

Our Ref:

Enquiries: Nokukhanya Khumalo
Tel: 021 462 4502
Email: nkhumalo@sahra.org.za
CaseID: 5914

Date: Tuesday September 30, 2014

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Interim Comment

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

Attention: Kenneth Mokoena

PO Box 61587, Marshalltown, Johannesburg, South Africa

The proposed Block Z area is approximately 141 ha with a coal capacity of 9 million tons, and is located adjacent to the current IC mining operations, more specifically west of the North Pit, north of Sasols underground mine, east of the Dwars-in-die-weg-spruit and AATC: Kriel Colliery (KC) operations. IC is situated in the Mpumalanga Province, approximately 60km south of Witbank and 8km south of the town of Kriel in the Mpumalanga Province. More specifically, IC is located between the towns of Kinross, Secunda, Bethal and Kriel (Figure 1-1). The area falls within the Nkangala District and the Emalaheni Local Municipalities.

Thank you for notifying SAHRA of the proposed Isibonelo Colliery open cast mine expansion. It is located on the farm Onverwacht 70 IS, Vlaklaagte 83 IS and Rietfontein 100 IS, near the town of Kriel in the Nkangala local municipality, Mpumalanga Province. The Isibonelo Colliery intends to expand the open cast coal mine pit to Block Z of their existing property.

Under sections 34, 35 and 36 of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA 25 of 1999) heritage resources are protected from damage from mining and development activities. These resources are for instance burial grounds, unmarked and marked graves that are older than 60 years, built structures that are older than 60 years old, archaeology (stone tools, stone walled sites, prehistoric and historic pottery sherds, ash grounds etc.) and palaeontology (fossils of plant and animal material).

The Block Z expansion area lies on a Very High palaeontological sensitive zone. The Draft Scoping Report mentions that the geology of Block Z comprises of Shales and Sandstones of the Madzaringwe formation, Karoo Supergroup. On SAHRIS Palaeontology heritage browser layer (<http://www.sahra.org.za/fossil-heritage-layer-browser>) the Madzaringwe formation may likely contain plant fossils which are protected by the NHRA. SAHRA will require a field assessment to be conducted by a professional palaeontologist.

Dr. AC Van Vollenhoven. April 2014. *A report on a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed Isibonelo Colliery Block Z opencast mine, close to Kriel, Mpumalanga Province.*

Dr Van Vollenhoven undertook a field assessment of the Isibonelo Colliery Block Z area in April 2014. The field assessment was intended to search for any possible heritage resources located on the farms mentioned above in the introduction. From the field assessment three grave sites were located on the study area, although it is noted that they lie outside the open cast pit. It is also noted that the field investigation took place when the vegetation (grass) provided poor visibility of the ground.

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- Site 1: Is a grave yard consisting of 9 graves with only one grave being known and dated to 1907. The other graves are identified by pack stones and have no inscription on them, as mentioned in the heritage report referenced above. This grave yard is located north-west of the proposed Block Z development, thus it will not be directly affected by the open cast mine. However the graves need to be conserved.

- Figure 13, page 22. It is noted that the image is to show the location of the graveyard in relation to the expansion activities. However this image is not clear at all, all the magnified portions of the Block Z expansion area seem as though they may be additional heritage resources in which the heritage report does not mention.

Interim Comment

SAHRA will only make a comment on this case once the following studies have been submitted.

- A Palaeontological Impact Assessment is conducted by a professional palaeontologist, this report should follow the SAHRA minimum standards of reports.

- A clarification of the heritage resources as mentioned above in Figure 13 on page 22 of the Heritage report that is referenced above.

- A final walk through by an archaeologist and palaeontologist, of the proposed mine expansion into Block Z when the vegetation density is low. This is necessary as the above heritage impact assessment was conducted when visibility of the ground was limited.

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

Yours faithfully



Nokukhanya Khumalo
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

Isibonelo Colliery proposed Block Z open cast pit



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Colette Scheermeyer
SAHRA Head Archaeologist
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <http://www.sahra.org.za/node/167732>
(MDEDET, Ref: MDEDET REFERENCE: 17 / 2 / 3N-362) (, Ref:)



The South African Heritage Resources Agency

Street Address: 111 Harrington Street, Cape Town 8000 * Postal Address: PO Box 4637, Cape Town 8000
* Tel: +27 21 462 4502 * Fax: +27 21 462 4509 * Web: <http://www.sahra.org.za>