

## **Input to Taung Skull World Heritage Site Heritage Impact Assessment Report for Improvement of Visitor Facilities, Site Infrastructure and Heritage Conservation Measures at the Taung Skull World Heritage Site**

David Morris, McGregor Museum Kimberley. June 2015

The author was invited by EcoAfrica Environmental Consultants (Pty) Ltd to act as External Reviewer, specifically in relation to archaeological resources, for a Heritage Impact Assessment for the Taung Skull World Heritage Site (TSWHS), in relation to Improvement of Visitor Facilities, Site Infrastructure and Heritage Conservation Measures. This comment is intended as a summary opinion on archaeological aspects of the process and report. I have some familiarity with the site (since the early 1980s) and peripheral involvement in previous phases of development.

### **Site visit**

I was invited to join the EcoAfrica team for a site visit during which the various elements (sites and associated activities) of the planned development/improvement were inspected. Each of the major archaeological and palaeontological features that would form part of the public experience of the Taung Skull site, and/or which have special management requirements, was visited. Proposals, and in some instances existing developments such as signage, were reviewed on-site, and annotations, especially with respect to outstanding management measures re sensitivities or maximisation of visitor experience, were made.

### **Proposed Improvements in relation to master plan and previous planning**

I am satisfied that the proposed activities, namely the improvement of visitor facilities, site infrastructure and heritage conservation measures, are in line with prior master planning for the TSWHS as a whole and with the various discussions that have taken place about the site. Certain of these features have required revision owing to changed circumstances, for example the positioning of the car park.

### **Anticipated Impacts on Archaeological Sites**

As long as the proposed management and mitigation measures that are set out in the report are implemented, it is not anticipated that there would be any significant negative impacts on archaeological sites/resources.

### **Enhanced protection of the TSWHS**

The activities that deal with conservation management in particular are crucial to enhancing heritage protection, inter alia through management of people visiting the various site elements, and hence these are recommended. Certain of these planned measures had been in place already and their implementation is highlighted in the present report as being required.

### **Opinion**

I am satisfied that the proposed activities and improvements fulfil the needs previously identified and/or adjusted in the present context and that these are sensitive to requirements to protect and manage archaeological resources. Where previous planning has assessed impacts on archaeological resources, it is not anticipated that further formal Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) is required.