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**Attention      Bernadet Pawandiwa**

Dear Ms Pawandiwa

**Application for Exemption from a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment  
Upgrading of KwaMayi-Theewater Bulk Water Supply Harry Gwala District Municipality,  
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

**Project description**

The proposed KwaMayi- Theewater Bulk Water Supply Scheme is located within the uMzimkhulu Local Municipality of the Harry Gwala District Municipality. The proposed project is aimed at providing residents within the region with a reliable, potable and sustainable water supply.

The proposed KwaMeyi-Theekloof water supply project involves the abstraction of water from the Ibisi River, the upgrade of the existing Water Treatment works, the construction of three reservoirs and two pipeline river crossings. No pump house or additional infrastructure will be provided at the river but an upgrade to the existing pumps will be undertaken.

The cardinal co-ordinates are as follows:

1. Water Treatment Works	30° 24' 20.95" S	29° 53' 29.72" E
2. Reservoir 1	30° 23' 27.73" S	29° 51' 32.64" E
3. Reservoir 2	30° 22' 18.71" S	29° 56' 08.71" E
4. Reservoir 3	30° 23' 17.39" S	29° 56' 43.14" E

See Google kmz. File uploaded to SAHRIS.

The topography of the supply area is characterised by very steep and hilly terrain rising up from the flatter valley bottom of the Ibisi River. Settlement density is high but households are mostly formalised fenced, field and homestead precincts; located along the valley bottoms and flatter interfluvies between the steeply incised drainage lines. The greatest part of the pipeline reticulation will follow immediately adjacent to existing District and Auxiliary Roads and established tracks. The "greenfield" alignments are not expected to impinge on any existing homestead precincts.

(See Figures as uploaded to SAHRIS).

## **Site assessment and recommendations**

Settlement of these upland grassland areas by subsistence farming communities is an historically recent phenomenon with people being drawn to Mission establishments in the area at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Latterly, the area was part of the former Transkei Homeland and communities came to be settled in formalised villages. This, and more recent RDP settlement expansion with concomitant field clearance, has masked a very ephemeral Later Stone Age archaeological footprint.

The SAHRIS Palaeontology Sensitivity Map places the scheme within a green delimitation and thus of moderate paleontological potential. However, given the nature of the project, where water reticulation pipes will be set 500-600 mm into already disturbed road reserves we suggest that further palaeontological mitigation is not required.

The heritage resource of prime concern is unmarked ancestral graves. All graves are accorded the highest level of protection and may not be disturbed without both family consent and a permit from Amafa.

Graves at extant homesteads are observed to be within or immediately adjacent to the household precincts or within formal cemeteries. These are thus protected and under constant surveillance of families and local residents.

It is therefore recommended that the following protocol be made binding in the Record of Decision (R.o.D.):

“ That during the Public Participation Process and again at the time of pegging the alignment the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and the Environmental Control Officer (ECO) engage with households in close proximity to the alignment to ascertain the presence of unmarked or invisible grave sites. Local traditional leadership should also be participant in these engagements or at least informed.

Any identified grave sites should ideally be left with a twenty metre (20m) buffer from construction activities and be fenced for the duration of such if mechanical digging is envisaged. Any closer infringement on a burial site will have to be negotiated with the household head concerned. If no consensus can be reached consideration should be given to moving the pipeline alignment away and past the grave site/s/

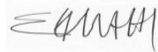
In the event of unintentional exposure of a grave or a request from a family for exhumation and re-interment the CLO/ECO shall immediately contact Amafa/KZN Heritage to obtain the necessary protocols and procedures for the management of such human remains”.

It is our considered opinion that the potential impact to heritage resources through implementation of the water scheme is very low given the above and that it is intended for the pipeline alignments to be within previously disturbed road verges. Consequently, on behalf of the Harry Gwala District Municipality, we request exemption from a full Phase 1HIA for this project.

Please could you convey Amafa's decision on this matter to the appointed Environmental Practitioner, Ms. Senamile Mnguni of **Isambulo Environmental Consulting**.

[isambuloenvironmental@gmail.com](mailto:isambuloenvironmental@gmail.com)

Yours sincerely



Len van Schalkwyk and Elizabeth Wahl