

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
P.O. Box 4637 | Cape Town | 8001
www.sahra.org.za

Enquiries: Ragna Redelstorff, PhD

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Email: rredelstorff@sahra.org.za

CaseID: 21821

Date: Friday July 28, 2023

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Letter

In terms of Section 32(19) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: Prof. Lee R. Berger
Evolutionary Studies Institute
University of the Witwatersrand
PO WITS 2050

In the interest of promoting science and bringing global recognition for our science of human origins research in South Africa in particular. I am proposing that Tim Nash, a Virgin Galactic Astronaut selected for the third commercial and second civilian flight into space carry two fossils into space, one of *Australopithecus sediba* from the Malapa site, which is on his property, and one of *Homo naledi* from the Rising Star site. This would make these fossils the first extinct humans into space and act as a sign of respect by humanity to our African ancestors who gave us the technology, skills and mind that allows this perhaps greatest expression of human technological achievement – the exploration of space. The carrying of a *Homo naledi* fossil into space will be particularly poignant given the major discoveries recently announced. Major media partners will assist in using this once in a lifetime opportunity to bring awareness to science, exploration, human origins and South Africa and its role in understanding Humankind's shared African ancestry.

Dear Prof Lee R Berger,

Thank you for your application to temporarily export two bones of *Australopithecus sediba* from Malapa National Heritage Site and *Homo naledi* from Rising Star Cave within the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site to Virgin Galactic Spaceport, New Mexico, for a space flight for the promotion of science and discoveries in South Africa.

SAHRA has reviewed the application and has decided to approve it.

We wish you every success with this project.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.

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Yours faithfully

Ragna Redelstorff, PhD
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

Phillip Hine
Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/620113>

Terms & Conditions:

1. This approval does not exonerate the applicant from obtaining local authority approval or any other necessary approval for proposed work.
2. If any heritage resources, including graves or human remains, are encountered they must be reported to SAHRA immediately.
3. SAHRA reserves the right to request additional information as required.