

Proposed upgrade to the existing railway infrastructure at the Wessels Mine near Hotazel in the Northern Cape

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 17101

Date: Friday October 08, 2021
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Interim Comment

In terms of Section 38(3), 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: SLR Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd

South32 intends to upgrade the existing railway infrastructure at the Wessels Mine. The upgrade will consist of modifications to the staging rail lines and the design of a new rail balloon. The extension of the railway into the new railway balloon measures at approximately 2 500 m long and 25 m wide and would result in the clearing of indigenous vegetation (more than 1 hectare, but less than 20 hectares). Additionally, the railway would cross a section of the existing tailings dam and would thus result in the removal of approximately 15 000 – 25 000 m³ of material from the tailings area, which would then be deposited on another existing tailings dam. The new railway extension would be located within the existing Mining Right (MR) boundary at the Wessels Mine and amendments to the mine's Water Use Licence (WUL) are not required.

SLR Consulting (South Africa)(Pty) Ltd has been appointed by Hotazel Manganese Mines (Pty) Ltd to conduct an Environmental Authorisation (EA) Application for the proposed extension of railway infrastructure at the Wessels Mine, near Hotazel, Northern Cape Province (DMRE Ref: NC-00212-MR/102).

A draft Basic Assessment Report (DBAR) Report has been submitted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (NEMA) and the 2017 NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations for activities that trigger the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (MPRDA)(As amended). The proposed development will include the construction of a new rail balloon and the upgrade of existing rail infrastructure.

CTS Heritage was appointed to provide heritage specialist input as required by section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA and section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA).

Lavin, J. 2021. Heritage Impact Assessment in terms of Section 38(8) of the NHRA for the Proposed upgrade to the existing railway infrastructure at the Wessels Mine near Hotazel in the Northern Cape.

No heritage resources were identified within the proposed development footprint. A Chance Fossil Finds and Chance Finds Procedure have been recommended to be implemented.

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The proposed development footprint is located in an area of moderate sensitivity as per the SAHRIS PalaeoSensitivity map. The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit requests that a desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment be conducted by a qualified palaeontologist as part of the proposed development EA process. Further comments will be issued upon the receipt of the outstanding report.

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

Yours faithfully

Natasha Higgitt
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://sahrissahra.org.za/node/582468>