



NEWSLETTER

Proudly Preserving Heritage

Preserving Our Past, Inspiring Our Future

ABOUT SAHRA

South African Heritage Resource 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.

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

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.

SAHRA is mandated to coordinate the identification and management of the national estate. The aims are to introduce an integrated system for the identification, assessment and management of the heritage resources and to enable provincial and local authorities to adopt powers to protect and manage them.

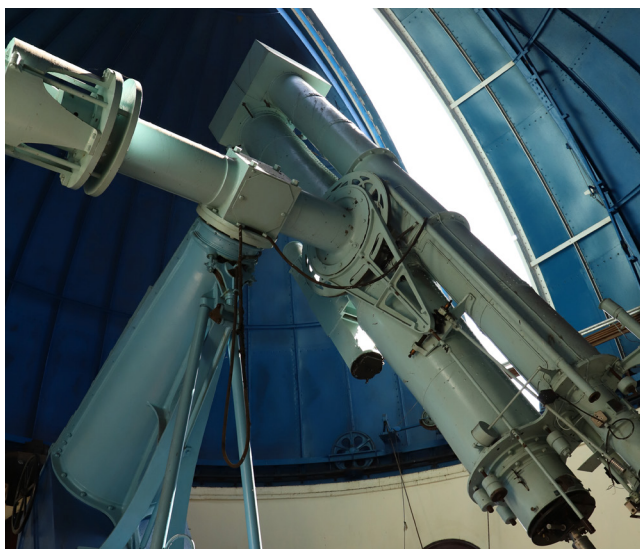
Our mission is to unite people through heritage.

Our Heritage, Our Identity, Our Future

The first quarter of 2026/27 saw SAHRA continue to protect and promote South Africa's rich heritage through strategic partnerships, conservation initiatives, digital innovation, and public engagement.

Across the country, SAHRA worked with communities, museums, universities, government institutions, and heritage stakeholders to safeguard places of memory, advance World Heritage initiatives, expand the National Inventory through the digitisation of museum collections, strengthen heritage protection systems, and preserve significant cultural resources.

Collectively, these achievements demonstrate how heritage conservation contributes to education, social cohesion, cultural identity, and sustainable development, while ensuring that South Africa's heritage remains a valued resource for present and future generations.



Unit Highlights

Built Environment Unit (BEU)

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Groot Constantia to Robben Island: Safeguarding the Nation's Most Iconic Heritage Sites

SAHRA advanced the long term protection of some of South Africa's most significant heritage sites through strategic conservation initiatives, heritage agreements, and site stewardship programmes. A major milestone was the progression of the declaration process for Groot Constantia Estate, where heritage agreement negotiations were successfully concluded, strengthening the framework for the preservation of one of the country's most important historic landmarks.

Further progress was made in securing the future of other nationally significant sites, including the Castle of Good Hope, where work continued to strengthen conservation planning and heritage management arrangements. These efforts support the sustainable use and protection of heritage places that contribute to South Africa's cultural identity, tourism economy, and shared national memory.

SAHRA also enhanced the visibility of the national estate through the installation of new National Heritage Site markers at Robben Island and the Owl House and Camel Yard in Nieu-Bethesda. These recognisable markers help highlight the significance of these sites, promoting public awareness and encouraging greater appreciation of South Africa's diverse heritage.

Through ongoing conservation oversight, heritage permitting, stakeholder partnerships, and support to provinces across the country, SAHRA continues to ensure that nationally significant heritage places remain protected, accessible, and relevant for future generations.



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SAHRA Supports the Conservation of the University of Fort Hare's Heritage Legacy

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) recently visited the University of Fort Hare (UFH), Dikeni Campus to engage with its Properties and Services Division on the recovery, restoration, and rebuilding of damaged facilities. These efforts are vital to safeguarding UFH's rich historical, educational, and cultural significance for future generations. As a National Heritage Site and part of the Human Rights, Liberation & Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, UFH holds both national and international heritage importance.

During the visit, SAHRA also inspected the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS), home to invaluable collections documenting South Africa's Liberation Movement, alongside significant fine art collections and research archives. These collections play an important role in preserving and sharing the stories that shaped our nation's history.

[#HeritageConservation](#) [#NationalHeritageSite](#)
[#KnowYourHeritage](#) [#NelsonMandelaLegacySites](#)



Unit Highlights

Maritime Underwater and Cultural Heritage (MUCH)

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SAHRA AT THE 17TH PANAF CONGRESS IN MOZAMBIQUE

From 27 to 31 July 2026, Briege Williams, Acting Manager of SAHRA's Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage (MUCH) Unit, represented South Africa at the 17th PANAF Congress of the PanAfrican Archaeological Association, hosted by Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, Mozambique. Bringing together heritage and archaeological practitioners from across Africa and beyond, the congress provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration. During the maritime heritage sessions, Briege presented "Decolonizing the Deep: Because Wrecks Aren't the Only Story in South Africa," highlighting the diverse and often overlooked dimensions of South Africa's maritime heritage. The conference fostered meaningful engagement with maritime heritage experts and strengthened international networks that will support future collaboration in the preservation and promotion of Africa's shared heritage. 

[#MaritimeHeritage](#) [#PANAF2026](#) [#AfricanHeritage](#)
[#InternationalCollaboration](#) [#SouthAfricanHeritage](#)



Beneath the Waves: Protecting South Africa's Hidden Heritage

South Africa's maritime heritage extends far beyond its shoreline, preserving centuries of exploration, trade, migration, conflict, and cultural exchange beneath coastal waters. During the quarter, SAHRA strengthened efforts to protect and promote this unique heritage through research, strategic partnerships, public awareness initiatives, and national advocacy.

A major milestone was the installation of a National Heritage Site marker at the SS Mendi Memorial, further elevating public recognition of one of South Africa's most powerful sites of remembrance. The project strengthens awareness of the legacy of the SS Mendi and honours the sacrifice of those who lost their lives during the First World War.

SAHRA also continued advancing maritime heritage research through ongoing work to locate and document historically significant shipwrecks, contributing to a growing understanding of South Africa's underwater cultural landscape. At the same time, partnerships with universities, museums, and heritage institutions in the Eastern Cape strengthened collaboration on maritime conservation, research, and public education.

Public engagement remained a standout success. Through targeted digital campaigns, maritime heritage content reached hundreds of thousands of people, significantly increasing public awareness of South Africa's underwater heritage and the importance of protecting vulnerable shipwreck sites. This growing public interest demonstrates the value of heritage storytelling in connecting people with lesser-known chapters of the nation's history.

By combining conservation, research, education, and partnership-building, SAHRA continues to ensure that South Africa's rich maritime heritage remains protected, understood, and accessible for future generations.

Unit Highlights

National Inventory Unit (NIU)

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Digitising the Nation's Memory: Building South Africa's Heritage Future

SAHRA continued to expand and strengthen South Africa's digital heritage infrastructure through significant growth of the National Inventory and ongoing enhancements to the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS). By preserving heritage information digitally and making it more accessible, SAHRA is helping to ensure that the country's cultural resources remain available to researchers, communities, educators, decision-makers, and future generations.

A major achievement during the quarter was the addition of thousands of heritage objects to the National Inventory. Through partnerships with leading cultural institutions, SAHRA facilitated the digitisation and publication of collections from the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Iziko Museums, and the Parliament Museum of Art, substantially increasing public access to nationally significant heritage resources.

SAHRA also advanced important initiatives aimed at strengthening heritage management across South Africa. Improvements to SAHRIS will further enhance accessibility, transparency, and user experience, while innovative mapping and information tools will assist heritage authorities, researchers, and the public in understanding and managing heritage resources more effectively.

Beyond the digital environment, SAHRA continued to document and record heritage resources through field surveys in the Northern Cape. This work contributes to the development of provincial heritage registers and strengthens the long-term protection of heritage landscapes, historic places, and sites of cultural significance.

Through innovation, technology, and strategic partnerships, SAHRA is building a modern, accessible heritage information system that preserves the nation's collective memory while supporting research, conservation, education, and informed decision-making.



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Preserving South Africa's Military Heritage

SAHRA recently conducted a site visit to the Castle Military Museum at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. Led by the Heritage Objects Unit (HOU), with support from the Built Environment Unit (BEU) and **National Inventory Unit (NIU)**, the visit formed part of ongoing efforts to safeguard and conserve South Africa's valuable heritage collections. The Castle Military Museum plays a vital role in preserving and sharing the story of South Africa's army over the past 350 years, making it one of the few museums dedicated specifically to the country's military history. Through collaborative site visits such as these, SAHRA continues to support the protection and preservation of our shared heritage for future generations.

[#HeritageConservation](#) [#NationalHeritageSite](#)
[#KnowYourHeritage](#) [#Museums](#) [#MilitaryHistory](#)



Unit Highlights

Heritage Protection Unit (HPU)

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📍 UMQWASHU MEMORIAL SITE, EASTERN CAPE

SAHRA recently conducted a site inspection and stakeholder engagement at the UmQwashu Memorial Site in Peddie, Eastern Cape a place of profound historical and cultural significance for the amaMfengu people. The site commemorates the historic oath taken on 14 May 1835, a defining moment that shaped amaMfengu identity, education, faith, and community development. The visit provided an opportunity to assess the condition of this important heritage site and engage with local stakeholders on its future care and management. Through meaningful dialogue and collaboration, participants reaffirmed their shared commitment to preserving the legacy of UmQwashu and ensuring that its rich history continues to be remembered and celebrated by future generations.

[#HeritageConservation](#) [#NationalHeritageSite](#)
[#KnowYourHeritage](#) [#UmQwashuMemorialSite](#)
[#StakeholderEngagement](#) [#AmaMfengu](#)



Strengthening the Protection of South Africa's Most Significant Heritage Sites

SAHRA continued to strengthen the protection and recognition of South Africa's most significant heritage resources through a range of national heritage initiatives during the quarter. A major milestone was the advancement of South Africa's World Heritage programme, with SAHRA contributing to the review and endorsement of seven sites for inclusion on the country's Tentative World Heritage List. These include landscapes and places of exceptional cultural and natural value that may ultimately be recognised on the UNESCO World Heritage List, elevating their international profile and long-term protection.

SAHRA also advanced work relating to the Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, supporting efforts to strengthen conservation planning, governance frameworks, and long-term management arrangements across the 14-site serial World Heritage property. These initiatives help to preserve places that tell the story of South Africa's journey to democracy while ensuring that future generations can engage with this important legacy.





DECLARED SITES

National Heritage Site Badge

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National Heritage Site Badge Installation: The Castle of Goodhope

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.

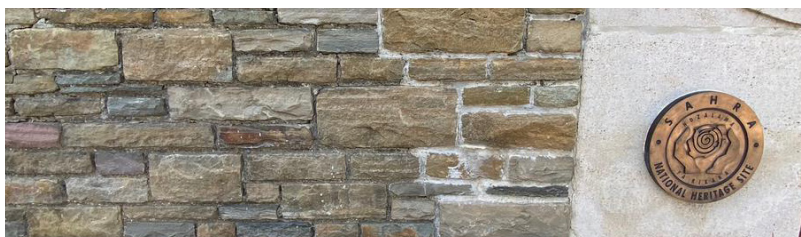
This rollout marks an important step in strengthening public awareness of South Africa's heritage landscape. By proudly and prominently displaying these badges, SAHRA highlights the stories, achievements, and pivotal roles each site played in shaping our shared history. More installations will follow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



Delville Wood Memorial

The Delville Wood Memorial in Longueval, France, commemorates the sacrifice of the South African Brigade during the Battle of Delville Wood, fought between 15 and 20 July 1916 as part of the Battle of the Somme in the First World War.

The battle became one of the defining moments in South Africa's military history, with thousands of South African soldiers killed, wounded, or missing in action. Today, the memorial stands as a symbol of courage, remembrance, and the enduring ties between South Africa and France.



Honouring A Legacy Of Courage And Sacrifice

A significant milestone in preserving South Africa's heritage was marked with the installation of a National Heritage Site plaque at the SS Mendi Memorial on the University of Cape Town lower campus.

The memorial commemorates the 616 members of the South African Native Labour Corps who tragically lost their lives when the SS Mendi sank in the English Channel on 21 February 1917.

Organised by the SAHRA Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit, the event brought together representatives from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the Gunners Association Western Province (GAWP), reflecting a shared commitment to remembrance and honour.

The unveiling formally recognises the memorial's national significance, ensuring that the story of the SS Mendi and its passengers remains an enduring part of South Africa's collective memory. Through meaningful collaboration between heritage practitioners, academic institutions, and military organisations, the event underscores the importance of preserving places of remembrance for future generations.



Unit Highlights

Burial Grounds and Graves Unit (BGG)

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Honouring the Fallen, Preserving the Nation's Memory

SAHRA continued to protect and preserve some of South Africa's most important sites of memory through the work of the Burial Grounds and Graves Unit. During the quarter, significant progress was made in safeguarding gravesites, memorials, and historic landscapes that reflect the country's diverse history, sacrifices, and collective identity.

A key achievement was the completion of Phase I of the Delville Wood Memorial project, an important milestone in honouring South Africans who served and lost their lives during the First World War. This investment in memorialisation helps ensure that future generations remain connected to the stories and sacrifices that shaped the nation.

SAHRA also undertook assessments and monitoring at several nationally significant gravesites and heritage locations, including sites associated with prominent historical figures and communities. Work at the Sutherland Nine gravesite further supported efforts to document and preserve places of remembrance that hold profound historical and social significance.

The organisation strengthened partnerships with municipalities, heritage foundations, memorial institutions, and community stakeholders, recognising that the preservation of sites of memory is most effective when undertaken collaboratively. Public awareness and knowledge-sharing initiatives also contributed to a greater understanding of the importance of protecting graves, memorials, and ancestral heritage.

Through conservation work, heritage assessments, memorial development, and stakeholder partnerships, SAHRA continues to ensure that places of remembrance are preserved with dignity, allowing South Africans to engage with their history and pass these stories on to future generations.



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HIDDEN HISTORIES IN CAPE TOWN

At the Mowbray Muslim Cemetery lie the graves of 13 Commonwealth soldiers men from South Africa, West Africa, and the Indian subcontinent whose stories remain largely untold. Buried among the local Muslim community and laid to rest according to Islamic rites, their presence speaks to a powerful legacy of faith, service, and belonging that transcends borders. This site is more than a cemetery it is a quiet testament to shared histories that deserve recognition and remembrance.

[Read more: Explore the full story](#)

<https://muslimviews.co.za/the-commonwealth-war-graves-at-the-mowbray-muslim-cemetery/>

#KnowYourHeritage #CapeTownHistory #HiddenHistories
#HeritageMatters #LestWeForget #SAHistory
#MowbrayCemetery



Unit Highlights

Heritage Objects Unit (HOU)

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🖼️ THE RETURN OF THE MASTERPIECE ✨

The iconic oil painting Arab Priest (1945) by Irma Stern (1894–1966) returns to South Africa a pivotal moment in the ongoing recognition of Stern's global legacy. 🇿🇦🌍 In 2011, a mutual agreement between the South African Heritage Resources Agency and Qatar Museums Authority ensured that this celebrated work would return home every five years for public exhibition. ✨ The first exhibition will be hosted by the University of Pretoria Museums from April - September 2026, in partnership with the Iziko South African National Gallery, where the artwork will later be exhibited in Cape Town. Join us in welcoming back a landmark of South Africa's artistic heritage.

#TheReturnOfTheArabPriest #IrmaStern #ArtAndHeritage
#SouthAfricanArt #MuseumExhibition

Protecting the Treasures That Tell South Africa's Story

SAHRA continued to strengthen the protection, preservation, and responsible management of South Africa's heritage objects, ensuring that irreplaceable cultural assets remain safeguarded for future generations. During the quarter, the organisation facilitated the lawful movement and oversight of significant heritage objects while advancing measures to improve custodianship, accountability, and conservation standards across the sector.

A major focus was supporting the protection and management of heritage collections held by public institutions, including nationally important objects associated with Parliament, museums, and sites of memory. These efforts help preserve the material evidence of South Africa's history while improving public access to heritage that contributes to education, research, and national identity.

SAHRA also strengthened collaboration with leading heritage institutions, museums, government entities, and international partners. These partnerships support knowledge exchange, improve conservation practice, and reinforce South Africa's position within the global heritage community.

Further progress was made in developing frameworks and guidelines that promote responsible stewardship of heritage objects and strengthen long-term protection measures. Alongside these initiatives, SAHRA contributed to sector-wide knowledge sharing and professional development programmes that enhance heritage management capacity across the country.

Through strategic partnerships, improved governance, and a continued commitment to conservation, SAHRA is ensuring that the objects, collections, and artefacts that tell South Africa's story remain protected, accessible, and valued for generations to come.



Unit Highlights

Development Applications Unit (DAU)

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Heritage Protection Supporting Sustainable Growth Across South Africa

SAHRA continued to strengthen the protection of South Africa's heritage resources through effective regulatory oversight and technical support provided by the Development Applications Unit. During the quarter, SAHRA issued 11 permits and delivered 292 formal heritage decisions and comments, helping to ensure that development projects across the country proceeded in a manner that recognised and safeguarded important archaeological, palaeontological, cultural, and historical resources.

A notable contribution during the period was SAHRA's support to Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities in provinces where heritage management capacity is still developing. Through this collaborative approach, heritage applications and permits continued to be processed in the Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West and Gauteng, ensuring that communities, developers, researchers and public institutions benefited from consistent heritage protection and regulatory certainty.

SAHRA also contributed to strengthening the broader heritage sector through policy development, professionalisation initiatives and research programmes aimed at improving heritage management practice across South Africa. Work undertaken during the quarter supported the development of future heritage skills, enhanced professional standards, and strengthened the frameworks that guide responsible heritage conservation and development.

By combining regulatory expertise, intergovernmental collaboration and sector leadership, SAHRA continues to ensure that South Africa's development goals are advanced alongside the protection of the nation's irreplaceable heritage resources for future generations.



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WOMEN'S MONTH 2026 | HONOURING THE WOMEN WHO SHAPED OUR NATION

This Women's Month, we pay tribute to the courageous women of 1956 and the countless women who contributed to South Africa's liberation struggle. Their bravery, resilience, and determination laid the foundation for gender equality and empowerment in our democratic nation. In commemoration of National Women's Day, the SAHRA Marketing and Communications Team, together with the SAHRA Library Department, proudly participated in the Women's Day celebrations at the Union Building on 9 August 2026, where they curated and showcased a special exhibition honouring the contributions, struggles, and achievements of South African women. Together, let us continue to celebrate, support, and advance the rights and empowerment of women across our nation.

#WomensDay #WomenInHistory #GenderEquality
#EmpowerWomen #UnionBuildingsExhibition



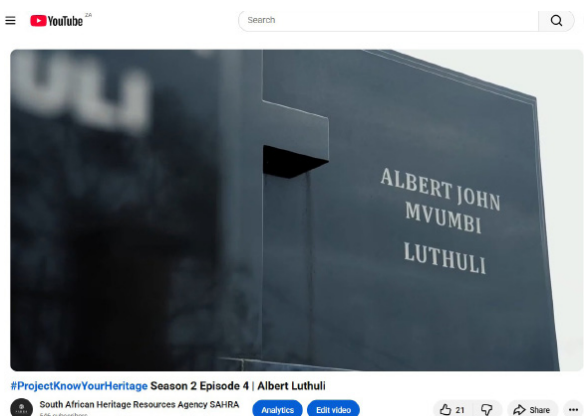
Know Your Heritage

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

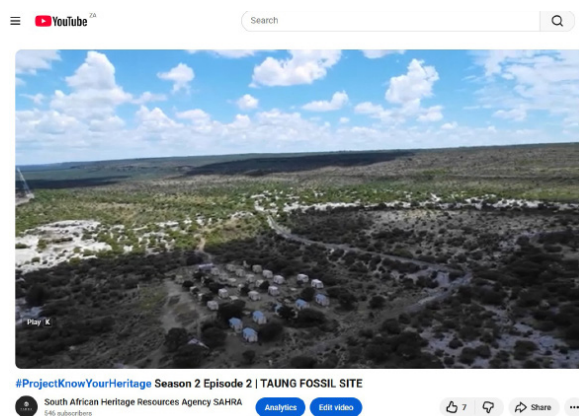
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Know Your Heritage

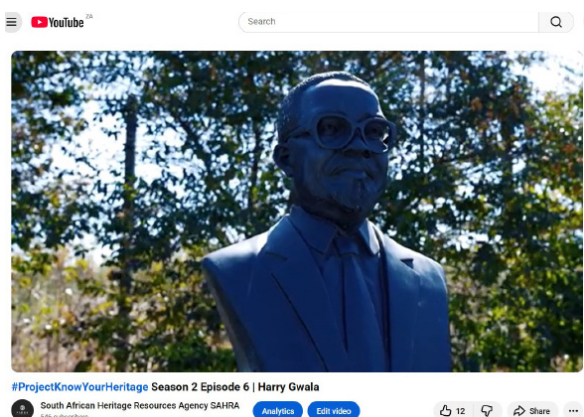
The SAHRA Know Your Heritage Film Project aims to celebrate and promote South Africa's rich cultural legacy by showcasing our National Heritage Sites. Through this initiative, audiences will gain deeper insight into the historical significance, cultural value, and purpose of each site, fostering appreciation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



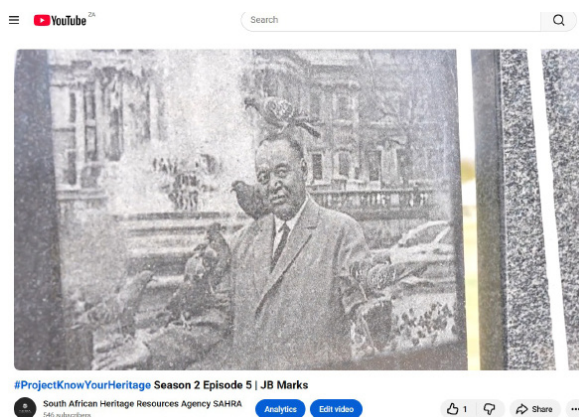
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjv8zU_mZT4&t=14s



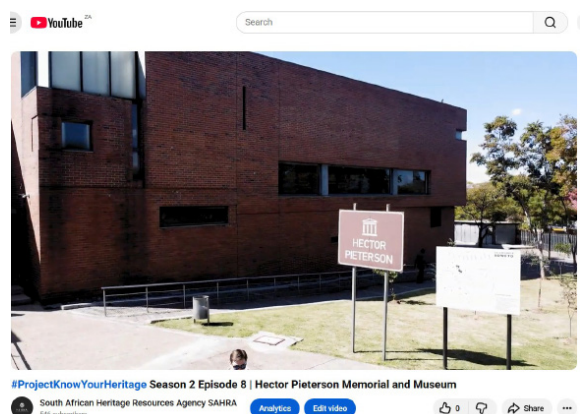
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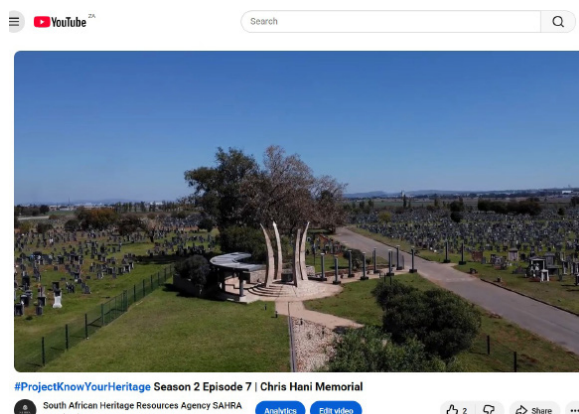
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FA2tQX8jVC4&t=5s>



<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>

SAHRA SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay Connected with SAHRA!

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

Watch. Share. Engage.



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SCAN CODE

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Resources Agency

Become A Partner in Conserving South Africa's Legacy

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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



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.





S O U T H A F R I C A N H E R I T A G E R E S O U R C E S A G E N C Y

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Thank You

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