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**REPORT ON ACCIDENTAL EXPOSURE OF BURIAL AT TJATANE VILLAGE,
MAKHUDHUTAMAGA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

HERITAGE CONSULTANTS	CLIENT
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1. INTRODUCTION

On 28 March 2015 workers of TlouLec General Trading accidentally exposed a possible grave during trenching for installation of low voltage underground cables in Tjatane Village (Fig. 1; GPS coordinates Lat: 24° 38' 56.3", Long: 029° 56' 05.6"). TlouLec is contracted by [Eskom Holding \(SOC\) Limited Limpopo Operating Unit \(LOU\)](#) to erect distribution power line at Tjatane Village

Rural electrification is part of government's on-going programme to provide basic needs in rural areas. Operation was suspended immediately after the discovery. Members of the South African Police Service were informed and they visited the site on 29 March 2015 and prepared a record for their files.



Fig 1. Map showing location of the burial in Tsatane Village.

Tjatane is a small village wedged between two arms of stream which flows northwest into the Olifants River. The area is a flat trough overlooked by hills to the east and south, and west. Schoonoord is a high growth point area with the Magistrate offices, taxi rank, police station etc. lying about 14km to the southeast.

2. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

[Eskom Holding \(SOC\) Limited Limpopo Operating Unit \(LOU\)](#) invited Ecorite Consultants (Pty) Ltd, a Heritage Specialist firm to carry out preliminary investigations, which prompted a visit to the site on Tuesday 6 April 2015. The site of

the grave is an opening between housing stands reserved for development of the street. Two complete houses stand opposite each other to the west (Fig 5). Poles for carrying overhead power lines had been propped up along the north side of street. Trenching started from one of the poles running east, and the skeletal material was exposed at a distance of 2.8m. The trench was relatively shallow measuring 35cm deep, 8m long and 45cm wide (Figs 2-3). The soil is brown and gritty. The exposure consists of many small, fragmented bones. Two fragments were large enough to be identifiable as part of a human skull, as indicated by a convex, bowl shape (Fig 4).



Fig 2. Trench showing position of burial



Fig 3. Trench, longitudinal view



Fig 4. Part of skull



Fig 5. Grave is in the middle of residential area

Our preliminary conclusion is that the burial is old as evidenced by the poor state of preservation of the bones. Subsequent inquiry revealed that they were the remains of Mahubedu Mmakola as attested by grandchild, Nkotanyane Mamakola. According to him more than 60 years have passed since the death and burial of his grandfather.

3. PROPOSED MITIGATION PROGRAMME

Given that the burial is located in what is now a developing residential area, it is necessary to move it to another location. This entails an archaeological salvage operation in line with SAHRA guidelines on the treatment of human remains. We further propose that with due consultation and consent from the local Traditional Authority, the remains must be reburied at the local cemetery rather than send to a museum or other research institution. These institutions hold a large number of such collections. International opinion is now generally not in favour of the argument that such material provides good opportunity for research into biology and past funerary practices. As already stated, research institutions hold a quite a lot of this material anyway.

4. SCHEDULE OF TASKS

	TASK	ACTION	Time frame
1	Quotation.	Ecorite	08 April 2015
2	Issue Task Order.	Eskom	10 April 2015
3	Send Preliminary Report to Eskom and SAHRA.	Ecorite Consultants	07 – 09 April 2015 (3 days)
4	Consultation with the Traditional Tribal Authority and SAPS. Secure letters of consent from the Tribal Authority and SAPS for relocation of burial.	Ecorite	13 April 2015 to 17 April 2015
5	Consultation with local residents (Public Participation Process – PPP).	Ecorite	13 April 2015 to 17 April 2015
6	Secure grave relocation permit from SAHRA.	Ecorite	20 April 2015 to 05 May 2015 (14 Days)
7	Sub-contract a funeral parlour to provide coffin, tombstone, secure reburial site and perform reburial service.	Ecorite	07 May 2015 to 09 May 2015
8	Archaeological salvage preceded by traditional rites connected with burials.	Ecorite, Traditional Authority, Funeral Service	07 May 2015 to 09 May 2015
9	Burial with ceremony.	Ecorite, Traditional Authority, Funeral Service	09 May 2015
10	Write report and submit to SAHRA and Eskom.	Ecorite	14 May 2015

NB: Tasks 4, 5 & 6 may be synchronised as parallel processes.

END

