

The establishment of a mixed residential township, Sarovic Investments

eMalahleni Local Municipality, Mpumalanga Province

Farm: Remaining extent of Portion 79 Blesboklaagte 296 JS and Portion 0 (remaining extent) Leeuwpoort 283 JS

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012 0000040/012 993 3110

Palaeontological Impact Assessment: Desktop study

Commissioned by: Shangoni Management Services (Pty.) Ltd.

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2015/06/05

Ref: DARDLEA 17/2/3N-419 & 1/3/1/16/1N-3



## B. Executive summary

Outline of the development project: Shangoni Management Services (Pty.) Ltd. has appointed Dr H. Fourie, a palaeontologist, to undertake a Paleontological Impact Assessment (PIA): Desktop study of the suitability of the proposed new construction of a mixed residential township for Sarovic Investments CC. The site is located on the remaining extent of Portion 79 of the Farm Blesboklaagte 296 JS and the remaining extent of Portion 0 of the Farm Leeuwpoort 283 JS, eMalahleni Local Municipality, Mpumalanga Province.

The applicant, Sarovic Investments CC, intends to develop a Mixed Residential Township across two properties. The project will commence in different phases. The development on the remaining extent of Portion 79 of the Farm Blesboklaagte 196 JS will occur in four phases, while the development of Portion 0 (remaining extent) of the Farm Leeuwpoort 283 JS will occur in ten phases. The development will include the provision of bulk services including electricity, water, stormwater and sewage systems and the construction of roads (BID Shangoni).

The Project includes one Option (see map):

Option 1: A roughly rectangular block of land located north of eMalahleni to the east of the R544. The southernmost portion is present on Blesboklaagte. This is a very small portion and the remainder is present on Leeuwpoort, with the northern portion extending to reach the R 544.

The **National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA)** requires that all heritage resources, that is, all places or objects of aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance are protected. The Republic of South Africa (RSA) has a remarkably rich fossil record that stretches back in time for some 3.5 billion years and must be protected for its scientific value. Fossil heritage of national and international significance is found within all provinces of the RSA. South Africa's unique and non-renewable palaeontological heritage is protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act. According to this act, palaeontological resources may not be excavated, damaged, destroyed or otherwise impacted by any development without prior assessment and without a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority.

The main aim of the assessment process is to document resources in the development area and identify both the negative and positive impacts that the development brings to the receiving environment. The PIA therefore identifies palaeontological resources in the area to be developed and makes recommendations for protection or mitigation of these resources.

For this study, resources such as geological maps, scientific literature, institutional fossil collections, satellite images, aerial maps and topographical maps were used. It provides an assessment of the observed or inferred palaeontological heritage within the study area, with recommendations (if any) for further specialist palaeontological input where this is considered necessary.

A Palaeontological Impact Assessment is generally warranted where rock units of LOW to VERY HIGH palaeontological sensitivity are concerned, levels of bedrock exposure within the study area are adequate; large scale projects with high potential heritage impact are planned; and where the distribution and nature of fossil remains in the proposed area is unknown. The specialist will inform whether further monitoring and mitigation are necessary.

Types and ranges of heritage resources as outlined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No.25 of 1999):  
(i) (i) objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens.

This report adheres to the guidelines of Section 38 (1) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

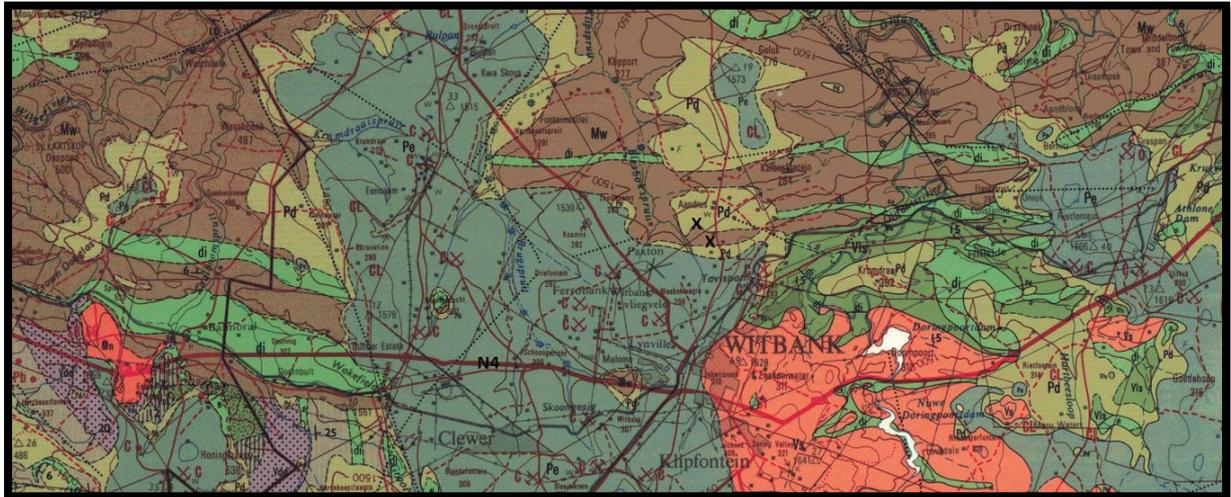
Subject to the provisions of subsections (7), (8) and (9), any person who intends to undertake a development categorised as (a) the construction of a road, wall, power line, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier exceeding 300 m in length; (b) the construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50 m in length; (c) any development or other activity which will change the character of a site (see Section 38); (d) the re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> in extent; (e) or any other category of development provided for in regulations by SAHRA or a PHRA authority.

This report aims to provide comment and recommendations on the potential impacts that the proposed development could have on the fossil heritage of the area and to state if any mitigation or conservation measures are necessary.

Outline of the geology and the palaeontology:

The geology was obtained from map 1:100 000, Geology of the Republic of South Africa (Visser 1984) and 2528 Pretoria (Walraven 1978).

**Figure 1:** The geology of the development area.



Legend to Map and short explanation.

Pe – (brown) Sandstone, shaly sandstone, grit, shale, conglomerate and coal near base and top. Vryheid Formation, Eccca Group, Karoo Supergroup. Permian.

Pd – (green) Tillite, shale. Dwyka Group, Karoo Supergroup. Late Carboniferous to early Permian.

Mw – (brown) Sandstone, quartzite in places; conglomerate. Wilgerivier Formation, Waterberg Group. Mokolian.

..... – Linear structure (Landsat and aeromagnetic).

⊥15 – Strike and dip of bed.

X – Marks the two farms.

Mining activity: C – Coal.

Summary of findings: The Desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment study was undertaken in June 2015 in the winter in dry conditions, but it has no influence on the outcome of a desktop study, the following is reported:

The Karoo Supergroup is present on the site, it is renowned for its fossil wealth. The Dwyka Group (Pd) is the lowermost unit of the Karoo Supergroup overlain by the Eccca Group and underlain by the Witteberg Group, Bokkeveld or Table Mountain Groups and various other groups. It ranges in age from Late Carboniferous to early Permian. Clastic rocks containing diamictite, varved shale, conglomerate, pebbly sandstone and mudrock are present. The rocks display features reflecting a glacial and glacially-related origin. Fossils are present (Kent 1980, Visser *et al.* 1990).

The Waterberg Group is known for its reddish sandstone with conglomerates present between Pretoria and Middelburg (Kent 1980). It is older than the coal and younger than the Magaliesberg Quartzite Formation. In the Cullinan-Middelburg base only one formation has been recognised, the unconformable Wilgerivier Formation (Mw). No fossils are found in the Waterberg Group. Snyman (1996) places the age as 1 800 Ma till 1 700 Ma (Mokolian).

The Vryheid Formation nearby (Pe, Pv), Eccca Group is rich in plant fossils such as the *Glossopteris* flora represented by stumps, leaves, pollen and fructifications. This formation is early to mid-Permian (Palaeozoic) in age and consists of sandstone, shaly sandstone, grit, conglomerate, coal and shale. Coal seams are present in the Vryheid Formation within the sandstone and shale layers. Fossils are mainly present in the grey shale which is interlayered between the coal seams.

Borehole logs in the coalfields show the following layers; soil, shale and sandstone, shale and sandstone interbedded, sandstone, coal, conglomerate reworked diamictite, Dwyka Tillite, and the Pre-Karoo Basement (Kent 1980, Visser 1989).

Fossils in South Africa mainly occur in rocks of sedimentary nature and not in rocks from igneous or metamorphic nature. Therefore, if there is the presence of Karoo Supergroup strata the palaeontological sensitivity can generally be LOW to VERY HIGH, and here locally **LOW** for the Dwyka Group and **LOW** for the Waterberg Group (SG 2.2 SAHRA APMHOB, 2012).

#### Recommendation:

The impact of the development on fossil heritage is **LOW** and therefore a field survey or further mitigation or conservation measures are not necessary for this development (according to SAHRA protocol). A Phase 2 Palaeontological Impact Assessment and or mitigation may not be recommended. The overburden and inter-burden consisting of Dwyka rocks must be surveyed for fossiliferous outcrops (shale). Special care must be taken during the digging, drilling, blasting and excavating of foundations, trenches, channels and footings and removal of overburden. Protocol is attached (Appendix 2).

During the study it was found that the farms are directly underlain by Karoo shale and tillite, as well as sandstone and conglomerate of the Wilgerivier Formation. At present, the development does not extend onto the Vryheid Formation, but if for some reason the development footprint changes, then the palaeontological sensitivity will change to **VERY HIGH** for the Vryheid Formation.

There is only one option with a low impact.

The Project includes one Option (see map):

Option 1: A roughly rectangular block of land located north of eMalahleni to the east of the R544. The southernmost portion is present on Blesboklaagte. This is a very small portion and the remainder is present on Leeuwpoot, with the northern portion extending to reach the R 544.

#### Concerns/threats:

1. Threats are earth moving equipment/machinery (front end loaders, excavators, graders, dozers) during construction, the sealing-in or destruction of the fossils by development, vehicle traffic and human disturbance.
2. Mitigation may be needed (Appendix 2).
3. No consultation with parties was necessary.

Stakeholders: Developer – Sarovic Investments CC. P.O. Box 3762, Witbank, 1035. Tel: 013 656 6789.

Environmental – Shangoni Management Services (Pty.) Ltd., P.O. Box 74726, Lynwood Ridge, 0040, 012 807 1014. Landowner – Sarovic Investments CC.

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## **D. Background information on the project**

### Report

This report is part of the environmental impact assessment process under the National Environmental Management Act, as amended (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and includes Appendix 6 (GN R38282 of 4 December 2014) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (See Appendix 2).

### Outline of development

This report discusses and aims to provide the developer with information regarding the location of palaeontological material that will be impacted by the development. In the pre-construction phase it is necessary for the developer to apply for the relevant permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA / PHRA).

The applicant, Sarovic Investments CC, intends to develop a Mixed Residential Township across two properties. The project will commence in different phases. The development on the remaining extent of Portion 79 of the Farm Blesboklaagte 196 JS will occur in four phases, while the development of Portion 0 (remaining extent) of the Farm Leeuwpoot 283 JS will occur in ten phases. The development will include the provision of bulk services including electricity, water, storm water and sewage systems and the construction of roads (BID Shangoni).

The Project includes one Option (see map):

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Rezoning/ and or subdivision of land: Yes from Agriculture.

Name of developer and consultant: Sarovic Enterprises CC and Shangoni Management Services (Pty.) Ltd.

Terms of reference: Dr H. Fourie is a palaeontologist commissioned to do a palaeontological impact assessment: desktop study to ascertain if any palaeontological sensitive material is present in the development area. This study will advise on the impact on fossil heritage mitigation or conservation necessary, if any.

Dr Fourie obtained a Ph.D from the Bernard Price Institute for Palaeontological Research (now ESI), University of the Witwatersrand. Her undergraduate degree is in Geology and Zoology. She specialises in vertebrate morphology and function concentrating on the Therapsid Therocephalia. For the past ten years she carried out field work in the Eastern Cape. Dr Fourie has been employed at the Ditsong: National Museum of Natural History in Pretoria (formerly Transvaal Museum) for 20 years.

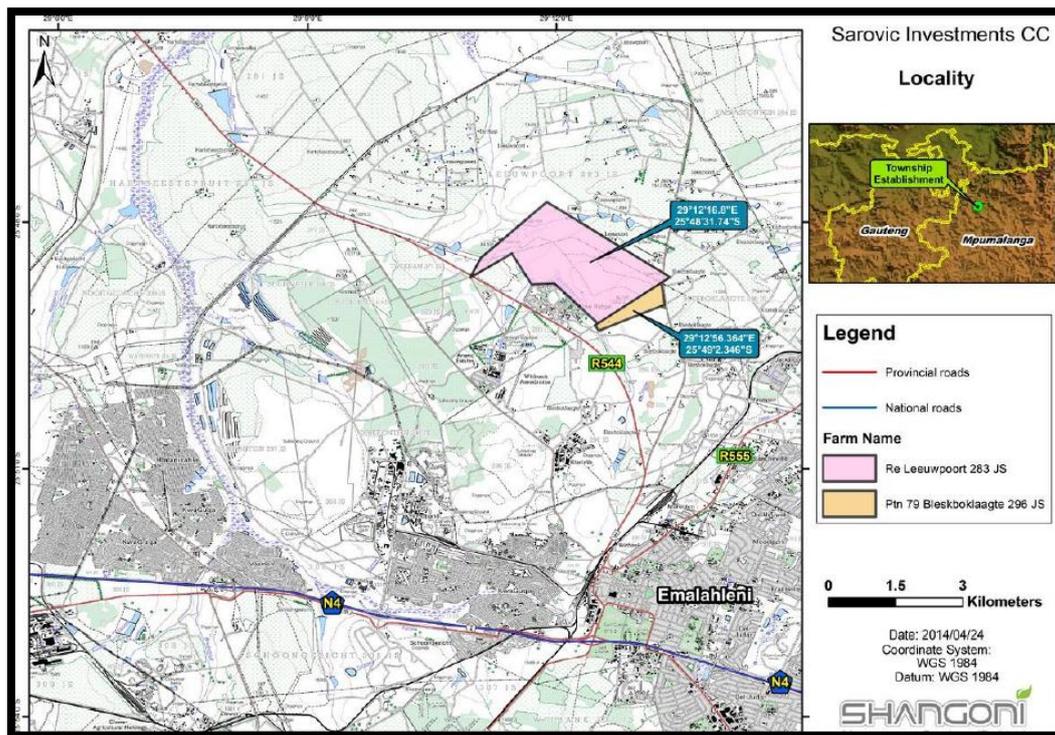
Legislative requirements: South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) for issue of permits if necessary. National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999). An electronic copy of this report must be supplied to SAHRA.

## **E. Description of property or affected environment**

### Location and depth:

The construction of a mixed residential township by Sarovic Investments CC. The site is located on the remaining extent of Portion 79 of the Farm Blesboklaagte 296 JS and the remaining extent of Portion 0 of the Farm Leeuwpoot 283 JS, eMalahleni Local Municipality, Mpumalanga Province.

**Figure 2:** Topographic map (Shangoni) showing location.



The Project includes one Option (see map):

Option 1: A roughly rectangular block of land located north of eMalahleni to the east of the R544. The southernmost portion is present on Blesboklaagte (yellow). This is a very small portion and the remainder is present on Leeuwoport (pink), with the northern portion extending to reach the R 544.

The bulk of the site is underlain by the sediments of the Dwyka Group, Karoo Supergroup and the Wilgerivier Formation of the Waterberg Group with the Vryheid Formation nearby.

## F. Description of the Geological Setting

### Description of the rock units:

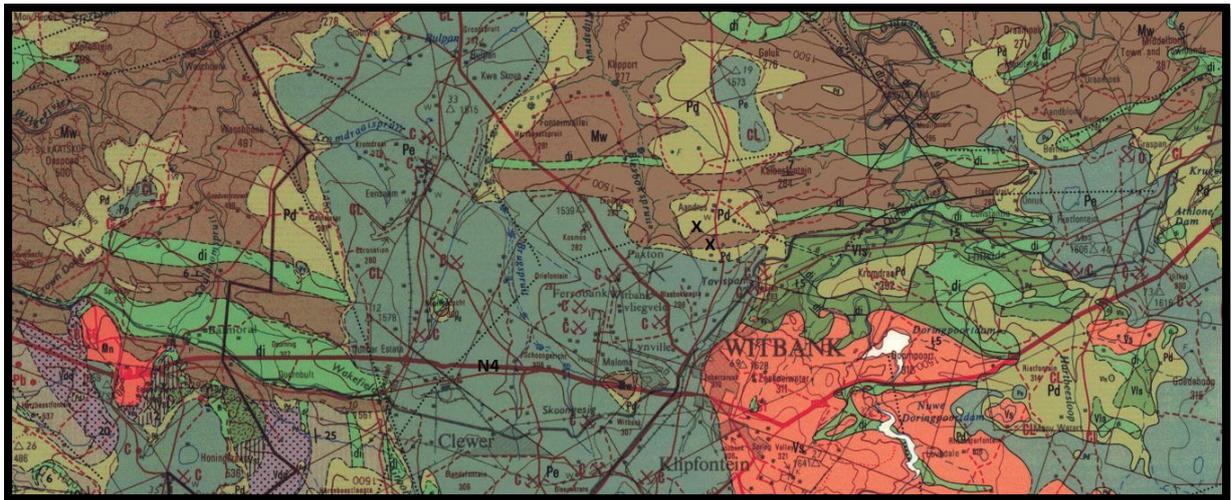
Large areas of the southern African continent are covered by the Karoo Supergroup. The Ecca Group is early to mid-Permian (545-250 Ma) in age. Sediments of the Ecca group are lacustrine and marine to fluvio-deltaic (Snyman 1996). The Ecca group is known for its coal (mainly the Vryheid Formation) (5 coal seams) and uranium. Coalfields formed due to the accumulation of plant material in shallow and large swampy deltas (see Appendix 1). The Ecca Group conformably overlies the Dwyka Group and is conformably overlain by the Beaufort Group, Karoo Supergroup. It consists essentially of mudrock (shale), but sandstone-rich units occur towards the margins of the present main Karoo basin in the south, west and north-east, with coal seams also being present in the north-east (Kent 1980, Johnson 2009).

The Dwyka Group is the lowermost unit of the Karoo Supergroup overlain by the Ecca Group and underlain by the Witteberg Group, Bokkeveld or Table Mountain Groups and various other groups. It ranges in age from Late Carboniferous to early Permian. Clastic rocks containing diamictite, varved shale, conglomerate, pebbly sandstone and mudrock are present. The rocks display features reflecting a glacial and glacially-related origin. Fossils are present (Kent 1980, Visser *et al.* 1990). Thickness varies between 100-800 m (Visser *et al.* 1990). As Gondwana drifted northward the first sediments to be deposited would have been the Dwyka. As the glaciers melted they left striations on the surface also vast quantities of mud and large fragments of rock which formed the characteristic, poorly sorted Dwyka tillite (McCarthy and Rubidge 2005). Visser *et al.* (1990) proposed two subdivisions for the Dwyka Group in the main Karoo basin, the Elandsvlei and Mbizane Formations. In the far north, the Tshidzi and Wellington Formations also form part of the Dwyka Group.

The Waterberg Group of rocks today occurs in several separate regions: in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces. These separate patches probably originally formed a single sheet of sedimentary rocks that since become fragmented as a result of

erosion. A deep red iron oxide is responsible for the colouration. As the rocks are chemically resistant and very hard, they produce spectacular cliffs and mountainous topography (McCarthy and Rubidge 2005). The Waterberg Group (Kent 1980) is known for its reddish sandstone with conglomerates present between Pretoria and Middelburg. It is older than the coal and younger than the Magaliesberg Quartzite Formation. In the Cullinan-Middelburg base only one formation has been recognised, the unconformable Wilgerivier Formation. No fossils are found in the Waterberg Group. Snyman (1996) places the age as 1 800 Ma till 1 700 Ma (Mokolian). A threefold subdivision is recognised, the Nylstroom, Matlabas and Kransberg Subgroups. It overlies the Loskop Formation.

**Figure 3:** Excerpt of geological map 2528 Pretoria (Walraven 1978).



*Legend to Map and short explanation.*

Pe – (brown) Sandstone, shaly sandstone, grit, shale, conglomerate and coal near base and top. Vryheid Formation, Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup. Permian.

Pd – (green) Tillite, shale. Dwyka Group, Karoo Supergroup. Late Carboniferous to early Permian.

Mw – (brown) Sandstone, quartzite in places; conglomerate. Wilgerivier Formation, Waterberg Group. Mokolian

..... – Linear structure (Landsat and aeromagnetic).

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X – Marks position of development.

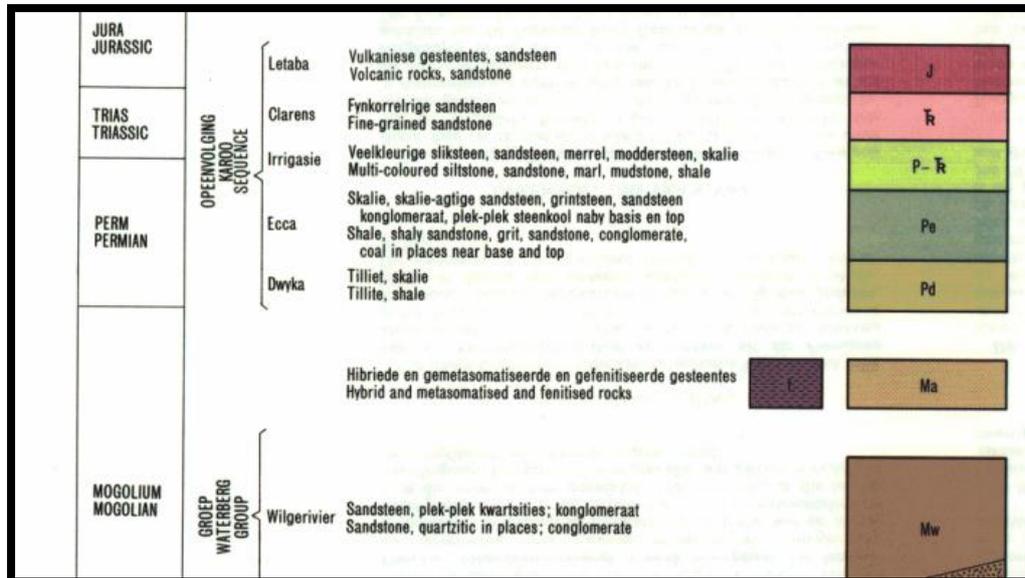
The Vryheid Formation is named after the type area of Vryheid-Volksrust. In the north-eastern part of the basin the Vryheid Formation thins and eventually wedges out towards the south, southwest and west with increasing distance from its source area to the east and northeast (Johnson 2009). The Vryheid Formation consists essentially of sandstone, shale, and subordinate coal beds, and has a maximum total thickness of 500 m. It forms part of the Middle Ecca (Kent 1980). This formation has the largest coal reserves in South Africa. The prodelta sediments are characterised by trace and plants fossils (Snyman 1996).

Coal has always been the main energy source in industrial South Africa. It is in Mpumalanga, south of the N4, that most of the coal-fired power stations are found. Eskom is by far the biggest electricity generator in Africa. Thick layers of coal just below the surface are suited to open-cast mining and where the overlying sediments are too thick, shallow underground mining. In 2003, coal was South Africa's third most valuable mineral commodity and is also used by Sasol for fuel- and chemicals-from-coal (Norman and Whitfield 2006). Grodner and Cairncross (2003) proposed a 3-D model of the Witbank Coalfield to allow easy evaluation of the sedimentary rocks, both through space and time. Through this, one can interpret the environmental conditions present at the time of deposition of the sediments. This can improve mine planning and mining techniques. The Vryheid Formation is underlain by the Dwyka Group and gradually overlain by mudstones (shale) and sandstones of the Volksrust Formation.

The Project includes one Option (see map):

Option 1: A roughly rectangular block of land located north of eMalahleni to the east of the R544. The southernmost portion is present on Blesboklaagte. This is a very small portion and the remainder is present on Leeuwpoot, with the northern portion extending to reach the R 544.

**Figure 4:** Lithostratigraphic column to show the Dwyka Group within the Karoo Supergroup (Walraven 1978).



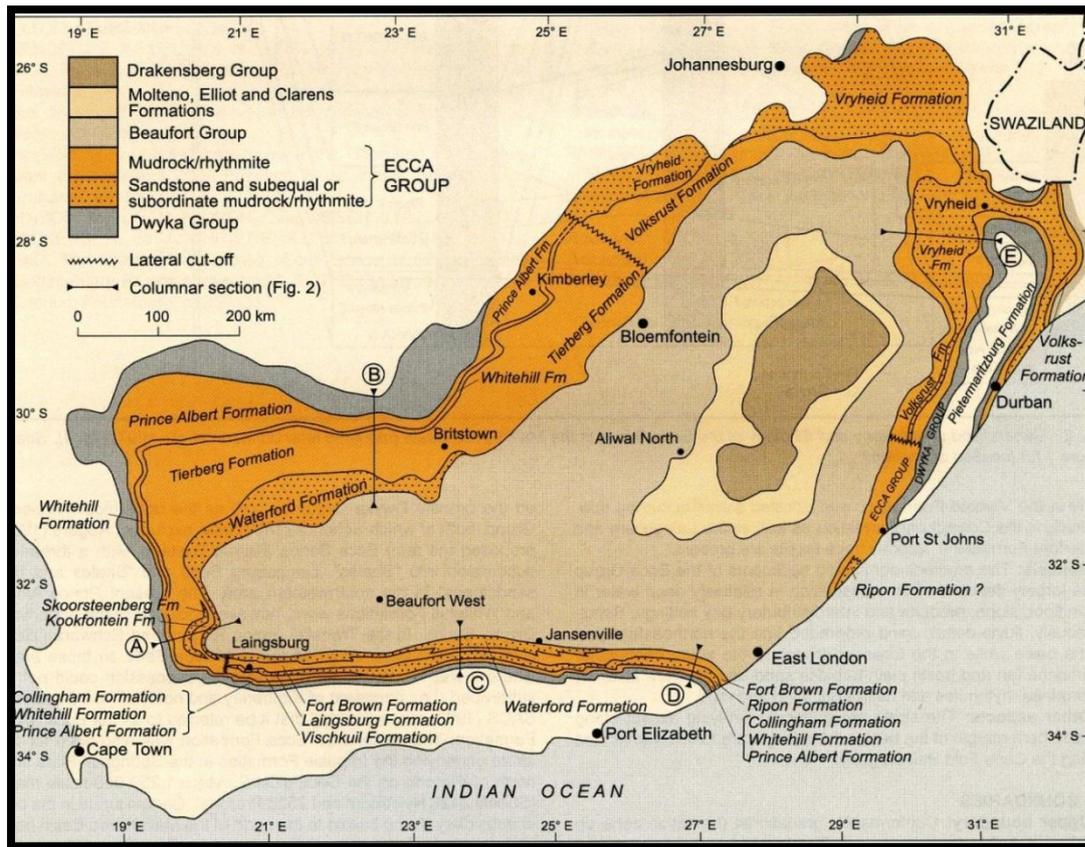
Eccca rocks are stable and lend themselves well to developments. It is only unstable in or directly above mining activities (Snyman 1996). Dolerite dykes do occur throughout the Karoo Supergroup. Structural geological features such as dykes and faults can have a measurable influence on ground water flow and mass transport.

There is some concern with the property due to the presence of the Vryheid Formation nearby. The depth of the Formation can be verified with geological cores. The topsoil, subsoil and overburden must be surveyed for Dwyka fossils and Mitigation is needed for any finds.

It is recommended to wait for the response from SAHRA on the Desktop study (this report), and if mitigation is recommended then the SAHRA protocol must be followed. Alternatives will not be feasible as all proposed development portions and surrounding areas are on the Vryheid Formation with a VERY HIGH palaeontological sensitivity rating.

### G. Background to Palaeontology of the area

Summary: When rock units of moderate to very high palaeontological sensitivity are present within the development footprint, a desk top and or field scoping (survey) study by a professional palaeontologist is usually warranted. The main purpose of a field scoping (survey) study would be to identify any areas within the development footprint where specialist palaeontological mitigation during the construction phase may be required (SG 2.2 SAHRA AMPHOB, 2012).



**Map 1:** Extent of the Dwyka Group within the Karoo Supergroup (Johnson 2009).

Spores and acritarchs have been reported for the Dwyka Group from the interglacial mudrocks, also spores, pollen and plant remains in the interbedded mudrocks as well as the diamictite itself, while anthropod trackways and fish trails are present in places on bedding planes (Visser *et al.* 1990).

The Eccla Group may contain fossils of diverse non-marine trace, *Glossopteris* flora, mesosaurid reptiles, palaeoniscid fish, marine invertebrates, insects, and crustaceans (Johnson 2009). *Glossopteris* trees rapidly colonised the large deltas along the northern margin of the Karoo Sea. Dead vegetation accumulated faster than it could decay, and thick accumulations of peat formed, which were ultimately converted to coal. It is only in the northern part of the Karoo Basin that the glossopterids and cordaitales, ferns, clubmosses and horsetails thrived (McCarthy and Rubidge 2005) (Appendix 1).

The *Glossopteris* flora is thought to have been the major contributor to the coal beds of the Eccla. These are found in Karoo-age rocks across Africa, South America, Antarctica, Australia and India. This was one of the early clues to the theory of a former unified Gondwana landmass (Norman and Whitfield 2006).

Fossils in South Africa mainly occur in rocks of sedimentary nature and not in rocks from igneous or metamorphic nature. Therefore, if there is the presence of Karoo Supergroup strata the palaeontological sensitivity is generally LOW to VERY HIGH, but here locally LOW for the Dwyka and Waterberg Groups.

Criteria used (Fossil Heritage Layer Browser/SAHRA):

Rock Unit	Significance/vulnerability	Recommended Action
Vryheid Formation (Pv) (Pe)	Very High	Field assessment and protocol for finds is required
Waterberg Group	Low	No palaeontological studies are required, however a protocol for finds is required.
Dwyka Group	Low	No palaeontological studies are required, however a protocol for finds is required.

Databases and collections: Ditsong: National Museum of Natural History. Evolutionary Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand (ESI).

Impact: LOW for the Dwyka and Waterberg Groups. There are significant fossil resources that may be impacted by the development (shale).

#### **H. Description of the Methodology**

The palaeontological impact assessment desktop study was undertaken in June 2015. A walk through of the affected portion was not done and photographs (in 7.1 mega pixels) were not taken of the site with a digital Canon camera (PowerShot A470). A literature survey is included.

Assumptions and Limitations:-

The accuracy and reliability of the report may be limited by the following constraints:

1. Most development areas have never been surveyed by a palaeontologist or geophysicist.
2. Variable accuracy of geological maps and associated information.
3. Poor locality information on sheet explanations for geological maps.
4. Lack of published data.
5. Lack of rocky outcrops.
6. Insufficient data from developer and exact lay-out plan for all structures.

#### **A Phase 2 Palaeontological Impact Assessment: Mitigation will include:**

1. Recommendations for the future of the site.
2. Description of work done (including number of people and their responsibilities).
3. A written assessment of the work done, fossils excavated, not removed or collected and observed.
4. Conclusion reached regarding the fossil material.
5. A detailed site plan.
6. Possible declaration as a heritage site or Site Management Plan.

Mitigation involves planning the protection of significant fossil sites, rock units or other palaeontological resources and/or excavation, recording and sampling of fossil heritage that might be lost during development, together with pertinent geological data. The mitigation may take place before and / or during the construction phase of development. The specialist will require a Phase 2 mitigation permit from the relevant Heritage Resources Authority before a Phase 2 may be implemented.

The Mitigation is done in order to rescue representative fossil material from the study area to allow and record the nature of each locality and establish its age before it is destroyed and to make samples accessible for future research. It also interprets the evidence recovered to allow for education of the public and promotion of palaeontological heritage.

Should further fossil material be discovered during the course of the development (*e. g.* during bedrock excavations), this must be safeguarded, where feasible *in situ*, and reported to a palaeontologist or to the Heritage Resources authority. In situations where the area is considered palaeontologically sensitive (*e. g.* Karoo Supergroup Formations, ancient marine deposits in the interior or along the coast) the palaeontologist might need to monitor all newly excavated bedrock. The developer needs to give the palaeontologist sufficient time to assess and document the finds and, if necessary, to rescue a representative sample.

When a Phase 2 palaeontological impact study is recommended, permission for the development to proceed can be given only once the heritage resources authority has received and approved a Phase 2 report and is satisfied that (a) the palaeontological resources under threat have been adequately recorded and sampled, and (b) adequate development on fossil heritage, including, where necessary, *in situ* conservation of heritage of high significance. Careful planning, including early consultation with a palaeontologist and heritage management authorities, can minimise the impact of palaeontological surveys on development projects by selecting options that cause the least amount of inconvenience and delay.

Three types of permits are available; Mitigation, Destruction and Interpretation. The specialist will apply for the permit at the beginning of the process (SAHRA 2012).

## I. Description of significant fossil occurrences

All Karoo Supergroup geological formations are ranked as LOW to VERY HIGH, and here the impact is potentially LOW for the Dwyka and Waterberg Groups. Rocks of Permian age in South Africa are particularly rich in fossil plants (Rayner and Coventry 1985). The fossils are present in the grey shale interlayered with the coal seams. The fossils are not very rare and also occur in other parts of the Karoo stratigraphy. The pollen of the Greenside Colliery also on the Vryheid formation was the focus of a Ph.D study. It is often difficult to spot the greyish fossils as they are the same colour as the grey shale in which they are present as these coalified compressions have been weathered to leave surface replicas on the enclosing shale matrix. A locality close to Ermelo, also Vryheid Formation, has yielded *Scutum*, *Glossopteris* leaves, *Neoggerathiopsis* leaves, the lycopod *Cyclodendron leslii*, and various seeds and scale leaves (Prevec 2011).

Fossils likely to be found are mostly plants such as 'Glossopteris flora' of the Vryheid Formation. The aquatic reptile *Mesosaurus* and fossil fish may also occur with marine invertebrates, arthropods and insects. Trace fossils can also be present. The marine bivalve *Megadesmus* is found in the upper part of the Volksrust Formation near Newcastle (Johnson 2009).

Details of the location and distribution of all significant fossil sites or key fossiliferous rock units are often difficult to be determined due to thick topsoil, subsoil, overburden and alluvium. Depth of the overburden may vary a lot. The vast coal mining industry provides palaeontologists with fantastic access to coal-associated plant fossils, while simultaneously resulting in the destruction of important National palaeontological heritage.

The threats are: - earth moving equipment/machinery (front end loaders, excavators, graders, dozers) during construction, the sealing-in or destruction of fossils by development, vehicle traffic, and human disturbance. See Description of the Geological Setting (F) above.

## J. Recommendation

- a. There is no objection (see Recommendation B) to the development, it may not be necessary to request a Phase 1 Palaeontological Impact Assessment: Field study to determine whether the development will affect fossiliferous outcrops as the palaeontological sensitivity is LOW. A Phase 2 Palaeontological Mitigation may be required if a Phase 1 Palaeontological Assessment identified a fossiliferous formation (e.g. Vryheid Formation). Protocol is attached (Appendix 2).
- b. This project will benefit the economy, the growth of the community and social development in general.
- c. Preferred choice: The impact on the palaeontological heritage is LOW. The presence of shale may be problematic. Care must be taken during the digging of foundations and removing topsoil, subsoil and overburden (see Executive Summary).
- d. The following should be conserved: if any palaeontological material is exposed during digging, excavating, drilling or blasting SAHRA must be notified. All construction activities must be stopped and a palaeontologist should be called in to determine proper mitigation measures.

### Sampling and collecting:

Wherefore a permit is needed from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA / PHRA).

- a. Objections: Cautious. See heritage value and recommendation.
- b. Conditions of development: See Recommendation.
- c. Areas that may need a permit: Yes.
- d. Permits for mitigation: None.

## K. Conclusions

- a. All the land involved in the development was assessed and none of the property is unsuitable for development (see Recommendation B).
- b. All information needed for the Desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment was provided by the Consultant. All technical information was taken from the Background Information Document provided by Shangoni Management Services, Ms L. Fellowes.
- c. Areas that would involve mitigation and may need a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency are discussed.

- d. The following should be conserved: if any palaeontological material is exposed during digging, excavating, drilling or blasting, SAHRA must be notified. All development activities must be stopped and a palaeontologist should be called in to determine proper mitigation measures. Especially shallow caves.
- e. Condition in which development may proceed: It is further suggested that a Section 37(2) agreement of the Occupational, Health and Safety Act (Act No. 85 of 1993) is signed with the relevant contractors to protect the environment and adjacent areas as well as for safety and security reasons.

#### L. Bibliography

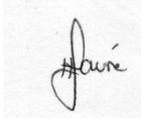
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**Declaration**

I, Heidi Fourie, declare that I am an independent consultant and have no business, financial, personal or other interest in the proposed development project for which I was appointed to do a palaeontological assessment. There are no circumstances that compromise the objectivity of me performing such work.

Heidi Fourie accepts no liability, and the client, by receiving this document, indemnifies Heidi Fourie against all actions, claims, demands, losses, liabilities, costs, damages and expenses arising from or in connection with services rendered, directly or indirectly by the use of the information contained in this document.

This report may not be altered in any way and any parts drawn from this report must make reference to this report.

A square box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Heidi Fourie'.

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Heidi Fourie  
2015/06/05

## Appendix 1: Protocol for finds

This section covers the recommended protocol for a Phase 2 Mitigation process as well as for reports where the Palaeontological Sensitivity is LOW; this process guides the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist on site and should not be attempted by the layman / developer.

The developer must survey the areas affected by the development and indicate on plan where the construction / development / mining will take place. Trenches have to be dug to ascertain how deep the sediments are above the bedrock (can be a few hundred metres). This will give an indication of the depth of the topsoil, subsoil, and overburden, if need be trenches should be dug deeper to expose the interburden.

Mitigation will involve recording, rescue and judicious sampling of the fossil material present in the layers sandwiched between the geological / coal layers. It must include information on number of taxa, fossil abundance, preservational style, and taphonomy. This can only be done during mining or excavations. In order for this to happen, in case of coal mining operations, the process will have to be closely scrutinised by a professional palaeontologist / palaeobotanist to ensure that only the coal layers are mined and the interlayers (siltstone and mudstone) are surveyed for fossils or representative sampling of fossils are taking place.

The palaeontological impact assessment process presents an opportunity for identification, access and possibly salvage of fossils and add to the few good plant localities. Mitigation can provide valuable onsite research that can benefit both the community and the palaeontological fraternity.

A Phase 2 study is very often the last opportunity we will ever have to record the fossil heritage within the development area. Fossils excavated will be stored at a National Repository.

### **A Phase 2 Palaeontological Impact Assessment: Mitigation will include (SAHRA) -**

1. Recommendations for the future of the site.
2. Description and purpose of work done (including number of people and their responsibilities).
3. A written assessment of the work done, fossils excavated, not removed or collected and observed.
4. Conclusion reached regarding the fossil material.
5. A detailed site plan and map.
6. Possible declaration as a heritage site or Site Management Plan.
7. Stakeholders.
8. Detailed report including the Desktop and Phase 1 study information.
9. Annual interim or progress Phase 2 permit reports as well as the final report.
10. Methodology used.

Mitigation involves planning the protection of significant fossil sites, rock units or other palaeontological resources and/or excavation, recording and sampling of fossil heritage that might be lost during development, together with pertinent geological data. The mitigation may take place before and / or during the construction phase of development. The specialist will require a Phase 2 mitigation permit from the relevant Heritage Resources Authority before a Phase 2 may be implemented.

The Mitigation is done in order to rescue representative fossil material from the study area to allow and record the nature of each locality and establish its age before it is destroyed and to make samples accessible for future research. It also interprets the evidence recovered to allow for education of the public and promotion of palaeontological heritage.

Should further fossil material be discovered during the course of the development (*e. g.* during bedrock excavations), this must be safeguarded, where feasible *in situ*, and reported to a palaeontologist or to the Heritage Resources authority. In situations where the area is considered palaeontologically sensitive (*e. g.* Karoo Supergroup Formations, ancient marine deposits in the interior or along the coast) the palaeontologist might need to monitor all newly excavated bedrock. The developer needs to give the palaeontologist sufficient time to assess and document the finds and, if necessary, to rescue a representative sample.

When a Phase 2 palaeontological impact study is recommended, permission for the development to proceed can be given only once the heritage resources authority has received and approved a Phase 2 report and is satisfied that (a) the

palaeontological resources under threat have been adequately recorded and sampled, and (b) adequate development on fossil heritage, including, where necessary, *in situ* conservation of heritage of high significance. Careful planning, including early consultation with a palaeontologist and heritage management authorities, can minimise the impact of palaeontological surveys on development projects by selecting options that cause the least amount of inconvenience and delay.

Three types of permits are available; Mitigation, Destruction and Interpretation. The specialist will apply for the permit at the beginning of the process (SAHRA 2012).

The Palaeontological Society of South Africa (PSSA) does not have guidelines on excavating or collecting, but the following is suggested:

1. The developer needs to clearly stake or peg-out (survey) the areas affected by the mining/ construction/ development operations and dig representative trenches and if possible supply geological borehole data.
2. Fossils likely to occur are for example the fossil plants from the Vryheid Formation, these are present in the grey shale (or any other fossiliferous layer ranked as VERY HIGH or HIGH) or invertebrates from the Volksrust Formation (or any other fossiliferous layer).
3. When clearing topsoil, subsoil or overburden and hard rock (outcrop) is found, the contractor needs to stop all work.
4. A Palaeobotanist / palaeontologist (contact SAHRIS for list) must then inspect the affected areas and trenches for fossiliferous outcrops / layers. The contractor / developer may be asked to move structures, and put the development on hold.
5. If the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist is satisfied that no fossils will be destroyed or have removed the fossils, development and removing of the topsoil can continue.
6. After this process the same palaeontologist / palaeobotanist will have to inspect and offer advice through the Phase 2 Mitigation Process. Bedrock excavations for footings may expose, damage or destroy previously buried fossil material and must be inspected.
7. When permission for the development is granted, the next layer can be removed, if this is part of a fossiliferous layer, then with the removal of each layer of sediment, the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist must do an investigation (a minimum of once every two weeks).
8. At this stage the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist in consultation with the developer / mining company must ensure that a further working protocol and schedule is in place. Onsite training should take place, followed by an annual visit by the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist.

#### **Fossil excavation if necessary during Phase 2:**

1. Photography of fossil / fossil layer and surrounding strata.
2. Once a fossil has been identified as such, the task of extraction begins.
3. It usually entails the taking of a GPS reading and recording lithostratigraphic, biostratigraphic, date, collector and locality information.
4. Using Paraloid (B-72) as an adhesive and protective glue, parts of the fossil can be kept together (not necessarily applicable to plant fossils).
5. Slowly chipping away of matrix surrounding the fossil using a geological pick, brushes and chisels.
6. Once the full extent of the fossil / fossils are visible, it can be covered with a plaster jacket (not necessarily applicable to plant fossils).
7. Chipping away sides to loosen underside.
8. Splitting of the rock containing palaeobotanical material should reveal any fossils sandwiched between the layers.

SAHRA does have the following documents in place:

Guidelines to Palaeontological Permitting policy.

Minimum Standards: Palaeontological Component of Heritage Impact Assessment reports.

Guidelines for Field Reports.

#### Appendix 2:

**Table 1:** Listing points in Appendix 6 of the Act and position in Report.

Section	Point in Act	Heading
B	1(c)	Outline of development project
	1(d)	Summary of findings
	1(g)	Concerns/threats:
	1(n)i	"
	1(n)ii	"
	1(o)	"
	1(p)	"
D	1(h)	Figures
	1(a)i	Terms of reference
H	1(e)	Description of Methodology
	1(i)	Assumptions and Limitations
I	1(f)	Heritage value
J	1(j)	Recommendation
	1(l)	"
	1(m)	Sampling and collecting
	1(k)	"
Declaration	1(b)	Declaration
Appendix 2	1(k)	Protocol for finds
	1(m)	"
	1(q)	"