



Interim Comment

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

Attention: Exxaro Resources (Pty) Ltd

Belfast Open Coast Coal Project, Zoekop 426 JS, Leeuwbank 427 JS and Blyvooruitzicht 383 JT, Belfast, Mpumalanga Province

Thank you for informing SAHRA on the proposed Belfast Open Cast Mine, near the towns of Belfast and Wonderfontein, located on various portions of the farms Blijvooruitzicht 383 JT; and Zoekop 426 JS, Emkhazeni Local Municipality. It is noted that the environmental process is complete for this case, and that the HIA was not submitted onto SAHRIS as per the letter attached to the case dated 27 August 2014.

In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, no 25 of 1999, heritage resources, including archaeological or palaeontological sites over 100 years old, graves older than 60 years and structures older than 60 years are protected. They may not be disturbed without a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority. Before such sites are disturbed by development or mining, it is incumbent on the developer to ensure that a Heritage Impact Assessment is done in terms of Section 38(8) of the NHRA. This report must assess the impact of the proposed development on heritage resources and must provide possible mitigation measures, which may involve recording, sampling and dating sites that are to be destroyed.

de Jong R.C. December 2009. *Heritage Impact Assessment Report: Proposed Belfast Mining Project located on portions of the farms Leeuwbank 427 JS, Blijvooruitzicht 383 JT, Zoekop 426 JS, south of Wonderfontein and Belfast, Mpumalanga*

Dr R. C. de Jong undertook a field assessment in December 2009 to identify any heritage resources located in the mine right area of the Belfast Open Cast Coal Mine which is 2 390 hectares. A number of heritage resources were found on the Belfast Open Cast Coal Mine property.

There are 26 graveyards identified for the project area, 8 on the farm Zoekop 426 JS; 13 on the farm Leeuwbank 427 JS; 5 on the Blijvooruitzicht 383 JT. The majority of the graves are unknown graves with a few barely visible in the grass, as mentioned in the heritage report referenced above.

There are also a total of 16 structures found on the various farms of the project area, 2 on Blijvooruitzicht 383 JT; 6 on Leeuwbank 427JS; 8 on Zoekop 426 JS.

Sites impacted on by the West Pit

All the sites located on the farms Zoekop 426 JS accept the most western edge of the property. These sites are:





- Z15F (modern farmstead); Z5H (old delapidated farm house, still occupied by an elderly farm worker); Z8F (modern farmstead); BV8F (modern farmstead).

- Z7G; Z8G (both these graveyards were farm workers graves); Z1G3; Z1G2; Z1G1 (farmers graves, the number of graves or age is not stipulated in the heritage document). BV8G; L11G also graves not clearly identified as heritage graves).

Sites Impacted on by the East Pit

Majority of the sites located on Leeuwbank will be negatively impacted on by the East open cast pit. The following sites lie in the area of the East Pit:

- LREF (modern farmstead of Jan Burger); L7F (modern farmstead); L10F (historic farmstead, known to be of Jan Burgers).

- BV6G (farm workers grave site); L10G3 (Single farm workers grave).

The location of the plant (Plant 2 was finalised as the viable option due to its proximity to existing access roads as mentioned in the heritage report referenced above) does not impact on any heritage resources.

The other sites located inside the mine right area are also protected in the NHRA, so during the process of construction and during the mining phase, workers, machinery and mining activities should not damage the sites.

Where structures are older than 60 years old they are generally protected from damage or destruction in section 34 of the NHRA (25 of 1999). They cannot be destroyed or damaged without being fully recorded and a destruction permit is not applied for at the Mpumalanga Provincial Heritage Resources Authority.

Under section 36 of National Heritage Resources Act NHRA (25 of 1999), graves that are older than 60 years are protected from damage or destruction by any development or mining activities. Where there are no known relatives or head stones to identify graves and their age, they are still protected by the NHRA. Where graves are younger than 60 years of age the Human Tissues Act (65 of 1983) and other Exhumation Ordinances apply.

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No archaeological sites were located in the mine right area. It is acknowledged that Dr de Jong is not an archaeologist and that no archaeologist has visited the area to undertake a survey. This is normally not common practice and SAHRA normally requires that an archaeologist be consulted for a survey. However, Dr de Jong motivated for the lack of an archaeologist on site and SAHRA APM unit agrees that in this specific instance, his assessment of the area is sufficient.





SAHRA requires that:

All the graves located within the areas proposed to be the East and West open cast mine pit be exhumed and reburied. A permit application for the exhumation of graves is required by the NHRA for graves older than 60 years and any unmarked graves. The permit application must be lodged with the SAHRA Burial Grounds and Graves Unit. For further information about the permit application process to the SAHRA BGG Unit, please contact Itumeleng Masiteng at 012 320 8490.

- Any damage or alteration to site L10F, which is a known historical farmstead, may be undertaken only with a permit for destruction of all structures older than 60 years issued by the Mpumalanga Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (MPHRA). For further information please contact Benjamin Moduka at (bmoduka@mpg.gov.za). Under section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999), it is stated that no built structure older than 60 years may be disturbed and/or damaged by developments without a permit issued by the provincial heritage resources authority.
- A Palaeontological Impact Assessment with a field assessment by a professional palaeontologist, the list of whom can be found on (<http://www.palaeontologicalsociety.co.za/palaeontological-impact-assessments.html>) be undertaken before SAHRA can issue a final comment. This is because the mine lies on a palaeontologically sensitive zone, the Vryheid formation consists of shale, mudstones that lie between the coal seams that may contain fossilised plants and insects which are significant. SAHRA will issue a final comment once the additional report is received.

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



Our Ref: 6278

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CaseID: 6278

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an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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Direct URL to case: <http://www.sahra.org.za/node/173953>
(MDEDET, Ref: 17/2/3N-131)



The South African Heritage Resources Agency

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