

**Provisional Protection for Thyspunt Cultural Landscape:** A landmark intervention in Quarter 2 and again in Quarter 4, HPU's efforts ensured the safeguarding of one of South Africa's most sensitive cultural landscapes. This was further bolstered by the official publication of protections and strategic stakeholder engagement across national and local levels.

**Bo-Kaap Corrections Published:** A previously undetected error in the declaration of the Rose Street Stable was professionally resolved with the City of Cape Town an example of SAHRA's precision and accountability.

**Responding to Urgent Threats:** When the Tarka Post National Monuments Plaque surfaced in an online auction, HPU acted swiftly to recover and restore it demonstrating vigilance and action in the face of heritage exploitation.

## Educating the Next Generation of Heritage Stewards

**HPU's knowledge-sharing efforts reached both professional and academic communities**

Delivered tailored training on Grading and Declaration (G&D) processes to new staff within SAHRA and the Built Environment Unit.

Engaged UCT's Built Environment and Archaeology Honours students on the Thematic Framework, District Six's historical narratives, and site-based learning including a field trip to Robben Island.

Shared G&D strategies with stakeholders such as the Cape Minstrels Task Team, reinforcing participatory heritage management.

As the custodians of South Africa's heritage, the Heritage Protection Unit (HPU) stood at the forefront of preserving the nation's irreplaceable cultural and historical assets throughout the 2024/25 financial year. With over 40 high-impact engagements across the country and internationally, HPU's work demonstrated SAHRA's deep commitment to its mandate to conserve, protect, and promote South African heritage.

## Strengthening National Memory Through Declarations & Protection

**Agency Agreements to Fill PHRA Gaps:** In provinces where Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities are underperforming, SAHRA stepped in to bridge the protection vacuum through proposed Agency Agreements ensuring no heritage is left vulnerable due to bureaucratic limitations.

**Input into UNESCO and World Heritage Processes:** SAHRA contributed meaningfully to UNESCO sessions and the World Heritage Committee's conservation mandates, supporting nominations such as the "Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour" and key Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites.

**Expanded Support for Heritage Routes:** From the Cape Minstrels Route to the Bleek & Lloyd Collection, HPU offered technical guidance, nomination support, and evaluation services, solidifying SAHRA's leadership in resource assessment.

## Engaging Municipalities and Communities

**From Soweto to the Eastern Cape, HPU worked hand-in-hand with local authorities, communities, and civic leaders:**

Partnered with the Mgijima Local Municipality to map graves of fallen heroes laying groundwork for honoring South Africa's spiritual and resistance histories. Hosted community dialogues with the Amathole District, Nqushwa Municipality, and Groot Constantia to promote municipal participation in heritage conservation. Participated in planning the 190th celebration of the Mqwashu Milkwood Tree, emphasizing heritage as a community anchor.

## Why It Matters:

Behind every monument saved, plaque recovered, or policy amended is the tireless work of heritage professionals and the vision of a South Africa where our shared history is preserved for generations to come.

But none of this is possible without sustained support. Your partnership helps SAHRA keep heritage alive through education, advocacy, strategic protection, and national leadership. The work continues and we invite you to be part of it.

## Elevating South Africa's Heritage Story

HPU's work reached global audiences with a feature interview in the New York Times, offering international readers a closer look at SAHRA's mission and vision in action.

# National Inventory Unit

Mapping Memory, Preserving Identity

10

In a fast-evolving heritage landscape, data is power and the National Inventory Unit (NIU) continued to drive transformation by anchoring our past to powerful systems that ensure nothing is lost, overlooked, or unprotected.

Throughout the 2024/25 financial year, the NIU laid critical foundations for long-term heritage preservation, digital access, and cross-border collaboration.



## Supporting Fieldwork and On-the-Ground Surveys

Hands-on contribution is part of NIU's DNA. The unit supported fieldwork in the Thyspunt Cultural Landscape, collaborating with the Archaeology and Paleontology Management Unit. NIU staff provided GPS mapping, photographic documentation, and inventory collation strengthening the national record while building team capacity through practical training.

## Driving Sector-wide Collaboration

Throughout the year, NIU played a key role in national heritage development:

Co-hosted and presented at the 2024 ASAPA Conference, sharing insights and innovations with industry peers.

Delivered training to the new DCAS Western Cape Museums Service Collections Manager and interns, reinforcing SAHRA's leadership in building institutional heritage capacity.

## Building the Future of Heritage, Byte by Byte

In a world increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure, SAHRA's ability to protect heritage depends not just on monuments but on metadata, maps, and mobile tools. Through the tireless work of the National Inventory Unit, South Africa's heritage is not only preserved, but made future-proof.

We invite you to support this critical work help us expand our systems, complete our surveys, and ensure that every part of our diverse and complex heritage is known, recorded, and honored.

## Expanding the National Heritage Database

At the heart of NIU's mission lies the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) the digital backbone of the country's heritage resource management.

Over the past year, NIU not only strengthened technical support for SAHRIS but introduced key system upgrades to improve functionality, data accuracy, and user accessibility.

**Moveable Heritage Expansion:** Through major bulk uploads from institutions like the Beaufort West Museum and Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, the inventory of moveable heritage objects grew by an impressive 23.3%, ensuring that valuable collections are digitally recorded, recognized, and accessible for future generations.

**Onboarding Heritage Western Cape (HWC):** The unit prepared to integrate HWC applications onto SAHRIS an important step toward national interoperability and provincial consistency in heritage management.

## Charting Heritage Routes: National and Regional

The Route Map Interface, functionally complete since 2022/23, saw progress in data rationalization this year preparing it for broader stakeholder input. Once DSAC provides the remaining data, this tool will serve as a vital resource in understanding and promoting heritage corridors across South Africa.

NIU also laid the groundwork for the Survey & Mapping of Liberation Heritage Resources in the SADC Region, procuring critical GPS and photographic capture equipment. This cross-border heritage effort promises to link liberation histories across Southern Africa in ways never before mapped.

## Strengthening Systems Through Policy and Procurement

**Behind the scenes, NIU ensured sustainable growth by:** Drafting a consolidated Section 39.7 Report covering two financial years enhancing reporting efficiency and historical continuity.

Submitting procurement bids for ongoing SAHRIS development and maintenance post-September 2024, ensuring uninterrupted access to this nationally critical platform.

Advancing recruitment and system capability for future regional projects, such as the SADC Heritage Survey.

# Archeology, Paleontology and Meteorites and Maritime, Underwater and Cultural Heritage Unit:

Protecting Our Stories from Earth and Sea

11



## Going Beyond the Plan: Strategic Site Visits

**In the last quarter of 2024/25, the APM and MUCH Units extended their reach beyond planned activities, conducting vital site visits to safeguard threatened heritage assets:**

**University of Fort Hare:** The units collaborated to assess an archaeological collection not yet curated by the university. Discussions with the National Inventory Unit (NIU) explored including this collection in SAHRA's national audit, ensuring its preservation and recognition within the national heritage framework.

**East London Museum & Volo Shipwreck:** The team inspected the **Volo shipwreck** near Kenton-on-Sea and toured the East London Museum's extensive maritime collection, strengthening partnerships and expanding knowledge of South Africa's underwater heritage.

**Kathu Archaeological Complex:** At this Grade 1 site in the Northern Cape renowned for its Early Stone Age significance the units assessed damage caused by natural sinkholes and fires. Collaboration with fire experts from Gamagara Fire Department underscored SAHRA's commitment to protecting vulnerable heritage sites from environmental threats.

**Barkley West Bridge Tollhouse:** This provincial heritage site was inspected due to concerns over its deteriorating condition, highlighting the ongoing need for conservation action.

**Pietermaritzburg Shipwreck:** As part of their operational plan, the unit conducted a thorough inspection of the wreck site, ensuring appropriate management measures are in place.

**Gats River Palaeontological Site:** Marking a major milestone, this site was successfully declared a national heritage site, further cementing SAHRA's role in preserving South Africa's prehistoric treasures.

The combined efforts of SAHRA's Archaeology, Paleontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit and the Maritime, Underwater and Cultural Heritage (MUCH) Unit are crucial to uncovering, safeguarding, and promoting South Africa's rich and diverse heritage both on land and beneath the waves.

## Facilitating Research & Access: Permit Processing

During this period, the units processed 12 permits, supporting vital research and conservation activities while maintaining rigorous oversight to protect heritage resources.

## Preserving Heritage Across Time and Terrain

Through proactive site visits, collaborative research, and meticulous management, the APM and MUCH Units ensure South Africa's archaeological, paleontological, and maritime heritage remains protected, accessible, and celebrated for generations to come.



*Investing in this work safeguards not only artifacts and sites but the stories that shape our nation's identity.*



# Burial Grounds and Graves Unit:

Honoring Our Heritage and Heroes

12

The Burial Grounds and Graves (BGG) Unit continues its vital work in safeguarding South Africa's sacred memorial sites, graves, and heritage landscapes, ensuring the dignity and remembrance of those who shaped our history.

## Assessments & Site Management

BGG conducted numerous assessments to monitor the condition and security of heritage graves and memorials, including:

The gravesites of **Moses Kotane**, **Robert Sobukwe** (following vandalism concerns), and **Steve Biko**.

Memorial sites at **Harry Gwala National Heritage Site**, **Oliver Reginald Tambo Memorial Garden**, and three concentration camps in **Mafeking**, **Magogwe**, and **Vryburg**.

Completion of the rehabilitation of **249 graves at the Polokwane Concentration Camp** in June 2024.

## Recent Developments & International Benchmarking

In early 2025, the unit remained deeply involved in national heritage efforts:

Continuing coordination with DSAC and local authorities on the **Duncan Village Massacre Memorial** project.

Site assessments at **Manyeding Village's unmarked historical mass grave**, and discussions with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development on grave management processes.

Assessments at various memorial and heritage sites including **Maitland Cemetery**, **Kimberley Concentration Camp**, and the **Kgoshi Mampuru statue** in Limpopo.

International benchmarking visits to memorial sites in **Ghana**, **Belgium**, **Azerbaijan**, and **Namibia** to guide the creation of a Heroes Acre in South Africa.

## Key Engagements & Memorial Projects

Throughout the reporting period, the BGG Unit actively engaged with diverse stakeholders, progressing multiple important heritage projects:

In May and June 2024, discussions with the **United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA)** and the **Steve Biko Foundation (SBF)** focused on the protection and fencing of significant heritage sites such as the **Chief Albert Luthuli Memorial, Grave, and Church** and the **Steve Biko Gravesite in King William's Town**.

Early collaboration with the **Greater Kokstad Local Municipality** initiated groundwork for the **Chief Adam Kok III Project**, with rehabilitation efforts underway.

The **Alexander Park Concentration Camp** rehabilitation progressed through site visits and virtual meetings involving provincial heritage authorities and local municipalities, ensuring the preservation of this historically significant site.

The unit coordinated key **Project Steering Committee** meetings for the **Duncan Village Massacre Memorial**, bringing together national and local government, heritage bodies, and community representatives to guide this sensitive memorialization process.

## Memorial Construction Progress & Permit Issuance

Significant progress was made on the **Chief Adam Kok III** and **Steve Biko Gravesite** memorial constructions, both targeted for completion by mid-2025. The unit also issued one permit during this period, supporting heritage preservation activities.



## Preserving Memory, Respecting Legacy

The Burial Grounds and Graves Unit plays a crucial role in honoring South Africa's history by protecting burial sites and memorials that hold deep cultural and historical significance. Through careful management, stakeholder collaboration, and sensitive memorialization, the unit ensures that the stories and sacrifices of our heroes and communities continue to inspire future generations.

# Policy and Skills Development Unit:

Guiding the Future of Heritage Management

13

Behind every impactful heritage intervention is a strong policy framework and a skilled team. The Policy and Skills Development (PSD) Unit plays a vital role in shaping SAHRA's strategic direction, creating regulatory clarity, and building institutional capacity across the heritage sector.

## Policy Innovation: From GIS to Permitting Reforms

PSD's mission is to ensure SAHRA remains adaptive, transparent, and legally grounded. In August, the team conducted its first formal policy development engagement with the National Inventory Unit (NIU), focusing on a new Geographic Information System (GIS) policy. The framework received positive feedback, setting the stage for a robust policy that will enhance management of the national estate inventory.

### Further policy advancements came in Q4:

February 2025 saw an internal permitting workshop, unveiling a revised SAHRA Schedule of Fees (pending gazetting) and a new Policy on Consultation, which clarifies external expert involvement in permitting processes.

The workshop also introduced Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for permit applications, aiming to standardize assessments, mitigate appeals, and protect SAHRA's institutional credibility.

A follow-up workshop in March addressed Burial Grounds and Graves regulations, reinforcing SAHRA's commitment to culturally sensitive and legally sound practices.

The review of SAHRA's 2005 Permit Regulations is now underway, with implementation of key recommendations set for the next operational cycle.

## National Engagement: Coordinating Across Government and Provinces

PSD's role as a connector between SAHRA and other stakeholders was especially prominent:

On 28–29 August, PSD engaged with Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities (PHRAs), securing support for the formal institutionalization of the unit.

In March, PSD met with City of Cape Town officials to discuss proposed amendments to the National Heritage Resources Act, especially the contentious 60-year clause a crucial step in aligning legislative frameworks with real-world heritage needs.

The unit also participated in a site visit to Langa to support the Grading and Declaration Review Committee's evaluation process.

## Diplomacy and Partnership: Strengthening Global Collaboration

The year began with a key moment of international engagement. In July 2024, SAHRA welcomed the Miles Barton Archaeological Project team including five Chinese experts during their visit to South Africa. This exchange deepened an already-strong partnership, following SAHRA's previous delegation to China. A warm welcome lunch near SAHRA's Head Office helped reaffirm mutual commitment to collaborative archaeological research.

In September, PSD continued to raise SAHRA's global profile by preparing for participation in the prestigious Beijing Culture Forum, coordinating media engagements and developing a keynote address to reflect South Africa's growing influence in global heritage dialogue.



## Expanding Representation: South Africa's Voice in Maritime Heritage

At the Africa Maritime Heritage Foundation (AMHF) meeting on 25 August, SAHRA introduced Briege Williams, its maritime archaeologist, as South Africa's new representative. This appointment marks a strategic investment in African-led underwater cultural heritage initiatives and reflects SAHRA's commitment to fostering expertise in underrepresented heritage domains.

## Planning for Impact, Building for the Long-Term

The PSD Unit continues to be a linchpin in SAHRA's mission providing the policy tools, strategic foresight, and skills development needed to safeguard heritage in a complex and changing environment.

Support for PSD means support for smarter, fairer, and more future-focused heritage governance.

# Development Applications Unit:

Driving Heritage-Conscious Development

14

The Development Applications Unit (DAU) has maintained a strong focus on balancing development needs with heritage conservation across South Africa, showcasing notable productivity and active stakeholder engagement throughout the reporting periods.



## Increased Productivity & Regulatory Contributions

In Q4 (January–March 2025), the DAU demonstrated a remarkable boost in output, issuing 11 permits and 391 decisions/comments—an increase from 270 comments in the same quarter the previous year. During this period, four appeals were submitted, underscoring the unit's role in upholding heritage standards.

The DAU also played a key role in several regulatory and legal efforts, including:

Reviewing the Conservation Body Regulations,  
Drafting a Mapungubwe Affidavit,  
Issuing a Contravention Notice related to the Gamsberg Mine.

## Academic & Conference Engagements

During Q1 2024/25, DAU contributed to academic outreach with a lecture at North West University. The unit's presence at the ASAPA 2024 Conference in Lesotho was significant: staff members NH, NK, and Stephen van den Heever participated, with Mr. van den Heever presenting his Master's research and Ms. Higgitt leading a session on Heritage Resources Management, supported by Ms. Khumalo.

## Operational Highlights & Collaboration

Between April and June 2024, the DAU processed 8 permits and issued 298 decisions and comments. Due to a high caseload, 30 of these decisions were completed with assistance from the Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage (MUCH) Unit.

From July to September 2024, the unit issued 16 permits and 262 decisions/comments, with MUCH staff helping to manage 35 cases amid a slight decline in total case processing compared to the previous quarter. Compared to the same period in 2023/24, there was a decrease in comments issued, though permit issuance increased.

## Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout the reporting periods, DAU staff actively participated in numerous meetings, site visits, and workshops, reinforcing their commitment to heritage protection while facilitating sustainable development.



## Building a Future that Honors Our Past

The Development Applications Unit continues to exemplify SAHRA's commitment to integrating heritage considerations into development processes, ensuring that South Africa's rich cultural legacy is safeguarded amid growth and change.



# SAHRA SOCIAL MEDIA

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15

**Discover South Africa's rich heritage, exciting events, and behind-the-scenes stories.**

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# Become A Partner in Conserving South Africa's Legacy

16

Your investment in SAHRA is an investment in South Africa's future.

By joining us, you contribute to:

- Preserving irreplaceable cultural treasures.
- Educating future generations about our rich history.
- Empowering communities and fostering cultural pride.
- Supporting a thriving cultural tourism sector.
- Building a more inclusive and equitable nation.

Together, let's rewrite the ending of South Africa's heritage story. Make your mark and invest in a future where the past illuminates the path ahead

## How you can help SAHRA:

SAHRA welcomes contributions of all sizes.

For tax-deductible donations from the US, please consider supporting Friends of South African Heritage Resource Agency at Myriad USA.

Donors can make tax deductible contributions to Friends of South African Heritage Resource Agency at Myriad USA. Because Myriad USA is a public charity, within the meaning of Sections 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1) of the IRC, donors may claim the maximum tax benefits allowed by U.S. tax law for their contributions. If you wish to support us, here is how to proceed.

## Gifts By Check:

Address your check to Myriad USA, write Friends of South African Heritage Resource Agency the memo section of the check, and send it to Myriad USA at 551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2400, New York, NY 10176.

Gifts by credit card, see:

<https://www.every.org/south-african-heritage-resources-agency>

## Who is MYRIAD?

Myriad is a global alliance that facilitates borderless giving. It connects donors with trusted charities worldwide, providing a platform for individuals and organizations to make a meaningful impact. Myriad offers a variety of services, including grant distribution, donor-advised funds, and philanthropic consulting.

By leveraging its extensive network and expertise, Myriad ensures that donations are used effectively to address pressing social and environmental challenges. Through its various funding mechanisms, Myriad empowers donors to support causes they care about, fostering a more equitable and sustainable world.

Myriad has partnered with SAHRA to facilitate easy giving dedicated to conserving South Africa's rich heritage and assisting SAHRA execute its mandate





SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

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# Thank You

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