

Jaco van der Walt BA (Pret) BA (Hons)  
(Archaeology) [Wits], MA (Archaeology [Wits])

Cell: 082-373-8491.  
E-mail: jaco.heritage@gmail.com.  
Website: www.heritageconsultants.co.za



Reg no. 2007/224785/23  
VAT no. 4660218696

Private Bag X1049  
Suite 34  
Modimolle  
0510

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Thingahangwi Tshivhase

FROM: Jaco van der Walt - Archaeologist

DATE: 7 August 2018

**SUBJECT: Memo on the site investigation of Human Remains – Lebowakgomo Pipeline**

Dear Ms Tshivhase

### 1. INTRODUCTION

HCAC (Heritage Contracts and Archaeological Consulting) was contracted to assess human remains at Lebowakgomo, Limpopo Province (Figure 1) unearthed by the laying of a pipeline (Groothoek Regional Water Scheme: Lebowakgomo Bulk Water Supply Lepelle Nkumpi Municipality Area) on 1 August 2018. This document constitutes feedback on the results of the site investigation as requested by SAHRA BGG.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

An HIA (van der Walt 2017) was conducted for the above mention project, and subsequently, statutory comments and approval were received from SAHRA on the project (Case ID 12347). Trenching commenced for the laying of the pipeline in 2018, and during this process, human remains were uncovered. As part of the chance finds procedure recommended for the project during the HIA the accidental exposure of skeletal remains was handled in the correct manner. All work in this area ceased, the site barricaded and the resident engineer, environmental compliance officer, archaeologist and police were notified and an incident report compiled (Annexure A). The police together with forensic unit visited the area and collected the human remains.

HCAC was then contacted to assess the site conditions and to liaise with the SAHRA BGG. The BGG unit (Ms Thingahangwi Tshivhase (Case Officer at the BGG at SAHRA)) was contacted and notified of the finds via email on 1 August 2018. Subsequently a site visit was conducted and during the field visit, the matrix in which the remains were found was recorded. A rescue permit application was created on SAHRIS and all supporting documents uploaded to the case (Case Number 12754).

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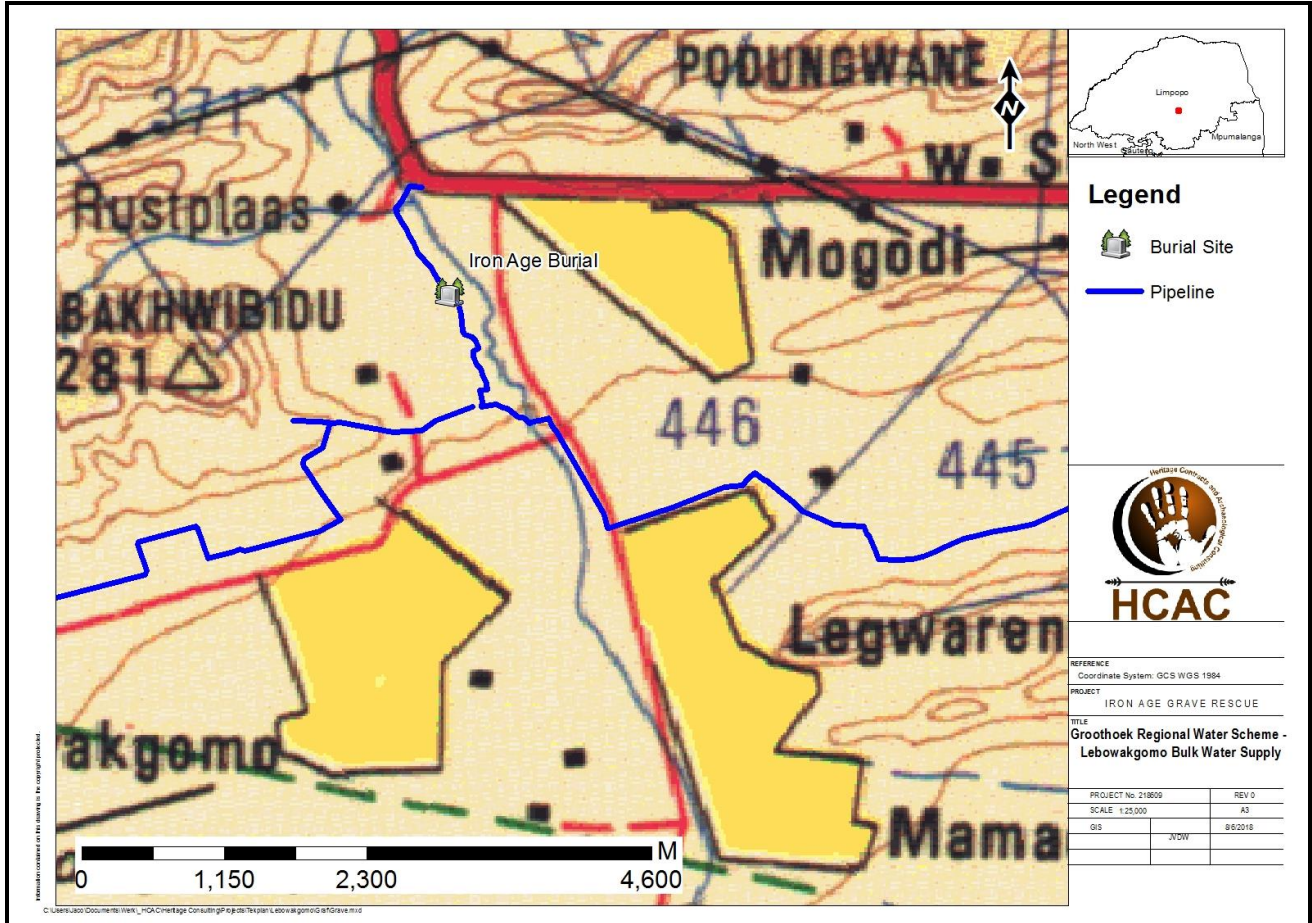


Figure 1. Provincial locality map indicating the location of the grave.

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### 3. RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The skeletal remains were uncovered at S 24° 16'29.8" E 29° 32' 53.7" in old agricultural fields that is currently overgrown by dense sickle bush. The grave was unmarked, and no surface indications of a burial were ever noted. In preparation of laying the pipe, clearing of vegetation occurs consisting of strip clearing of the dense sickle bush along the pipeline route and subsequent trenching exposed the skeletal remains.

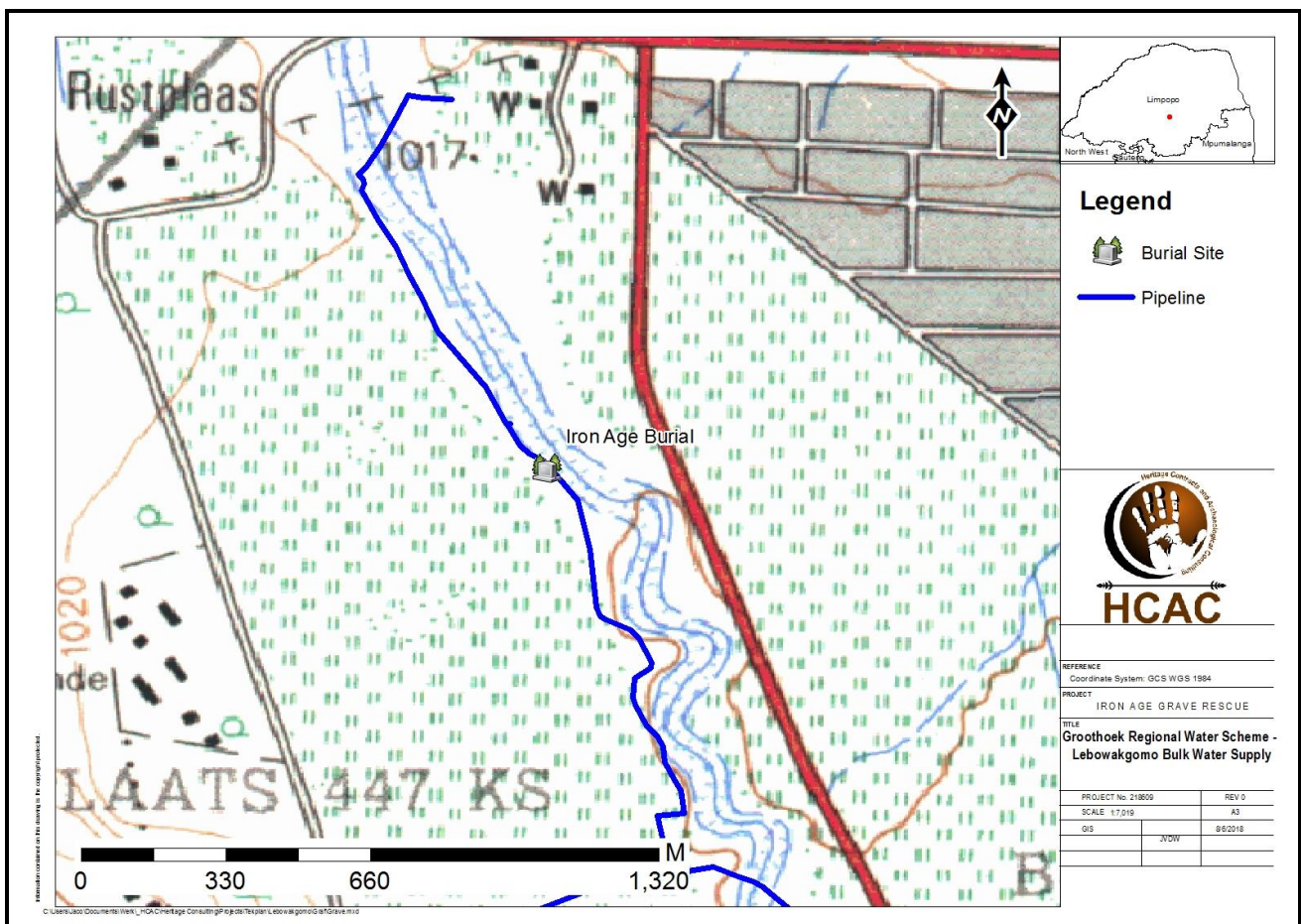


Figure 2. Locality map.

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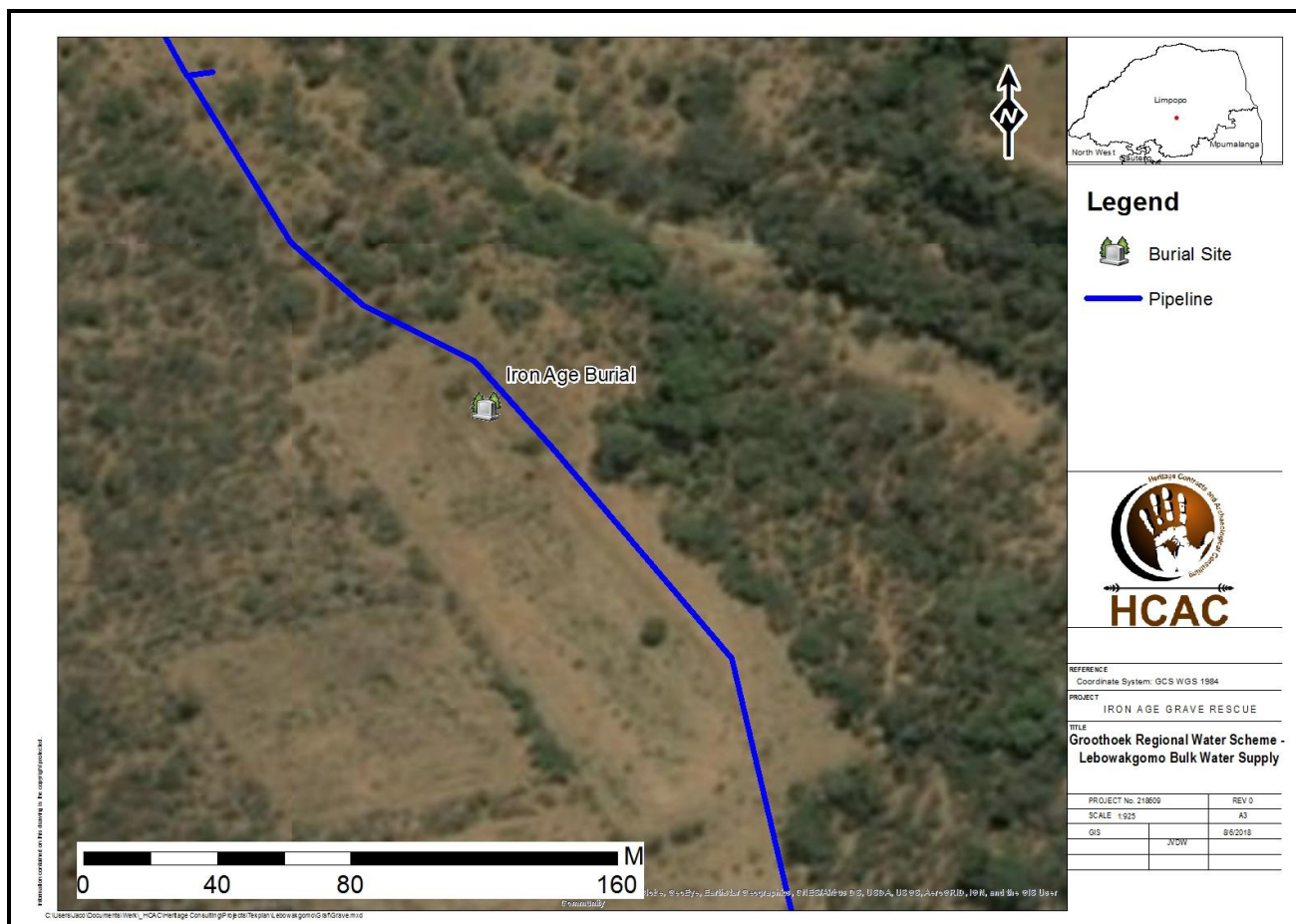


Figure 3. Google Earth image of the area where the grave was uncovered.

Although the skeletal material has been removed by the police at the time of the visit, the burial pit was clearly visible located approximately 75 cm from the Present surface level (PSL) within a thin ash layer (approximately 12 cm thick and spread over 10 meters in a horizontal direction). Cultural material in the spoil heaps consist of upper grinding stones and diagnostic and undiagnostic ceramics. Comb stamping characterises diagnostic ceramic fragments with necked jars.

A very small grave pit occurs in the south western profile of the excavated trench typical in shape and size to a burial in the fetal position. The burial and associated archaeological cultural material strongly suggest that this is an Iron Age period grave.

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Figure 4. Uncovered human remains



Figure 5. Skeletal material.



Figure 6. Danger tape marking the area where remains were discovered.



Figure 7. Thin ash lens indicating archaeological deposit (underlined in blue).

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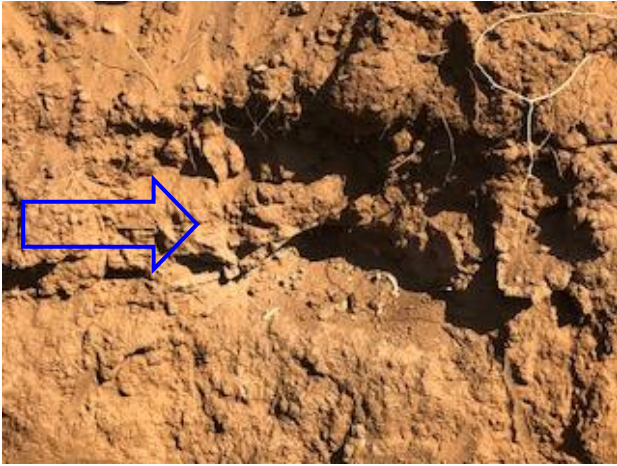


Figure 8. Burial pit indicated by blue arrow



Figure 9. Iron Age period artefacts associated with the grave

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the accidental exposure of skeletal material date to the Iron Age and was handled in compliance with the chance find procedure in the HIA and EMP. Similar cases occurred in the Limpopo province and in line with the procedure followed for these cases (Permit 2127 and 2496) the following is recommended:

- The spoil heap should be screened for additional human remains
- The remains should be recovered from the police and reinterred on site
- The grave location must be demarcated to ensure protection from further impacts.

Kindly advise if you agree with the recommended approach in order for us to continue with the process?

Any further queries can be forwarded to Jaco van der Walt on Cell: +27 82 373 8491 or to [jaco.heritage@gmail.com](mailto:jaco.heritage@gmail.com)

Sincerely

Jaco van der Walt  
Archaeologist

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