



Dear SAHRA personnel

Application for exemption from HIA – proposed Transnet Freight Rail link between two existing railway lines near the Assmang Mine, Sishen, Northern Cape Province

I hereby apply for exemption from an HIA process for the construction of a rail link between two existing railway lines outside the existing railway reserve situated south west of the town of Kathu in the Northern Cape (Figure 1). The applicant is Transnet Freight Rail.

The proposed activity involves the construction of a section of railway line, of which little more than 300 m traverses land outside the railway reserve (which is already heavily disturbed).

Motivation for exemption:

- While it is recognized that the Kathu area has produced significant desposits of Early Stone Age archaeological material close to the town, in particular the area known as Khatu Pan to the north east of the town which is considered to be a grade 1 archaeological site of international significance (Walker, Chazan, Morris 2013 Kathu Pan nomination documents). A scan of information contained on SAHRIS has indicated that other finds outside the pan area are of variable quality and most are of low significance.
- The proposed activity is not situated close to the proposed Grade 1 site. Furthermore it is a small project in that little more than 300 m of the proposed railway line is situated outside of the rail reserve. Of the 300 m alignment it is noted that half of this has been subject to prior disturbance (see Figure 2). The other half traverses a low sheet rock outcrop and rubble with very little soil depth which is unlikely to contain any significant archaeological material. The Environmental Specialist for the project, Bharat Gordhan provided ACO with a comprehensive collection of photographs, taken of the alignment which allowed for verification of the ground surface conditions and the character of the area.
- The general vicinity is a landscape of mining, haulage roads, railways and long distance conveyor belts. The proposed activity therefore cannot be considered to be a significant change to the character of the area (Figure 3).

In conclusion the proposed activity in the project area is unlikely to have an impact on heritage.

It is therefore requested that this project be exempted from further heritage work.

Please contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Tim Hart (director)



Figure 1 Location of the project area

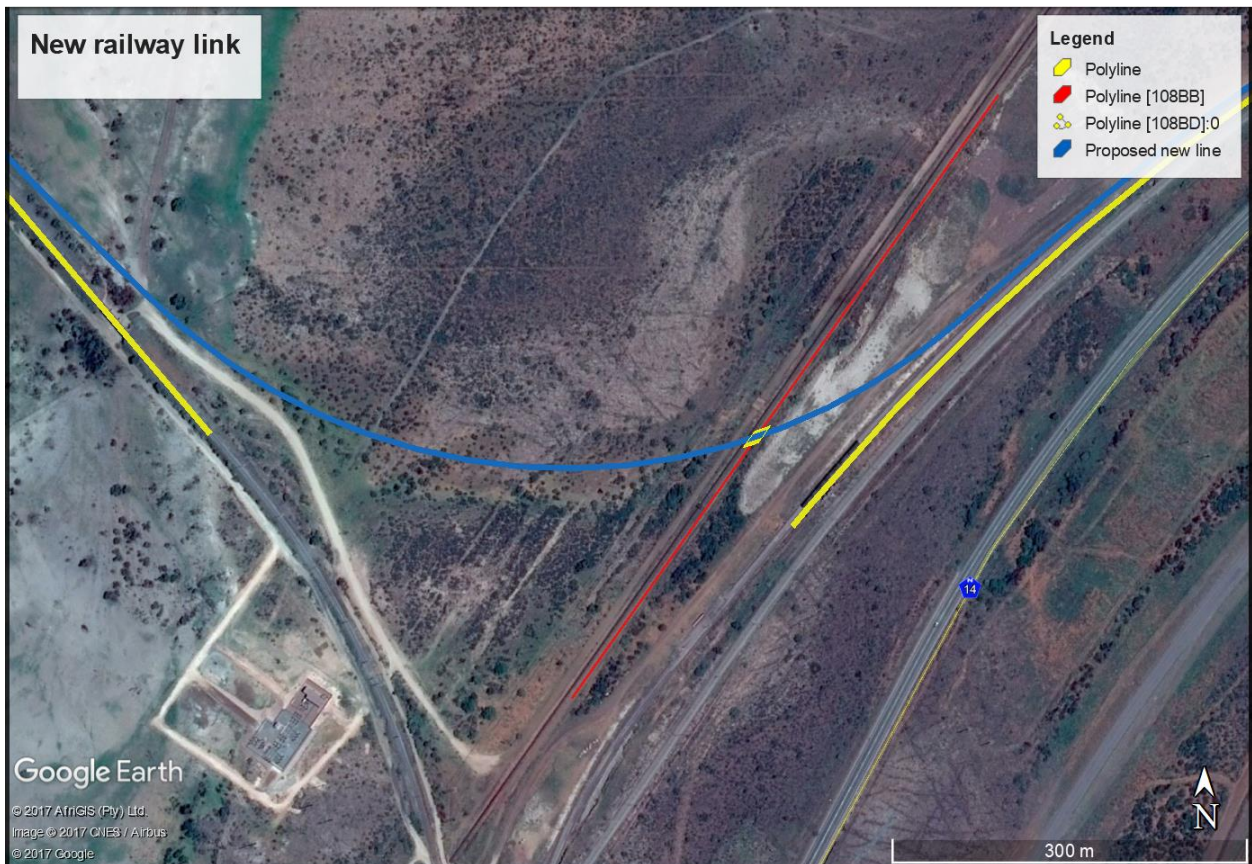


Figure 2 The proposed new rail alignment. The Kathu open cast mine lies just to the east of the N14.



Figure 3 A view down the proposed alignment. No the rock outcrops and shallow soil depth.