



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

COMMITTEE MEETING DATES:

GDRC: 26/08/20

EXCO: TBC

HRM COM: TBC

COUNCIL: TBC

DECLARATION SUBMISSION

SUBMITTED BY: Heritage Protection Unit

DATE: 18 August 2020

SAHRIS SITE ID: 130121

SAHRIS SITE CATEGORY: Burial Grounds and Graves / Monuments and Memorial

SIGNIFICANCE CATEGORY (THEMES): Historical, Association with a person / Social

ENQUIRIES: Ms H. Weldon

ITEM: Proposal for National Heritage Site Declaration: The grave site of Magrieta "IHabi" Jantjies, Kameelboom Cemetery; Upington

A1. BACKGROUND

A1.1. The grave of Magrieta "IHabi" Jantjies, located at the Kameelboom Cemetery in Upington, Northern Cape, was identified as a grave of cultural significance because of her contribution in preserving the N|uu Language which is on the verge of extinction.

A1.2. The language had been erroneously declared extinct in 1978, until the first known N|uu speaker was identified in the late 1990s. Further research ensued and last few remaining speakers were identified.¹ The language is listed by United Nations

¹ UNESCO Atlas of World Language in Danger,

<http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-1781> [Accessed 18 February 2020]

Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as one of the 2473 languages in danger of disappearing.²

- A1.3. N|uu was spoken largely around in the areas Upington and Olifantshoek and possibly other surrounding area as well. However, the compulsion to speak Afrikaans on farms and other areas of employment, especially after the National Party came into power in 1948, led to the decline of the language. Some words have become completely extinct.
- A1.4. The remaining speakers are elderly and therefore there is likelihood that the language will become extinct once they pass away. Magrieta "IHabi" Jantjies was among a group of people who became actively involved in assisting to preserve the language. As one of five last remaining people who could speak N|uu fluently, she worked with linguists in efforts undertaken to document and preserve the language. After her, death there were only four people left who can speak N|uu.³
- A1.5. The grave of Magrieta "IHabi" Jantjies foregrounds the consequences of colonialism and apartheid in the destruction of language and culture. While the human cost has always been highlighted in several literature works and in memorials, few of these studies have focused on the destruction of language. Several languages became extinct in southern Africa for various reasons part of which were the expansion of colonial rule and apartheid
- A1.6. In August 2016, SAHRA through the Burial Grounds and Graves Unit rehabilitated the grave with a headstone. The inscription on the headstone is the first official inscription in N|uu.

² The #Khomani Community of South Africa mourns one of the last N|uu language speakers, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/dynamic-content-single-view/news/the_khomani_community_of_south_africa_mourns_one_of_the_las/ [Accessed 20 February 2020]

³ Penwell Dlamini, 'Meet the only 4 people on Earth who speak this ancient SA language, *Timeslive*, 21 September 2017, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2017-09-21-watch--only-four-people-on-earth-speak-this-ancient-sa-language/> [Accessed 18 February 2020]

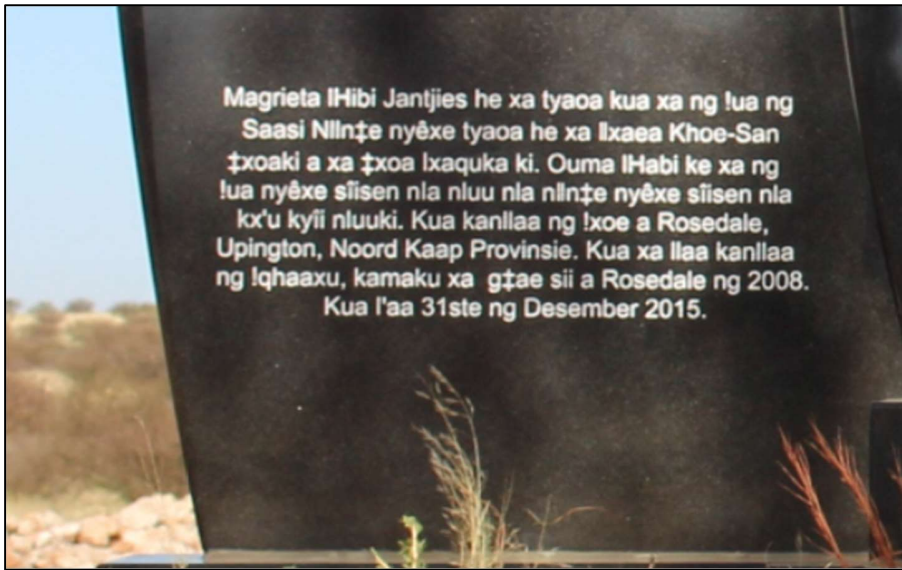


Figure 1: N|uu Language inscription on the headstone of Magrieta “IHabi” Jantjies.

A1.7. The site was graded as a Grade 1 site by the GDRC on 26 February 2020

A2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A2.1. *Language contributes to a community’s sense of place, identity, and social practices. Thus, memorialisation of the grave of Magrieta “Hlabi” Jantjies brings into focus a diminishing community and culture’s sense of place. The inscription of the N|uu Language on a grave of one the last community members to speak the language (the first in the country) was a milestone in contributing to restoring to the N|uu. In its discussion of the N|uu, the UNESCO notes, “A lost language is not only lost cultural heritage, it is also lost traditional knowledge, such as precious knowledge about medicinal herbs or local species or environment. Thus, with each language that disappears, humanity is impoverished in manifold ways.”⁴*

A2.2. *The grave of Magrieta “Hlabi” Jantjies, is, therefore, both of historic and social importance to not just the Khoisan community, but to the South African community as a whole. As one of the last speakers her grave brings into the public consciousness important aspects about the South African past. The near extinction of the language speaks to the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, of land dispossession, coerced*

⁴ The #Khomani Community of South Africa mourns one of the last N|uu language speakers, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/dynamic-content-single-view/news/the-khomani-community-of-south-africa-mourns-one-of-the-las/> [Accessed 20 February 2020]

assimilation, forced labour, neglect and migration amongst others. The extinction of the language in a democratic dispensation as a lived community experience, further reflects the depth of this legacy. While fragments of the N|uu language are in the process of being recovered, several words from its vocabulary have been lost thus extinguishing part of the richness and diversity of our heritage tapestry. Thus, her grave is of cultural significance as it foregrounds a forgotten aspect of South African history.

A3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A3.1 The grave of Magrieta “*Hlabi*” Jantjies was identified and nominated by the Burial Grounds and Graves Unit of SAHRA after rehabilitating the site in 2016. Magrieta “*Hlabi*” Jantjies was one of the last remaining speakers of the N|uu Language and among a few community activists who worked towards its preservation.
- A3.2. Her grave is situated within the Kameelboom Cemetery in Upington and the inscription on the headstone that SAHRA rehabilitated has the first official inscription engraved in N|uu.
- A3.3. Due to the COVID -19 outbreak in South Africa in March 2020 and subsequent lockdown, the planned public meeting with the community in which the site is situated could not take place. Therefore, all the relevant community structures were identified and formally notified. SAHRA received responses in full support of the declaration and no objections. There were also requests that the grave of Elsie Vaalbooi, another speaker of N|uu, be declared. This will be added to the declaration in of Magriet “*Hlabi*” Jantjies in a serial declaration of the last remaining speakers of N|uu,
- A3.4 The Dawid Kruiper Municipality are responsible for the overall maintenance and management of the site through their management of the cemetery. A heritage agreement is being negotiated with the Municipality.
- A3.5. The site is a memorial commemorating the work and life of Magrieta “*Hlabi*” Jantjies as one of the last speakers of N|uu.
- A3.6. It is recommended that the site to be declared as a national heritage site.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE SUBMISSION

- 1.1 The submission is made to discuss and recommend the declaration of the grave site of Margrieta "Hlabi" Jantjies located in the Kameelboom Cemetery in Upington, Northern Cape as a National Heritage Site.

2. LANDOWNER'S DETAILS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS DECLARATION

- 2.1. The grave is located within the Kameelboom Municipal Cemetery and is therefore under the jurisdiction of the Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality, represented by:

Mr W. Juries
Senior Manager
Local Economic Development and Tourism
Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality
Per Email: willem.juries@dkm.gov.za

- 2.2. The Jantjies Family is represented by:
Ms L. Oor
Magrieta Jantjies Family Representative
C/O Mr D. Van Wyk
Per Email: davidvanwyk405@gmail.com

- 2.3. Both the Municipality and the Family are in support of the declaration.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND NOTIFICATION

3.1. Letters of notification were sent on 05th June 2020 to the following interested and affected parties, with the 60-day period ending on the 04th August 2020:

- Jantjies Family
- Khomani San / Vaalbooi Family
- Communal Property Association
- South African San Council
- N|juu Language Authority
- Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality
- ZF Mgcawu District Municipality
- Northern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority
- Heritage Services Northern Cape Dept of Sports Arts and Culture

3.2. In addition, SAHRA published a public notice on the SAHRA website, all our social media platforms and SAHRIS.

3.3. While it was planned to hold a public meeting, however, the restrictions imposed due to the current COVID 19 pandemic did not allow for this. Therefore, all the necessary community structures have been notified by receiving a formal letter of notification as indicated above.

3.4. SAHRA received responses in acknowledgement of receiving the letters from:

- the South African San Council,
- N|juu Language Authority,
- ZF Mgcawu District Municipality and
- Heritage Services Northern Cape Dept of Sports Arts and Culture

3.5. The Khomani San / Vaalbooi Family responded in full support of the declaration, acknowledging the importance of heritage preservation for future generations

3.6. The Northern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority, wrote to SAHRA in strong support of the declaration acknowledging the important step in preserving national heritage site within the province

3.7. There was a request from both the N|juu Language Authority and the Khomani San for the recognition of the grave of Elsie Vaalbooi as a National Heritage Site. As discussed in the GDRC meeting on 26 February 2020, the grave of Elsie Vaalbooi can be attached to the declaration of the Magrieta Jantjies in a serial nomination for

the last speakers of the N|uu Language Authority. The nomination forms have been sent through.

3.8. SAHRA received no objections to the declaration of the site.

4. OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE (AS PER THE TITLE DEEDS)

4.1. The grave is situated within a municipal cemetery, Kameelboom at Block MM, Row K, Grave Number 29.

4.2. In August 2016, SAHRA's Burial Grounds and Graves Unit was involved in rehabilitating the site but installing a headstone, two ledger and base components.

4.3. The inscription on the headstone is the first official inscription in N|uu.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA TO BE DECLARED (SITE BOUNDARIES)

Site Name	Grave Number	Cemetery	Town	Municipality		Province
				Local Municipality	District Municipality	
Grave site of Magrieta "Hlabi" Jantjies	Block MM Row K Grave Number 29	Kameelboom Cemetery	Upington	Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality	ZF Makgawu District Municipality	Northern Cape

Central Point Co-ordinates

Points	Latitude	Longitude
Central Point	28°28'27.1"S	21°11'34.1"E

6. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF THE RESOURCE

6.1. The Kameelboom Municipality is maintained by the Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality.



6.2. SAHRA has initiated negotiations of a heritage agreement with the Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality (Annexure B)

7. RESOURCE UTILIZATION

7.1. Following the rehabilitation of the grave site, the site is utilised as a memorial and commemoration of the role Magrieta Jantjies played in preserving N|uu language.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1. It is recommended that the declaration of the grave of the Magrieta Jantjies as a National Heritage Site is approved.

Prepared By:		Supported By:	
Heidi Weldon Heritage Officer: Grading and Declaration		Nkosazana Machete Manager: Heritage Protection	
Date: 17 August 2020		Date: 18 August 2020	

Recommendation supported by GDRC		Recommendation not supported by GDRC	
Mamakomoreng Nkhasi-Lesaoana Chairperson: GDRC		Signature	
Date:			

Recommendation supported by EXCo		Recommendation not supported by EXCo	
Adv Lungisa Malgas Chairperson: EXCo		Signature	
Date:			

Recommendation supported by HRM Committee		Recommendation not supported by HRM Committee	
Mr Motsathebe Serekoane Chairperson: HRM Committee		Signature	
Date:			

Recommendation supported by Council		Recommendation not supported by Council	
Mr Moses Themba Makhweyane Chairperson: Council		Signature	
Date:			

