



NEWSLETTER

Heritage in Action

Showcasing SAHRA's Impact Across South Africa

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 Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), has been tasked to manage and implement the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) of 1999.



| South African Astronomical Observatory

A Season of Momentum, Milestones and Meaning

This edition of Heritage in Action reflects a period of sustained delivery, consolidation, and leadership by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). Across the country and beyond its borders, SAHRA continued to safeguard irreplaceable heritage resources, strengthen regulatory systems, and build partnerships that enable responsible development and long-term conservation.

From high-volume regulatory decision-making and national inventory expansion to international cooperation on repatriation and maritime heritage protection, the quarter demonstrates SAHRA's continued impact as the national authority responsible for protecting South Africa's heritage for present and future generations.



| Freedom Park Museum

Unit Highlights

Development Applications Unit (DAU)

Consistent Regulatory Delivery at National Scale

The Development Applications Unit delivered a strong quarter, achieving planned operational targets and maintaining high regulatory output despite sustained demand and capacity pressures.

During the period, the Unit:

- Issued 44 permits
- Finalised 262 decisions and comments on development and heritage applications

This throughput reflects disciplined processes, professional judgment, and dependable service delivery in support of both heritage protection and development certainty.

Beyond routine casework, DAU contributed to strategic and sector-wide initiatives, including policy inputs to environmental guidance, preparation of technical project plans, forward operational planning, and work towards professionalisation and registration of heritage practitioners.

Active engagement across intergovernmental, municipal, and specialist platforms reinforced consistent interpretation and application of the NHRA. Through ongoing skills development and leadership training, the unit continues to invest in institutional capacity that underpins quality decision-making and regulatory confidence.



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At the end of October 2025, the **South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) Development Applications Unit (DAU) Manager, Ms. Natasha Higgitt** presented at the 4th EAPASA SADC Regional Conference held at the Graceland Hotel, Secunda, Mpumalanga Province. The conference theme “SADC Sustainable Synergies” which aimed to find synergies to standardize the Environmental Assessment practice and develop guidelines for Best Practice.

Ms. Higgitt presented a paper titled “Heritage: Fatal flaw or opportunity to redress?”. This paper aimed to show that heritage resources are not a stumbling block to development, but an opportunity to integrate heritage into development in an innovative manner, and in a way to address past inequities.

The session was well received by attendees who appreciated the departure from conventional thinking and applauded the new proposed approach to integrate the Heritage Impact Assessments, Social Impact Assessments (SIA) and Public Participation Process (PPP) in a meaningful manner.

[#EAPASA](#) [#Sustainability](#) [#HeritageImpactAssessment](#) [#NHRA](#)



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On the **8th of October 2025**, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) Development Applications Unit (DAU) Heritage Officer, Ms. Nokusho Ngobeni, with the Archaeological, Palaeontological & Meteorite (APM) Unit, Ms. Ayanda and Mr. Phillip Hine, conducted the annual heritage site monitoring visit at the **Vele Colliery in Musina Local Municipality of the Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province**.

The SAHRA is appointed into an Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC) for the Vele Colliery. The objective for the Colliery’s EMC is to monitor compliance of the conditions of their Environmental Authorisation (EA) and Integrated Water Use Licence (IWULA) and the implementation of the DFFE objectives for the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site (MWHS), as well as to implement the Heritage Management Plan (HMP).

As part of these objectives, SAHRA attends 4 EMC meetings and undertakes regular monitoring of the heritage sites in their mine right area. Currently the mine is under care and maintenance, and no mining operations are taking place. The heritage sites within the mining right boundary are in a stable condition with no impacts from the previous mining activities. SAHRA DAU is dedicated to ensuring that all developments comply with the NHRA, ensuring that heritage resources are protected and managed for future generations, while enabling sustainable and responsible development.

[#HeritageCompliance](#) [#HeritageSiteVisits](#) [#NHRA](#)



Unit Highlights

Celebrate Culture. Embrace Unity. Honour Heritage

National Inventory Unit (NIU) Building South Africa's Digital Heritage Backbone

The National Inventory Unit achieved full delivery against its APP targets, consolidating SAHRA's role as custodian of the national heritage information system.

A major focus was the stabilisation and enhancement of SAHRIS following its migration to a new platform. Improved tools, forms, and mapping functionality strengthened system reliability and accessibility.

Significant expansion of the national inventory was achieved through large scale digitisation and bulk uploads from museum partners, alongside support for regional heritage documentation through a successful SADC heritage survey expedition.

These achievements position SAHRA strongly for continued growth in digital heritage management and data driven protection.



| Cradle of Humankind

Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit (APM) Specialist Oversight with National Reach

The APM Unit continued to deliver on its core regulatory mandate, processing a high volume of applications and providing specialist oversight across sensitive heritage resources.

Through engagement with practitioners, regulators, and academic partners, the Unit strengthened consistency in heritage assessments and compliance with legislative requirements. Strategic technical work and knowledge sharing initiatives supported improved decision quality and planning for system enhancements.

Despite operational pressures, APM's steady delivery underscores the professionalism and resilience required to protect South Africa's archaeological and palaeontological record at scale.

Policy and Skills Development Unit (PSD) Shaping the Future of Heritage Governance

The Policy and Skills Development Unit advanced several strategic initiatives central to SAHRA's long term effectiveness.

Notably, the Unit played a key role in the review and modernisation of the National Heritage Resources Act, contributing to the clarification of definitions, strengthening of enforcement mechanisms, and alignment with contemporary legislation.

Progress was also made on the professionalisation of heritage practitioners, with Terms of Reference developed and procurement initiated to establish a nationally coherent framework for professional standards. PSD further supported sector planning through advancement of the Tertiary Institutions Audit Project, contributing to long term skills and capacity development.

These interventions reinforce SAHRA's coordinating role in building a capable, credible, and future ready heritage sector.



| West Coast Fossil Farm

Unit Highlights

Maritime Underwater and Cultural Heritage (MUCH)



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In 1794, the **São José**, a Portuguese slave vessel, struck submerged rocks off Clifton Beach and began breaking apart. On its tragic voyage from Mozambique to Brazil, the ship carried over 500 enslaved people.

As a protected historical wreck, the site requires regular monitoring. Yesterday (11 December), the **MUCH Unit** conducted a site-inspection dive to assess its condition. Divers Briege Williams, Jake Harding, and Karyn Moshe examined exposed elements of the wreck, including:

- ✓ Cannons
- ✓ Pieces of timber
- ✓ A ballast block

The site remains stable and relatively undisturbed since the previous inspection. The team captured detailed images to help track changes over time and preserve this important piece of history.



Historic Wreck Inspection: São José Slave Ship



MUCH Unit in Kleinbaai

Protecting Heritage Below the Surface

The MUCH Unit demonstrated active protection of South Africa's maritime heritage through inspections at key shipwreck sites, including SAS Pietermaritzburg and Birkenhead, confirming continued integrity of these sensitive resources.

Enhanced cooperation with environmental authorities and law-enforcement partners strengthened shared protection responsibilities, while high public engagement with maritime heritage awareness messaging reinforced understanding of legal protections.

The Unit maintained strategic representation in national ocean governance forums, ensuring that maritime cultural heritage is embedded within broader planning processes. Progress on heritage agreements, signage development, and digital outreach reflects growing visibility and public interest in underwater heritage.



SS Mendi Memorial



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174 years ago today, the HMS Birkenhead tragically sank off Danger Point, Western Cape (26 Feb 1852). Carrying soldiers, women, and children to the Cape Colony, the ship struck an uncharted rock and broke apart.

It was here that the famous "women and children first" the Birkenhead Drill was born as soldiers stood fast so lifeboats could evacuate others first. Over 400 lives were lost.

Today the wreck is a protected heritage site under the NHRA, and government partners continue to monitor and safeguard it. A recent inspection by the MUCH Unit, SAPS, and DFFE found no evidence of illegal salvage, reinforcing ongoing efforts to protect South Africa's maritime heritage.

Unit Highlights

Built Environment Unit (BEU)

Guarding South Africa's Built Heritage

The Built Environment Unit delivered consistent regulatory performance aligned with organisational priorities and APP targets.

Through site inspections, application assessments, and coordinated engagement with applicants, municipalities, and provincial authorities, the Unit supported heritage-sensitive development while maintaining statutory oversight. Participation in governance structures and working groups strengthened internal coherence and policy alignment.

Investment in staff development and professional training continues to enhance technical output and adaptive capacity across the Unit's wide geographic and thematic footprint.



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SAHRA has begun rolling out its new badge marking the National Heritage Status at several of South Africa's National Heritage Sites. The Castle of Good Hope, the South African Astronomical Observatory, Trafalgar High School, and Dal Josafat are the first to receive these new markers, each one highlighting the importance of these sites while celebrating their unique stories.

This rollout marks an important step in strengthening public awareness of South Africa's heritage landscape. By proudly and prominently displaying these badges, SAHRA highlights the stories, achievements, and pivotal roles each site played in shaping our shared history. More installations will follow as SAHRA continues to honour the places that define our national story.

[#HeritageConservation](#) [#NationalHeritageSite](#)
[#HeritageResourcesManagement](#) [#KnowYourHeritage](#)
[#Badge](#) [#SAHRA](#) [#DepartmentofSportArtsandCulture](#)



| The Castle of Good Hope



| National Heritage Site Badge Installation

Unit Highlights

Heritage Protection Unit (HPU)

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South African Astronomical Observatory

Strengthening Governance, Protection, and International Cooperation

The Heritage Protection Unit reported a quarter marked by significant governance and protection milestones.

A key achievement was SAHRA's role in the successful repatriation of internationally significant Zimbabwean heritage objects, undertaken through coordinated intergovernmental engagement and formal agreements. This process reflects SAHRA's commitment to ethical stewardship and international cooperation.

The Unit also strengthened oversight of World Heritage and legacy sites through active participation in national and international heritage governance structures, supporting clearer management arrangements and improved inter-agency coordination.

Internally, the approval of interim complaints procedures marked an important institutional step, providing a transparent and consistent framework for addressing heritage-related concerns while permanent systems are finalised. Capacity within the unit was further strengthened through targeted training and the appointment of a Senior Heritage Officer, supporting continuity and resilience.

DECLARATION OF THE GRAVE OF SOLOMON LINDA; DOORKOP CEMETERY; SOWETO, JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE SITE

By virtue of the powers vested in the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), in terms of section 27 (5) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999), SAHRA hereby declares the grave of Solomon Popoli Linda; grave number 4875, located at the Doornkop Cemetery, Soweto, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province as a National Heritage Site.

Statement of Significance

"The grave of Solomon Linda is of pivotal cultural significance to South Africa as it encapsulates the broader impact of colonialism, particularly its theft and exploitation of African people's cultural heritage without recognition. Linda, a musician whose rendition of the Imbube in the 1930s became a major success in South Africa and gained popularity in other parts of the world, especially in the United States of America. Despite Linda's success in South Africa, the socio-political context of the 1930s granted Africans menial rights; thus, depriving them of economic benefit from their talents. As notes, "Black South Africans had no legal rights in the 1930s and while alive Solomon Linda was not aware of what royalties were..." This forced Linda to sell rights for his song for 10 shillings, leaving him destitute to the time of his death in 1960. Furthermore, both he and his descendants did not receive royalties for his creative work, despite the reworking and popularisation of his work. In fact, others claimed royalties while refusing to acknowledge Linda's role. As Peter Alegi & Chris Bolsmann have noted in their book, Africa's World Cup: Critical Reflections on Play, Patriotism, Spectatorship, and Space, "The most memorable example of the theft of intellectual rights of an African artist is that of Solomon Linda who in 1939 wrote the song Mbube and received 10 shillings (less than \$2) for his effort.

In addressing the nation on 24 September 2022, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated, "The tragedy that befell Solomon Linda, the great injustice that was done to him, must never again visit any of our artists...In today's modern age, this exploitation has taken new forms such as plagiarism, cultural and intellectual property appropriation and copyright theft. Struggling artists are taken advantage of and strong-armed into giving up their rights and their royalties." Linda's grave therefore captures broadly the discontinuities and continuities of cultural appropriation of creative talent for profit without due acknowledgement of its creator. Its significance speaks to a practice that prevails with the Arts and Culture sector post the democratic dispensation."



Unit Highlights

Heritage Objects Unit (HOU)

Proactive in Institutional Compliance, Inter-agency Collaboration and Promoting the National Estate

The Heritage Objects Unit (HOU) has made strong progress in advancing heritage conservation, strengthening partnerships, ensuring compliance with national frameworks, and celebrating the national estate.

The unit also contributed to a major international milestone, culminating in the return of the soapstone bird to Zimbabwe in April 2026, reinforcing bilateral relations and SAHRA's leadership in heritage diplomacy. On 18 May 2026, International Museum Day, Irma Stern's *The Arab Priest* returned to South Africa under a 20-year loan agreement with the Qatar Museums Authority. The artwork is now on public display at UP Museums, highlighting national efforts to preserve and celebrate heritage.

The declaration of the Gifts Bestowed to the Late Nelson Mandela at the Nelson Mandela Museum was another key achievement, strengthening the protection and management of nationally significant heritage objects.

The unit continues to engage stakeholders, safeguard at-risk heritage objects, and promote a balanced approach of advocacy, compliance, and collaboration.



| *The Return of the Arab Priest*



Declaration of the Nelson Mandela Collection

SAHRA has formally declared the Nelson Mandela Collection, comprising approximately 3,900 gifts bestowed on the former President and held by the Nelson Mandela Museum, as a Specifically Declared Collection under the National Heritage Resources Act, reinforcing its national and global significance as a curated archive of diplomacy, public affection, and cultural exchange.

The collection, which spans items from children's handmade cards to state gifts and symbolic artefacts, reflects Mandela's enduring legacy of unity, justice, and reconciliation, while advancing his own condition that these gifts be preserved and shared with the South African public, particularly in the Eastern Cape.

Positioned as both a heritage asset and an educational resource, the declaration strengthens custodianship, enhances public access, and creates a platform for ongoing engagement, research, and potential partnerships aligned to heritage preservation and nation-building objectives.

Unit Highlights

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

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Burial Grounds and Graves Unit (BGG) Preserving Memory with Dignity

The Burial Grounds and Graves Unit continued to protect and conserve graves and memorial landscapes of national significance, ensuring respectful management in line with the National Heritage Resources Act.

During the period, the Unit supported the National Verification Committee at Freedom Park, contributed to key memorialisation initiatives including work related to the Leliefontein Massacre Site, and engaged with municipalities, provincial authorities, museums, and foundations to strengthen heritage agreements and compliance processes.

Monitoring and assessment activities were undertaken at gravesites and concentration camp cemeteries across Gauteng and the North West, alongside support to municipalities on statutory permitting requirements for graves older than sixty years. Progress continued on memorial construction and rehabilitation projects, including significant advances at the Dr James Moroka gravesite, with compliant permits issued to support authorised conservation work.

Through these efforts, the Burial Grounds and Graves Unit reinforces SAHRA's commitment to honouring sites of memory that reflect South Africa's history, sacrifice, and identity. Sustained partnerships and investment remain essential to ensuring these heritage places are protected for future generations.



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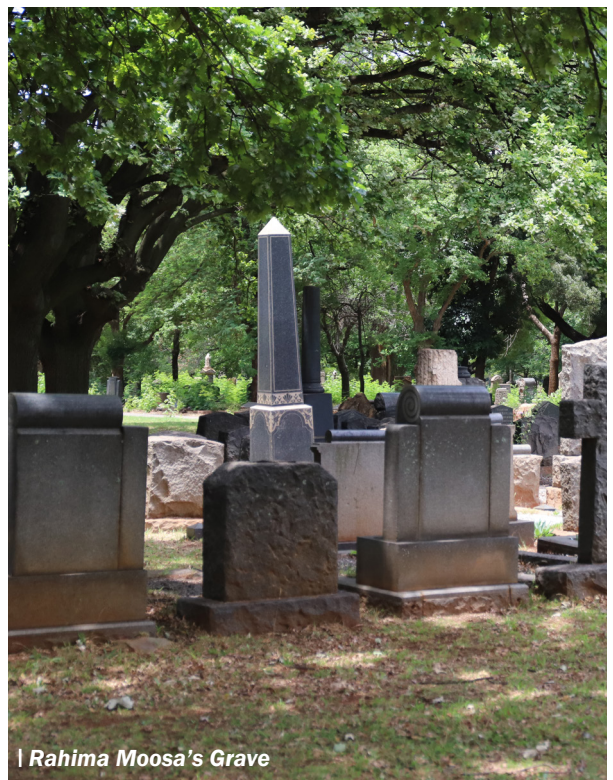
In the quiet, arid landscape of the Northern Cape lies Kinderlé "the place where children lie." Last week, the reburial of 63 Khoi and San ancestral remains marked a powerful moment of healing and justice.

Once a site of deep tragedy, Kinderlé now stands as a national symbol of remembrance, cultural restoration, and the ongoing journey toward reconciliation. This historic reburial honours lives disrupted by colonial violence and ensures their stories are finally acknowledged with the dignity they deserve.

A step forward in restoring humanity. A step toward justice.

Read more on the article by SAHRA's Council Member Mr Anwar Omar:

muslimviews.co.za/kinderle-reburial-restoring-dignity-and-the-path-towards-justice/



| *Rahima Moosa's Grave*



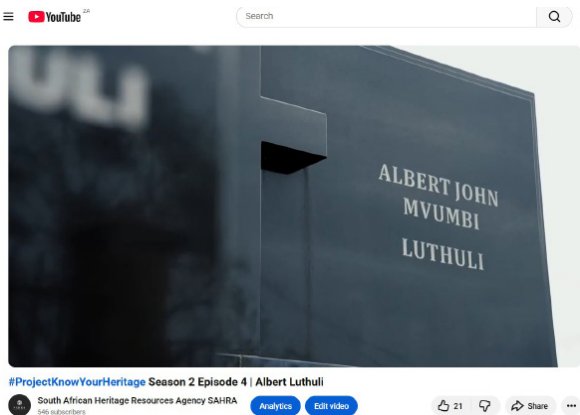
| *Kinderlé Reburial: Restoring Dignity & Honouring Ancestral Memory*

Know Your Heritage

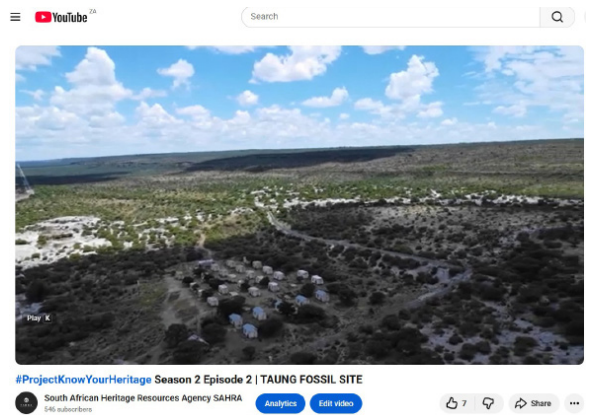
Exploring SAHRA's Legacy: A Journey Through National Heritage Sites

Know Your Heritage

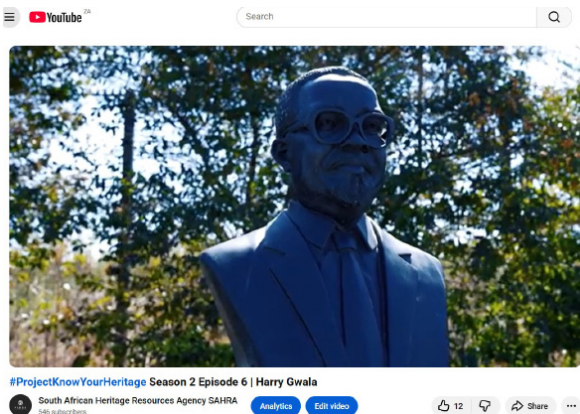
The SAHRA Know Your Heritage Film Project aims to celebrate and promote South Africa's rich cultural legacy by showcasing our National Heritage Sites. Through this initiative, audiences will gain deeper insight into the historical significance, cultural value, and purpose of each site, fostering appreciation and understanding of the stories that shape our nation's identity.



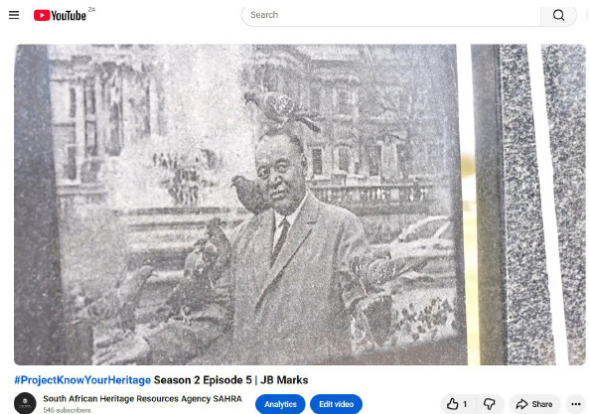
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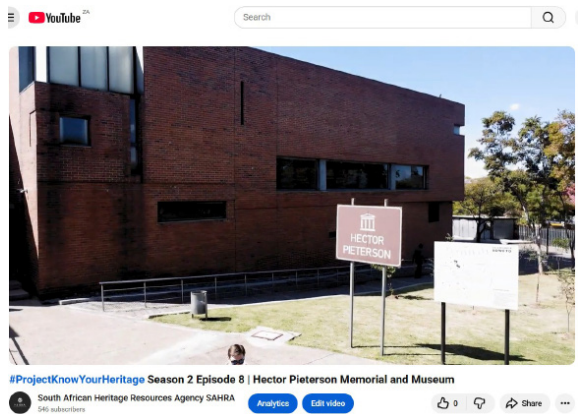
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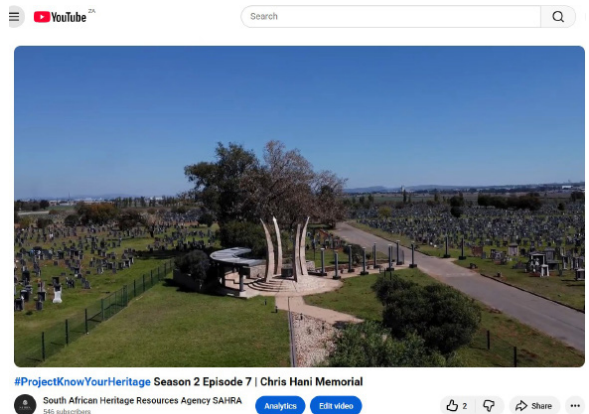
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FA2tQX8jVC4&t=5s>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrhhGwAyyqQ&t=74s>



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McS2amskd_8&t=66s



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rWNYkh6y9A&t=47s>

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Follow us on social media and be part of preserving our legacy!

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South African Heritage Resources Agency

Become A Partner in Conserving South Africa's Legacy

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 shape the future of South Africa's heritage story.

Our heritage needs you - report any damage or contraventions and help preserve it for future generations



| Voortrekker Monument

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.



| Dal Josefat



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Thank You

An Agency of the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture