

5 June 2022

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**RE: Proposed Name Change of the Afrikaans Language Monument / Afrikaanse Taalmonument (ATM)**

On 10 March 2022, Minister Nathi Mthethwa, Department of Sports, Arts and Culture (DSAC), purportedly instructed the management of the Afrikaans Language Monument / *Afrikaanse Taalmonument* (ATM), Paarl, Western Cape, to remove the reference to Afrikaans in its name ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrikaans\\_Language\\_Monument](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrikaans_Language_Monument)). Mthethwa's instruction was met with concern, not only by the ATM Council (ATM 2022; Nikanjeni 2022) but by the public at large, with various organizations pledging their commitment to fight for the retainment of the ATM's name as well as Afrikaans as language within the multicultural and -linguistic makeup of South Africa in general and the Western Cape in specific, including among other the Democratic Alliance (DA) (DA 2022; McCain 2022; Poonah 2022), the Freedom Front Plus (FFPlus) (Boshoff 2022), and lobby group Afriforum (Craig 2022; Kelder 2022).



**Plate 1:** View of the ATM, Paarl, Western Cape (<https://www.taalmuseum.co.za/the-history-of-the-monument/>)

The ATM was officially opened on 10 October 1975. The monument commemorates the semicentenary of Afrikaans as an official language of South Africa, separate from Dutch, coined with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Society of Real Afrikaners / *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* (GRA). The monument comprises various tapering concave and convex features symbolizing the influences of different languages and cultures on Afrikaans as language as well as political developments in South Africa. An open stadium at the bottom of the structure serves as venue for concerts and events and more recently constructed office facilities facilitates both management and research ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrikaans\\_Language\\_Monument](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrikaans_Language_Monument); Webley 2008). An abbreviated history of the monument is given as (<https://www.taalmuseum.co.za/the-history-of-the-monument/>):

*"The idea to build a monument for the Afrikaans language was announced on 14 August 1942 during the unveiling of a memorial plaque at the cemetery on the farm Kleinbosch outside Paarl, in honour of S.J. du*

Toit, D.F. du Toit and P.J. Malherbe, the three founding members of the [...] GRA. The announcement was followed by a public meeting in Paarl on 26 September 1942 where the Afrikaanse Taalmonument committee was established. The chairman was P.J. Loots and the vice-chairman S.P.H. de Villiers. The rest of the committee consisted of A.L. de Jager, W. de Vos Malan, J.J. Muller, G.G. Cillie, G.C. Burger (secretary), H.A. Rust, W.A. Joubert, W.H. Louw, and Miss J. Meyer.

The purpose of the committee was to raise funds for the construction of a 'worthy language monument in Paarl' and for bursaries for 'deserving advanced students who wanted to especially dedicate themselves to an intensive study of the Afrikaans language'.

The launch was enthusiastic and a so-called 'Oproep' [appeal] was set up to bring the matter to the attention of the whole of South Africa. This 'Oproep' enjoyed wide coverage in the media, but the fundraising, however, wasn't as successful as hoped and it was nearly three decades later before the monument became a reality.

The 'Afrikaanse Taal- en Kulturbond' (ATKB) was since 1963 heavily involved in the construction of the monument and eventually took over all administrative and secretarial duties. The organisation also played a large role in fundraising.

In 1963 a committee was established to launch a competition for the design of the monument and 12 architects were invited to take part. According to the brief the monument had to be visible from far away and among others present the cultural and political bloom of Afrikaans. The design by architect Jan van Wijk was announced as the winner.


The terrain for the monument west of Bretagne Rock on Paarl Mountain was already selected in 1963. In 1968 the Paarl municipality granted 84 hectares of land to the state.

Building work started in late 1972 and was completed by the end of 1974. The total cost of construction was R700 000. The monument was inaugurated in 1975, one hundred years after the founding of the GRA."

The land on which the ATM is situated, Erf 11827, a portion of Erf 1, Paarl Mountain, was accordingly first proclaimed a National Monument in 1963 under the Natural and Historical Monuments, Relics and Antiquities Act, Act No. 4 of 1934 (Webley 2008). The ATM is currently, by inference according to available records, managed by SAHRA as a National Heritage Site (NHS) [?] (with cognizance to the retainment of the site's heritage status as a National Monument) under the National Heritage Resources Act, Act No. 25 of 1999 (NHRA 1999), and listed in the *List of Heritage Sites, Paarl* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_heritage\\_sites\\_in\\_Paarl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_heritage_sites_in_Paarl)) as:

LIST OF HERITAGE SITES, PAARL						
SAHRA Identifier	Site Name	Description	Town	District	NHRA Status	Coordinates
9/2/069/0140	Taalmonument, Paarlberg, Paarl	-	Paarl	Paarl	National Monument [NHS?]	S33°45'58"; E18°56'36"

9/2/069/0140	Taalmonument, Paarlberg, Paarl		Paarl	Paarl	National Monument	33°45'58"S 18°56'36"E	
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Screenshot: 4 June 2022 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_heritage\\_sites\\_in\\_Paarl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_heritage_sites_in_Paarl)).

**Table 1:** Record of the ATM as listed in the List of Heritage Sites, Paarl

It is reasonably inferred that the ATM's name change, as instructed / proposed by Mthethwa, will be subject to the South African Geographical Names Council Act, Act No. 118 of 1998 (SAGNCA 1998) process. However, in the case of the ATM, and with impact on the heritage status quo of the site, the proposal is coevally subject to the particulars of the NHRA 1999, not limited to but including among other:

❖ NHRA 1999 – Section 9

(1) All branches of the State and supported bodies must give heritage resources authorities such assistance in the performance of their functions as is reasonably practicable.

- (3) Each State department and supported body must –
- (e) Not take any action that adversely affects such a resource unless the authority concerned is satisfied that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the taking of that action and that all measures that can reasonably be taken to minimize the adverse effect will be taken.
  - (f) At the initiation of the planning process of the project, or at least 90 days before taking any action that could adversely affect such a heritage resource, whichever is the greater, inform SAHRA of the proposed action and give them reasonable opportunity to consider and comment on it.
- (4) Where SAHRA has been informed of a proposed action by a State Department or supported body, it must, as soon as practicable, submit its comments to the Department or supported body.
- (5) An action for the purpose of this section shall be deemed to include the making of a recommendation which, if adopted, would affect a heritage resource, the making of a decision, the approval of a programme, the issue of a licence or the granting of a permission.

❖ **NHRA 1999 – Section 27**

- (1) SAHRA must identify those places with qualities so exceptional that they are of special national significance in terms of the heritage assessment criteria set out in section 3(2) and prescribed under section 6(1) and (2), and must investigate the desirability of their declaration as national heritage sites.
- (2) A provincial heritage resources authority must identify those places which have special qualities which make them significant in the context of the province or a region in terms of the heritage assessment criteria set out in section 3(2) and prescribed under section 6(1) and (2) and must investigate the desirability of their declaration as provincial heritage sites.

❖ **NHRA 1999 – Section 3**

- (1) For the purposes of this Act, those heritage resources of South Africa which are of cultural significance or other special value for the present community and for future generations must be considered part of the national estate and fall within the sphere of operations of heritage resources authorities.
- (2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the national estate may include –
- (a) Places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance;
  - (b) Places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- (3) Without limiting the generality of subsections (1) and (2), a place or object is to be considered part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because of –
- (a) Its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
  - (b) Its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
  - (c) Its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
  - (d) Its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;
  - (e) Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
  - (f) Its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
  - (g) Its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
  - (h) Its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organization of importance in the history of South Africa.

❖ **NHRA 1999 – Section 7**

- (1) SAHRA, in consultation with the Minister and the MEC of every province, must by regulation establish a system of grading of places and objects which form part of the national estate, and which distinguishes between at least the categories –
- (a) Grade I: Heritage resources with qualities so exceptional that they are of special national significance;
  - (b) Grade II: Heritage resources which, although forming part of the national estate, can be considered to have special qualities which make them significant within the context of a province or region; and
  - (c) Grade III: Other heritage resources worthy of conservation,

And which prescribes heritage resources assessment criteria, consistent with the criteria set out in section 3(3), which must be used by a heritage resources authority or a local authority to assess the intrinsic, comparative and contextual significance of a heritage resource and the relative benefits and costs of its protection, so that the appropriate level of grading of the resource and the consequent responsibility for its management may be allocated in terms of section 8.

❖ NHRA 1999 – Section 37

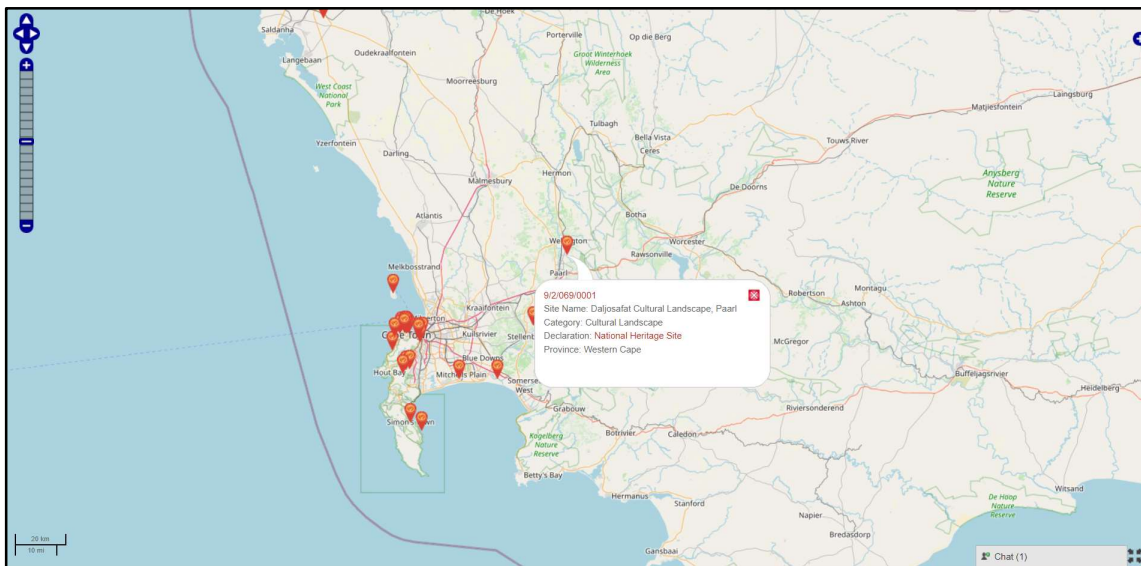
Public monuments and memorials must, without the need to publish a notice to this effect, be protected in the same manner as places which are entered in a heritage register referred to in Section 10.

\* \* \*

With reference to site management, the proposed ATM name change, and related NHRA 1999 process the following are preliminary raised / requested:

1) The ATM's grading under the NHRA 1999

At present it is uncertain whether the NHRA 1999 process applicable will apply to the ATM as a NHS, as is preliminary inferred and thus contained in this letter, or as a Provincial Heritage Site (PHS). The site is listed as a National Monument ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_heritage\\_sites\\_in\\_Paarl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_heritage_sites_in_Paarl)) implying that the site has not as yet been graded in terms of the NHRA 1999 – this being a troublesome heritage site status with regards to proposed changes and the management thereof. It, however, need be stated that the ATM is not the only heritage site in this predicament, nor the only such site listed in the *List of Heritage Sites, Paarl*. SAHRIS does not record the ATM as a NHS, with the only NHS indicated on the SAHRIS NHS database situated in the Paarl region being the Daljosafat Cultural Landscape, Paarl (SAHRA Identifier: 9/2/069/0001). On the other hand, the *List of Heritage Sites, Paarl* indicates that some formerly declared National Monuments receive (automatic) PHS status under the NHRA 1999 – where it is reasonably inferred that these sites may (or may not) have passed a rigorous grading process – while the heritage site status of others are still pending grading assignments associated with the replacement of the National Monuments Act, Act No. 28 of 1969 (NMA 1969) by the NHRA 1999.



**Map 1:** NHSs of the greater Paarl region as geospatially listed on SAHRIS (<https://sahris.sahra.org.za>)

With cognizance to agreements between SAHRA and HWC, including among other the matter of heritage site grading (SAHRA & HWC 2012), the HWC (2012) "Procedure for the Grading of Former National Monuments" states:

Grading of former national monuments, now all provincial heritage sites, which were declared before the National Heritage Resources Act came into effect on 1 April 2000 is required in terms of this Act.

6. Where a site is believed by the Council to be Grade I, the matter must be referred to SAHRA for its decision.
7. Until SAHRA expresses its opinion the site shall be treated as if it is Grade II.
8. If SAHRA disagrees with the grading the site shall thereafter be deemed to be Grade II.

9. Final gradings shall be entered into the database.

It is, resultantly, requested that clarity as to the ATM's site status as a NHS or PHS / grading process as per the NHRA 1999 Section 7(1) be made available, or finalized, as may apply, in order to facilitate management of the proposed name change process by the relevant heritage agency / authority, being SAHRA in the case of a NHS [Grade I] status, or the provincial heritage resources authority being Heritage Western Cape (HWC) in the case of a PHS [Grade II (or Grade III, as may apply)] status.

2) The proposed ATM name change and associated NHRA 1999 process

The proposal for the name change is subject to the NHRA 1999 Section 9(3) process, be – as stated above – the process managed by SAHRA or HWC; with the project proponent, and thus the party responsible for the heritage process in the case of the proposed name change, being DSAC.

It is herewith requested that this letter serves as registration as Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) for the heritage consultation / public process related to the proposal (at the time of officiation of the process), be the process managed by SAHRA or HWC, and called for in terms of the NHRA 1999 Section 10(2), Section 25(1)(b), Section 38(3)(d) and (3)(e), or other.

\* \* \*

On 3 June 2022, Shadow Minister Veronica Van Dyk, DSAC, reported that a request by the DA to see the agreement wherein Mthethwa instructed the said name change was responded to by DSAC as: "*[N]o agreement ever existed between the Minister and the Board of the Afrikaans Taalmonument*", and further thereto that "*It is very much disturbing that the Department / Minister's office continuously gets dragged into rumors or unverified information*": the commentary by DSAC thus contrary to the reported 10 March 2022 instructed ATM name change report (Van Dyk 2022).

With noted discrepancy in reporting regarding the matter of the ATM's proposed name change and with specific reference to the public response thereto it is recommended that SAHRA / HWC ensures transparency and prompt management of the matter, as called for in this letter, with a focus on:

- 1) Clarity regarding the heritage site status of the ATM and the responsible agency / authority to manage the process should the name change proposal be officially initiated; and
- 2) Notice to the various parties involved of the NHRA 1999 process and the particulars thereof (where seemingly uncertainty exists), including that of DSAC as proponent and by implication responsible for the NHRA 1999 process.

I trust SAHRA and HWC find the above in order.

Yours sincerely,



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