

Office of the Chief Executive Officer
Iziko Museums of South Africa
PO Box 61
Cape Town, 8000
Tel no: (021) 481 3832
Fax no: (021) 461 3994
E-mail address: akotze@iziko.org.za

4 December 2018

South African Heritage Resources Agency
PO Box 4637
Cape Town
8001

E-mail: tmonnye@sahra.org.za

Dear Mr Monnye

FUTURE OF MUSEUM SHIP *SAS SOMERSET*

The letter from SAHRA dated 5 October 2018 and our subsequent meeting with SAHRA representatives on 3 December 2018 have reference.

The *SAS Somerset*, a Boom Defence Vessel that served as a Museum Ship since 1988, is currently berthed in the Marina in the V&A Waterfront. A brochure with the history of the *SAS Somerset* is included as Annexure A.

The Department of Public Works previously maintained the *SAS Somerset* as she was considered to be a museum site, but later the DPW advised that the vessel would be viewed as a large museum object and that DPW would no longer be responsible for repair and maintenance. A vessel such as the *SAS Somerset* should be sent to the synchrolift every five years for major repairs, but this is costly, so Iziko Museums of South Africa (Iziko) has not been able to maintain the vessel.

The Two Oceans Aquarium pumps seawater from the Marina in the V&A Waterfront where the *SAS Somerset* is berthed so when two independent surveys recently highlighted the environmental risks posed by the *SAS Somerset* being berthed next to the Aquarium, Iziko advised the Department of Arts and Culture. The DAC obtained an independent assessment from the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) and on 3 August 2018 Iziko was advised that ministerial approval had been given to de-accession the *SAS Somerset* in terms of Section 10(2) of the Cultural Institutions

Act, 1998 (Act No. 119 of 1998) which states that “any movable property transferred under subsection (1) to a declared institution may be alienated only with the approval of the Minister”. Approval was also granted to scrap the *SAS Somerset*.

When oily water was observed around the *SAS Somerset*, the V&A Waterfront advised that the following urgent work needed to be done:

- conduct an underwater hull survey;
- seal the sea chest; and
- pump oily water from the vessel.

A service provider was appointed on 29 August 2018 and subsequently service providers were also procured to remove the asbestos as well as the oil from the *SAS Somerset* so that she can be moved to another berth.

As discussed at the meeting, the *SAS Somerset* was not older than 75 years when Iziko representatives met with SAHRA representatives. However, she has subsequently become older than 75 years as defined in Section 2(ii)(d) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999).

In terms of Section 9(3)(f) of the NHRA, Iziko is hereby informing SAHRA that the *SAS Somerset* will be scrapped as she has been de-accessioned due to her being in a state of disrepair and thus poses an environmental risk.

Smaller heritage objects will be removed from the vessel and larger heritage objects will be removed by service providers when the *SAS Somerset* is moved to Quay 700 where the scrapping process will commence. As mentioned at the meeting, Iziko Collections and Conservation staff will only be able to go below deck to finalise the list of heritage objects to be removed from the *SAS Somerset* when an Asbestos Free Certificate is issued. In the meantime, the Director Collections & Digitisation, Mr Paul Tichmann, may be contacted should there be any queries regarding the removal of heritage objects from the *SAS Somerset*.

You are also welcome to contact me should you have any queries regarding the processes being followed to ensure that the *SAS Somerset* is safe to move to Quay 700 where the scrapping process in terms of the TNPA Scrapping Procedures will commence.

Yours faithfully



Denise Crous (Mrs)
Executive Director Operations
Iziko Museums of South Africa