

# HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

submitted in terms of section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act

prepared for

NADESON Consulting Services

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MR 00356 Eden

Ladismith – Eden District Municipality, Western Cape

Nadeson Consulting Services appointed *vidamemoria* to conduct a heritage impact assessment for a proposed borrow pit located along MR 00356 approximately 12.2 km south of Ladismith in the Eden District Municipality, Western Cape. *vidamemoria* appointed Dr John Almond (*Natura Viva CC*) to conduct necessary palaeontological specialist study and Madelon Tusenius (*Natura Viva CC*) to conduct necessary archaeological impact assessment. Heritage impact assessment is submitted for comment in terms of Section 38(8) of the NHRAct as a component of an Environmental Management Programme (EMProg in terms of Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act 49 of 2008) to be submitted to the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR).

The proposed borrow pit does not pose a significant threat to local fossil heritage and no further palaeontological heritage studies or mitigation are recommended for this project. No significant impact on archaeological resources is expected if the proposed borrow pit is developed. No further archaeological studies or mitigation are recommended. Proposed intervention would not result in a detrimental heritage impact, yielding social and economic benefits without a negative impact on heritage resources.

## 1. Introduction

Nadeson Consulting Services on behalf of the WCPA: Department of Transport and Public Works appointed Quahnita Samie (*vidamemoria*) to conduct a Notification of Intent to Develop (NID) application in terms of Section 38(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) for a proposed borrow pit at km 5.8 along MR 00356 near Ladismith, in the Eden District Municipality. NID dated 25 June 2012 was submitted to Heritage Western Cape (HWC) for consideration. Response dated 08 August 2012 (case ref 120762TS21) requested 'a heritage impact assessment limited to archaeological scoping report and a palaeontological scoping report with an integrated set of recommendations is required' (Refer Annexure A). *vidamemoria* appointed Dr John Almond (*Natura Viva CC*) to conduct the necessary palaeontological specialist study (dated March 2013) and Madelon Tusenius (*Natura Viva CC*) to conduct necessary archaeological impact assessment (dated March 2013) under supervision of Dr Lita Webley (ACO Associates) as incorporated within this assessment.

The proposed action triggers Section 38(1) (c)(a) activity that will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000 m<sup>2</sup>. This assessment report is submitted for comment in terms of Section 38(8) of the NHRAct as a component of an Environmental Management Programme (EMProg) in terms of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (49 of 2008) to be submitted to the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR). Notification as previously submitted to HWC (dated 31 May 2011) and response (dated 20 June 2011) confirmed the approach to be undertaken in submitting borrow pit notifications to HWC.

### Structure of assessment

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## Site location and description

The Department of Transport, Western Cape, is applying to the Department of Mineral Resources for approval to exploit road material from new borrow pit at **MR00356/5.8/0.3L** close to the R327 approximately 12 km south of Ladismith, Eden District Municipality in the Little Karoo region, Western Cape. This borrow pit is proposed to be excavated into an overnight resting camping place for herded livestock and the attendant drovers. Its physical location is at the foot of a north-west facing slope. The pit is located on Farm Rooideberg Outspan and borrow pit co-ordinates are 33°36'26.86"S 21°15'12.85"E

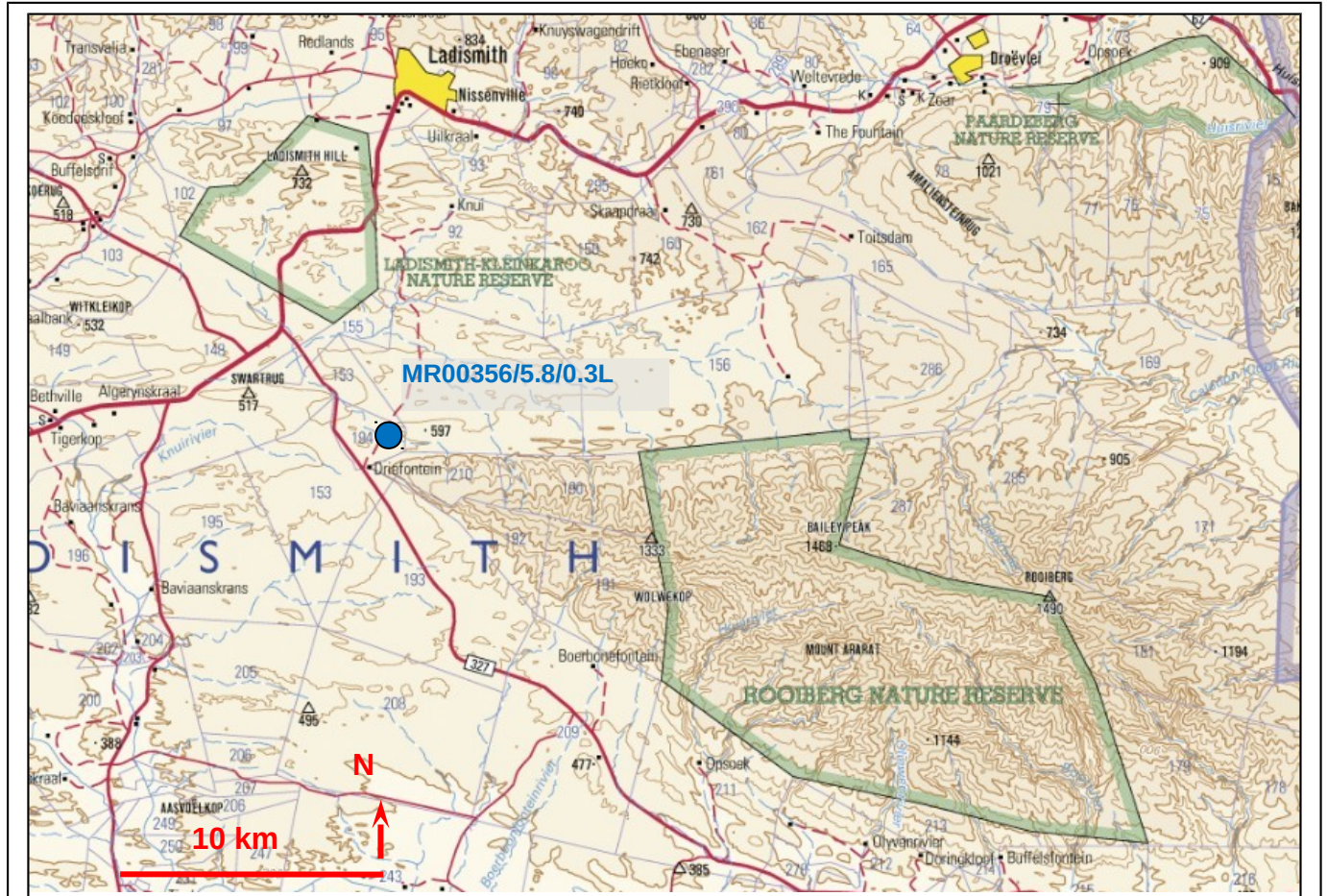


Figure 1: Extract from topographical sheet 3320 Ladismith (extracted Almond 2013: 2)



Figure 2: Existing shallow borrow pit (Almond 2013: 4)



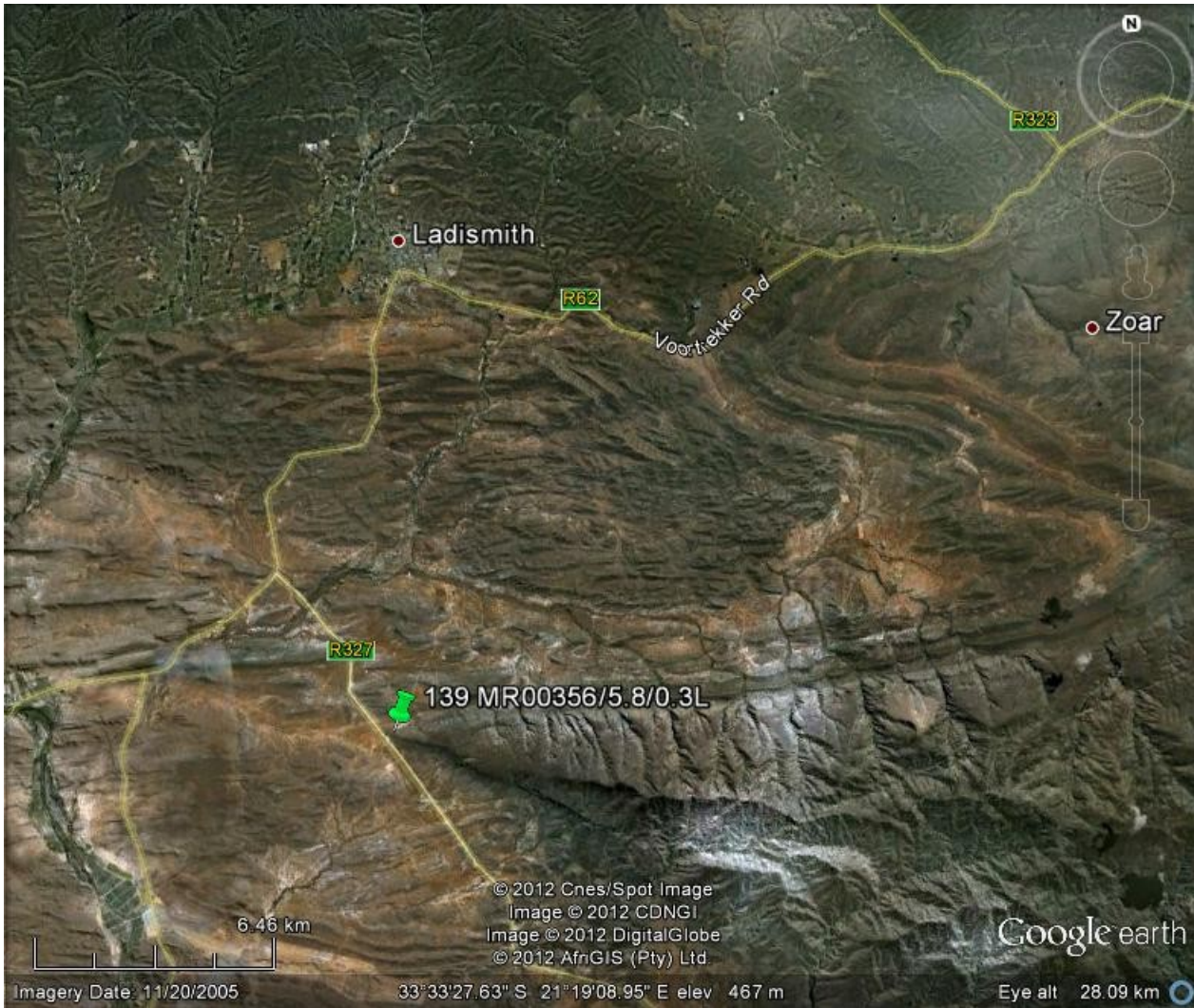


Figure 3: Aerial view of proposed borrow pit location (Google earth image, July 2012)

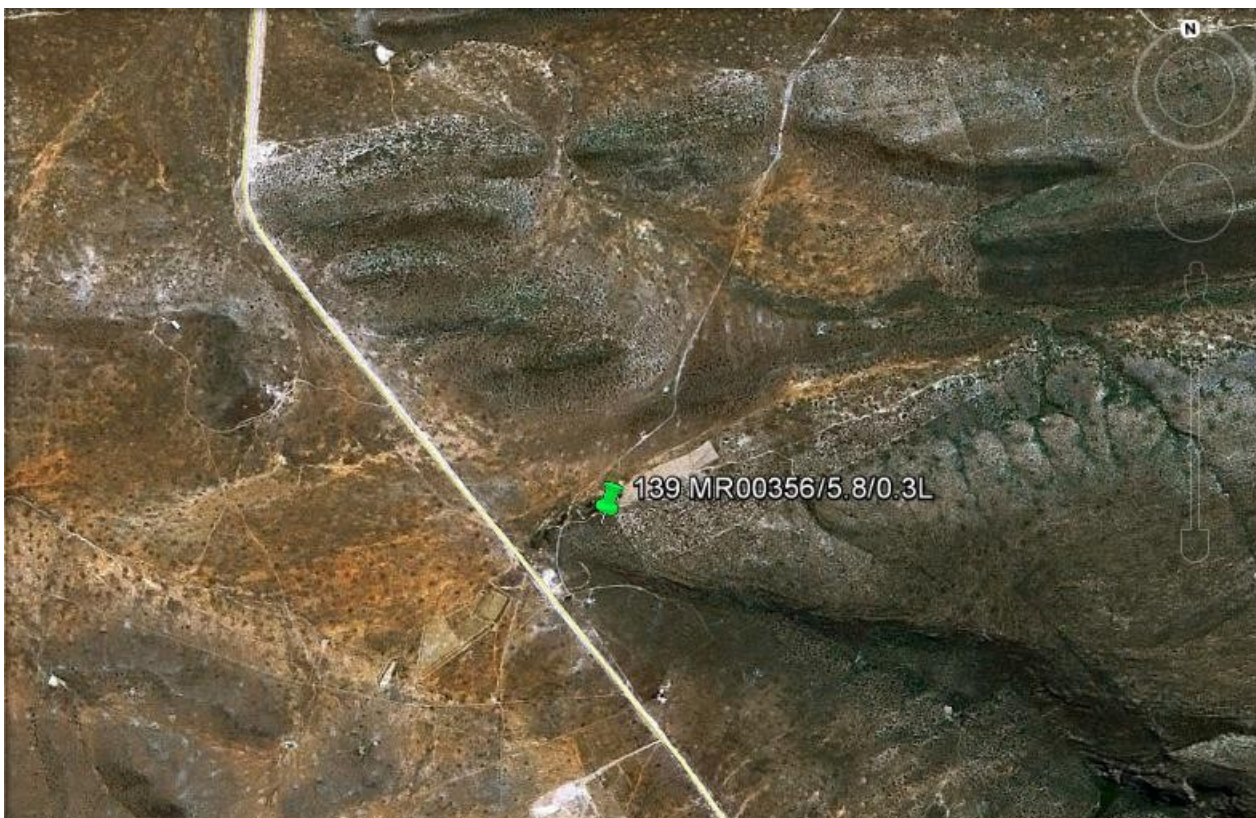


Figure 4: Aerial view of proposed borrow pit area (Google earth image, July 2012)

## Description of proposals

In terms of the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act, all mining activities including extraction of material from borrow pits and quarries requires authorisation from the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR). Where the WCPA: Dept Transport and Public Works is undertaking the maintenance and / or upgrading of roads under its control, no application needs to be submitted for a mining right or permit, however, as per provisions of Section 106(2) of the MPRDA, they are required to prepare and submit an EMProg to DMR for their approval prior to the extraction of any material from a proposed borrow pit or quarry. According to the MPRDA, mineral resources are in the custodianship of the State, where WCPA would temporarily acquire the right to mine the borrow pits, subject to approval by the DMR.

For a gravel road to be able to carry traffic safely and effectively an upper layer of gravel known as a wearing course, which meets specific technical requirements, has to be placed on the prepared roadbed. With time, the wearing course is eroded away by both traffic and the elements. This wearing course needs to be replaced in order to continue to deliver a safe and functional surface to road users. Implementation of regravelling activities requires extraction of suitable materials from identified material sources. During decommissioning, working areas are rehabilitated and revegetated. Material excavated from borrow pit located at **km 5.8 along MR 00356** will be used for the re-gravelling so as to benefit road users in terms of road safety and user economy as well as to minimise maintenance-related disruptions

Summary of borrow pit	
Borrow pit / expropriation area	10 500 m <sup>2</sup>
Maximum depth	5 m
Material description	Feldspathic sandstones of the Rietvlei Formation
Proposed usage after rehabilitation	Stock watering
Volume of material to be sourced	22 000 m <sup>3</sup>
Estimated proven material reserves	22 000 m <sup>3</sup>

Trial pit investigations and sampling were conducted at four proposed borrow pits considered as potential sources of material.

Three were however excluded from consideration due to environmental concerns and / or unsuitability of material for purpose of regravelling.

The mine plan outlining extent of borrow pit and mining is attached as Annexure B. Methodology for the preparation, operation and closure of borrow pit is outlined in Annexure C.

Eden District Municipality is to undertake work on behalf of the WCPA. Formal agreements are to be entered into between the landowner and the WCPA, with the municipality managing the site until decommissioning and closure. During decommissioning, the working area will be rehabilitated and revegetated as per the approach outlined in the mining plan. WCPA's liability for the site persists until such time as a Closure Certificate has been issued by the DMR.

## **Results of consultation**

DMR has outlined requirements for public participation in terms of the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act (Act 28 of 2002) for exempted organs of state. This includes liaison with the landowner, notification of the immediate neighbours and either an on-site advertisement or advertisement in the local newspaper. The WCPA has indicated a commitment to developing and maintaining good relations with landowners and therefore landowners concerns are incorporated into the final agreement.

The public consultation process for this project has involved consultation with the landowners and neighbours, and the advertising of the proposed activity in the local newspaper.

No heritage related comments and / or concerns were received.

*Requests / concerns of owner:*

- None noted

## 2. Heritage resources

### Identification of heritage resources

Proposed site and immediate context do not fall within conservation or protected heritage areas, and is not located near to or visible from any protected heritage sites. The site does not fall within a historical settlement or townscape and does not contribute towards rural or natural landscape of cultural significance. The site is therefore not considered as an integral component of the cultural landscape.

Dr John Almond conducted a palaeontological field assessment and provided a report outlining geological context, palaeontological heritage and palaeontological sensitivity. The borrow it site is underlain by fluvial to shallow marine quartzites of the Rietvlei Formation (uppermost Table Mountain Group) of Early Devonian age. Elsewhere in the Little Karoo these rocks have yielded an important biota of shallow marine brachiopods, molluscs, trilobites and other shelly invertebrates of the Malvinokafric Faunal Realm as well as low-diversity trace fossil assemblages. In the study area the Rietvlei bedrocks are shattered and quartz veined in proximity to a major fault and are unlikely to contain well-preserved fossils. They are also mantled in thick quartzitic colluvium of Late Caenozoic age (Almond 2013:5).

Madelon Tusenius conducted archaeological field assessment and provided report identifying and assessing archaeological resources, associated impact, assessment of significance and recommendations regarding any mitigation required. Given the history of the site as an outspan place, there was a surprising lack of archaeological material on the ground. Many of the stone artefacts are indeterminate in age but are likely to be either Middle Stone Age (MSA) or Later Stone Age (LSA). All material has clearly been washed into position from elsewhere and is thus in a disturbed, secondary context (Tusenius 2013: 1)

The site has no known historical, social, or spiritual significance. No built environment issues and / or cultural landscape issues have been identified. No further heritage resources were identified.

### Heritage significance

A previous desktop basic assessment of the pit site by the author assessed its palaeontological heritage sensitivity as high due to the presence here of potentially fossiliferous mudrocks of the Gydo Formation (Lower Bokkeveld Group). However, in the study area the Rietvlei bedrocks are shattered and quartz veined in proximity to a major fault and are therefore very unlikely to contain well-preserved fossils. They are also mantled in thick quartzitic colluvium of Late Caenozoic age of very low palaeontological sensitivity (Almond 2013:6).

The mix of sparse, scattered archaeological and historical material of various ages in a secondary context indicate that the affected area is of low archaeological heritage significance (Tusenius 2013: 11).

### Heritage indicators

Heritage indicators identified aim to ensure that significance would not be adversely impacted on by the proposed development. Indicators concern impact on the cultural landscape, identified heritage resources and visual impact. No sensitive landscapes and material of archaeological significance were identified. The site is however regarded to be of exceptionally high palaeontological sensitivity.



### 3. Assessment of impacts

An assessment of the potential development impacts on significance is undertaken using relevant assessment criteria as well as response to indicators. Assessment of impacts on palaeontological significance has been provided as well as consideration of the cultural landscape and assessment of cumulative impacts.

**Cultural landscape:** Proposed borrow pit would not result in a negative impact on the cultural landscape. The landscape within which the site lies possesses low intrinsic heritage value and no heritage resources were identified within the immediate context. The site and its immediate context are considered as being of low heritage significance. No heritage resources will be impacted and the overall status of the impact is considered as low.

**Archaeological and palaeontological impact:** No impact on archaeological resources would occur as a result of expansion.

**Visual impact:** Low intensity visual impact is limited to the immediate surroundings and will be limited to operational phase.

**Cumulative impact:** The proposed moderate intensity intervention lies within a disturbed context with degraded conditions. No new roads would have to be constructed as the borrow pit is accessed directly off main / divisional roads or via existing access tracks. The borrow pit and access tracks would be fenced for the duration of the mining activities. There will be no site buildings located at the borrow pit site. No long-term traffic increase will be experienced. Low impact is associated with impact of increased personnel and cumulative impacts on borrow pit footprint and surroundings.

**Site rehabilitation:** The intention is to recreate a depression in which runoff collects for stock watering and recreation of users of the present picnic facilities. Therefore, stockpiled topsoil should be carefully redistributed over cut slopes of worked out areas above the elevation of the drainage overflow, after the completion of any one phase of exploitation of the resources in this pit. The floor of the pit below the elevation of the drainage overflow does not require topsoiling because it will be drowned by collected run-off water.

**Impact relative to sustainable social and economic benefits:** The project will result in social and economic benefits for the local community in terms of service provision and employment opportunities.



## 4. Discussion

During the course of borrow pit excavations, operations should be planned in such a way that the amount of work that will be necessary for the finishing off of the borrow pit is reduced as far as possible. Indiscriminate excavation without due regard for the desired final shape of the borrow pit should not be permitted and should be rectified immediately. Timing of rehabilitation is important as rehabilitation of disturbed areas should ideally be programmed to occur as soon as practically possible following cessation of work in a specific area. The period between cessation of activities associated with mining of materials and the onset of rehabilitation for that area should ideally not exceed 1 month. Rehabilitation operations should ideally be conducted in parallel with extraction. Accordingly, progressive rehabilitation, in which depleted sections of a borrow pit are reclaimed while extraction is ongoing in other sections of the same pit is encouraged.

Site development, operation, mining and closure guidelines outlined with the Environmental Management Programme provides detailed guidance for the preparation, operation and decommissioning of the site. Rehabilitation of old and current working faces has been undertaken to mitigate visual impact to road users. Measures outlined should be adhered to in order to minimise potential negative impacts. It is recommended within the EMProg that an environmental control officer or suitable experienced engineer monitors the preparation, operational and decommissioning of the borrow pit so as to ensure that mitigation and rehabilitation measures are adhered to.

The proposed borrow pit project does not pose a significant threat to local fossil heritage and no further palaeontological heritage studies or mitigation are recommended for this project (Almond 2013: 6).

No significant impact on archaeological resources is expected if the proposed borrow pit is developed. No further archaeological studies or mitigation are recommended. If any human remains are found during development of the proposed pit, work in that area must cease and the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) must be notified immediately (Tusenius 2013: 11)

### **Recommendations**

It is therefore recommended that:

1. proposed borrow pit be supported
2. comment be issued that proposed activity may proceed in terms of Section 38(8) of the NHRAct

References:

- Almond John E PhD (March 2013): *Palaeontological specialist study: field assessment & recommendation for exemption from further studies & mitigation*
- ASAPA Aggregate and Sand Producers Association of Southern Africa (30 September 2009): *The issue of borrow pits being used in the aggregate and sand industry* accessed online
- Aurecon / Nadeson JV (July 2011): *Draft environmental management programme, summary report and mine plan*
- Galliers R M (July 2011): *Geotechnical investigations and geological strategic gravel pit summary report* for Aurecon South Africa
- Heritage Western Cape (August 2012): *Minimum Standards For Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (Aia) Reports*
- Tusenius M (March 2013): *Archaeological Impact Assessment*
- vidamemoria (June 2012): *Notification of Intent to Develop*