

# HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

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## Top Stories

Indigenous Food Exhibition and Dialogue Highlights the Value of Traditional Knowledge in Sustainable Development

Max Mojapelo Preserves South Africa's Indigenous Music Heritage in Memory Footprint.



*Champions of African  
heritage towards  
social cohesion*

01

# CONTENTS

- 01** Indigenous Food Exhibition and Dialogue Highlights the Value of Traditional Knowledge in Sustainable Development
- 02** Max Mojapelo Preserves South Africa's Indigenous Music Heritage in Memory Footprint
- 03** NHC and Freedom Park Commemorate Battle of Cuito Cuanavale.
- 04** NHC Research Seminar Strengthens Collaboration and Community-Centred Conservation
- 05** NHC strengthens SCM team with new administrator appointment
- 06** NHC Invites Applications for 2026–2027 Heritage Funding to Empower Community Heritage Projects.
- 07** NHC Opens Call for 2026-2027 Nelson Mandela Ubuntu Initiatives Proposals

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**Dear Valued Stakeholders and partners,**

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) remains committed to strengthening heritage as a living foundation for identity, unity, and sustainable development.

This March/April edition highlights the continued importance of indigenous knowledge systems, showcased through the Indigenous Food Exhibition and Dialogue, which reaffirmed heritage as a driver of sustainable development and community resilience. We also celebrate the preservation of indigenous music heritage through the work of Max Mojapelo, whose efforts safeguard memory and cultural identity for future generations.

In partnership with Freedom Park, we commemorated the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, honouring its enduring significance in our liberation history and regional solidarity. Battle of Cuito Cuanavale continues to remind us of the sacrifices that shaped our freedom.

We also remain focused on strengthening institutional capacity through our research seminars and internal improvements, ensuring that we deliver our mandate with integrity, accountability, and impact.

Furthermore, we invite communities and practitioners to apply for the 2026–2027 Heritage Funding Programme and the Nelson Mandela Ubuntu Initiatives, which continue the legacy of Nelson Mandela by advancing unity, dignity, and social cohesion.

The NHC remains steadfast in its mission to protect, promote, and sustain South Africa's heritage for present and future generations.

**Warm regards,  
Dr. Thabo Manetsi  
Chief Executive Officer, National Heritage  
Council of South Africa**



## **CEOs MESSAGE**

*Dr Thabo Manetsi, Chief Executive Officer, National Heritage Council of South Africa*



## INDIGENOUS FOOD EXHIBITION AND DIALOGUE HIGHLIGHTS THE VALUE OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

An Indigenous Food Exhibition and Intergenerational Dialogue held on Saturday, 28 March 2026, in Tshidzivhe, Limpopo Province, brought together community members, elders, youth, researchers, and cultural practitioners to explore the role of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in addressing food security, climate resilience, and cultural preservation.

The event was hosted by the National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) in partnership with Nyamukuvha Ngwaniwapo NPC. It provided a platform for intergenerational exchange on indigenous food practices and their continued relevance in contemporary development contexts.

A key feature of the gathering was an exhibition showcasing Venda traditional cuisine and indigenous medicinal knowledge. Participants engaged with a variety of traditional foods and remedies, while facilitators explained their nutritional value, health benefits, and cultural significance within local communities.

Speaking at the event, Mr Amos Mulaudzi, Living Heritage Manager at the NHC, said the initiative forms part of ongoing efforts to safeguard Indigenous Knowledge Systems, particularly those linked to food practices that are increasingly at risk of being lost.

He noted that such platforms are essential for strengthening intergenerational learning and ensuring that traditional knowledge continues to contribute to sustainable development, social cohesion, and the empowerment of youth and women as custodians of heritage.

"This initiative not only strengthens intergenerational learning but also highlights how indigenous knowledge can contribute to sustainable development, social cohesion, and the empowerment of youth and women as custodians of our heritage," Mulaudzi said.



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“This initiative not only strengthens intergenerational learning but also highlights how indigenous knowledge can contribute to sustainable development, social cohesion, and the empowerment of youth and women as custodians of our heritage,” Mulaudzi said.

Junior lecturer at the University of Venda, Ms Muvhango Divhani, emphasized the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge into modern development approaches. “Sustainable development in Africa cannot be achieved without recognising and integrating indigenous knowledge systems,” she said.

“The challenges of food insecurity and malnutrition are not due to a lack of knowledge, but rather the gradual loss and undervaluing of indigenous food systems.”

Divhani further encouraged communities and policymakers to actively restore and elevate traditional practices, noting that indigenous foods remain resilient systems that have sustained African communities across generations.

By the end of the event, participants expressed renewed appreciation for indigenous food systems and their relevance in addressing contemporary challenges. The dialogue highlighted the importance of preserving traditional knowledge as a living resource that continues to support food security, environmental sustainability, economic empowerment, and cultural continuity.





## MAX MOJAPELO PRESERVES SOUTH AFRICA'S INDIGENOUS MUSIC HERITAGE IN MEMORY FOOTPRINT

Veteran broadcaster and author Max Mojapelo has released a new book, *Memory Footprint*, in a bid to preserve South Africa's rich but often undocumented indigenous music heritage. The project, supported by the National Heritage Council (NHC), captures decades of stories about the artists and traditions that shaped the country's musical identity.

"Too many of our music legends have gone unrecorded. This book is about making sure their stories are preserved before they disappear." Mojapelo shared.

The publication builds on his earlier work, *Beyond Memory* (2008), but shifts focus more deliberately toward traditional and indigenous genres. Mojapelo describes *Memory Footprint* as a more detailed and introspective continuation, one that seeks to document the roots of South African music with greater depth and care.



*With more than 30 years in radio, Mojapelo has had a front-row seat to the evolution of the country's music industry.*

He hosted programmes across a wide range of genres, including jazz, reggae, gospel and traditional music, experiences that allowed him to document personal stories through interviews and encounters with musicians over the years.

The book's title reflects this journey. Drawing on vivid memories from his broadcasting career, Mojapelo reconstructs moments that might otherwise have been lost, creating what he describes as a cultural archive based on lived experience.

His passion for music began in childhood in Matome village in Zebediela, where he was immersed in traditional sounds. That early exposure laid the foundation for a lifelong commitment to storytelling. Later, in Soweto, his blind uncle, musician Jimmy Mojapelo, introduced him to composing, recording and performance, while village elders shaped his narrative voice through oral traditions such as proverbs, fables and praise poetry.



Throughout his career, Mojapelo engaged with key figures in the industry, including producer Rupert Bopape and cultural leader Sello Galane. He also participated in major events such as the Lion Lager Road Show and worked closely with musicians in diverse communities, including visually impaired artists in Soweto during the 1970s.

Mojapelo further highlighted that documenting music history is an urgent task. "Undocumented information is heritage lost. If we don't act now, we risk losing an entire generation of musical history," he said. He points to the enduring influence of traditional genres such as mbaqanga, which have shaped contemporary styles like kwaito and amapiano.

Preserving these roots, he argues, is essential not only for cultural identity but also for future musical innovation.

The NHC played a key role in bringing the book to publication, funding critical stages including editing, design and printing. In a statement, the council said initiatives like Memory Footprint are vital in safeguarding indigenous knowledge systems and ensuring that cultural traditions are passed on to future generations.

“Projects like Memory Footprint play a critical role in preserving indigenous knowledge and cultural identity,” said the NHC Funding Manager, Bongwiwe Magasela.

Music scholars have also welcomed the publication, noting the scarcity of formally documented histories of South Africa's indigenous music traditions. One cultural researcher said Mojapelo's work helps bridge the gap between oral history and written record, making it more accessible to younger audiences and international readers.

Mojapelo hopes the book will inspire renewed appreciation for local music and encourage greater investment in indigenous genres such as maskandi, kiba and mgqashiyo. He has called on the private sector and media to support artists through festivals, talent development and increased local content.

Memory Footprint is the first in a planned series, marking the beginning of a broader effort to archive South Africa's musical heritage. For Mojapelo, the project is both a personal mission and a national one.

“*Our music carries our history, and if we lose it, we lose a part of ourselves. This is about identity,” he said.*



## NHC AND FREEDOM PARK COMMEMORATE BATTLE OF CUITO CUANAVALÉ

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC), in partnership with Freedom Park, commemorated the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale on 23 March 2026 in Salvokop, Pretoria, marking the Day of Reflection on Resistance and Liberation Heritage.

The event brought together government officials, scholars and members of the public to reflect on the historical significance of the battle and its impact on Southern Africa's liberation struggles.

Proceedings began with a wreath-laying ceremony to honour those who died during the conflict.

Messages of support from partner countries were also delivered, highlighting the role of international cooperation during the liberation era.

In his welcoming note, the NHC Chairperson, Mr Tau Masemola, stated that Freedom Park plays a crucial role in preserving and presenting South Africa's history, from pre-colonial times through apartheid to democracy. He called for continued efforts to address past injustices and to recognise those who contributed to the country's freedom.

A public lecture formed part of the programme, focusing on the political and social impact of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale. Speakers examined how the conflict influenced developments in the region and its relevance for younger generations.

Deputy Minister Peace Mabe said the battle demonstrated strong ties between African countries and international allies, particularly Cuba. She noted that the conflict contributed to the independence of Angola and Namibia and helped accelerate the end of apartheid in South Africa.

“We are gathered here not only to remember a turning point in our history, but to honour the shared sacrifice that united nations in the fight for freedom,” Mabe said.

The commemoration highlighted the role of historical memory in shaping national identity and ongoing efforts to promote unity and social cohesion.



## NHC RESEARCH SEMINAR STRENGTHENS COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY-CENTRED CONSERVATION

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC), in partnership with Sol Plaatje University, convened a two-day research seminar in Kimberley from 26–27 March 2026, advancing dialogue on sustainable, community-centred heritage management in the Northern Cape.

Held under the theme “Exploring the heritage landscape of the Northern Cape for sustainable management and community engagement,” the seminar brought together academics, traditional leaders, policymakers, students, and heritage practitioners. It provided a collaborative platform to shape strategies for safeguarding both tangible and intangible heritage.

Opening the seminar, SPU’s Dean of Humanities highlighted the university’s growing role as a hub for heritage studies since its establishment in 2014. He highlighted its commitment to Indigenous Knowledge Systems, particularly research focused on Khoi, Nama, San, and broader African identities. Plans to establish a Centre for Heritage and Indigeneity in Southern Africa further position the institution at the forefront of heritage scholarship.

Dr Mirriam Tawane, Executive: Core Business at the NHC, stressed the urgency of preserving living heritage. “Much of our heritage is not written, it lives with our elders,” she said, warning that invaluable knowledge risks being lost if not documented. She also called for a reassessment of historical narratives, noting that many fail to fully reflect the realities of displacement and colonial impact.

Addressing sustainability, Dr Tawane emphasised the need to link heritage preservation with livelihoods. “Heritage is not just about the past, it is about identity, education, and creating opportunities for the future,” she said, urging innovative approaches amid constrained resources.

Throughout the seminar, participants strengthened the importance of integrating research, teaching, and community engagement. Discussions highlighted communities as central custodians of heritage, with knowledge transmission extending beyond formal institutions.



Critical challenges facing heritage conservation in the Northern Cape were brought into focus. Experts pointed to the vulnerability of archaeological and cultural sites, including rock art and historic settlements, threatened by mining, neglect, and development pressures.

Concerns over the degradation and repurposing of culturally significant spaces emphasized the need for stronger policy implementation, improved resource allocation, and active community involvement.

The seminar also foregrounded the role of traditional leadership in preserving living heritage. Contributions emphasized the importance of safeguarding genealogy, cultural practices, and spiritual traditions.

Participants called for greater recognition and documentation of knowledge held by elders and community custodians.

Presentations on sacred sites illustrated their dual significance as cultural assets and potential drivers of local economic development through responsible heritage tourism. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of balancing preservation with sustainable development.

Collaboration emerged as a central theme, with participants advocating for strengthened partnerships across government, academia, and heritage institutions.

Municipal spatial development frameworks were identified as key tools for protecting heritage-sensitive areas, while cooperation with museums and international bodies was seen as vital for capacity building.

The NHC confirmed its commitment to supporting the sector through research, education, and funding initiatives. Programmes such as the Golden Shield Heritage Awards and the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme continue to play a key role in recognising and empowering heritage practitioners.

On the second day of the seminar, delegates visited GaMohana Hill and Wonderwerk Cave, to gain firsthand insight into the province's rich heritage and the practical challenges of site management, including infrastructure and security gaps.

The seminar concluded with clear recommendations, including increasing student participation in research, fostering publication partnerships, and improving site management systems.

Expected outcomes include collaborative research outputs and the development of a dynamic heritage research hub in the Northern Cape.

The seminar reflects a shared commitment by the NHC and SPU to promote inclusive knowledge production, strengthen community empowerment, and ensure the sustainable preservation of South Africa's diverse heritage.

The National Heritage Council (NHC) of South Africa has appointed Ms, Tsakani Sandra Mavhona as Supply Chain Management (SCM) Administrator, effective March 2026.

Mavhona brings more than five years of experience in supply chain management, procurement and compliance in the public sector. She has previously held roles including Probity Manager, SCM and Contracts Manager, SCM Compliance Consultant and Internal Auditor.

She holds a BTech in Cost and Management Accounting and is currently pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma in Supply Chain Management.

Her appointment forms part of the efforts to strengthen procurement and supply chain management functions within the organisation.



## NHC STRENGTHENS SCM TEAM WITH NEW ADMINISTRATOR APPOINTMENT

# CALL FOR HERITAGE FUNDING

2026

CLOSING DATE: 29 MAY 2026 AT 23:59



## NHC INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR 2026–2027 HERITAGE FUNDING TO EMPOWER COMMUNITY HERITAGE PROJECTS

The National Heritage Council (NHC) of South Africa has opened applications for its 2026/2027 Heritage Funding Call, supporting community-led projects that preserve and promote the country's cultural heritage.

The funding programme is designed to empower projects that contribute to heritage preservation through research, documentation, digitisation, and publication. Interested applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals before the closing date of 15 May 2026.

All applications must be completed online via the NHC's Praxis Grant Management System, available on the NHC website or directly at <https://nhc.praxisgms.co.za/>. The Council has emphasised that no emailed or hand-delivered applications will be accepted.

Eligible applicants include educational institutions, non-profit companies (NPCs), non-profit organisations (NPOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), associations, foundations, community trusts (excluding family trusts), and Traditional Councils.

Applicants must be South African citizens and registered on the NHC Funding Portal.

NHC Chief Executive Officer, Dr Thabo Manetsi, highlighted the importance of the initiative, indicating that funding heritage projects is central to the Council's mandate.

He explained that such initiatives play a vital role in preserving South Africa's cultural legacy while strengthening social cohesion and fostering a shared national identity.

## Funding will be allocated across three key categories:

- ◇ Living Heritage: Projects focusing on oral history documentation, indigenous knowledge systems, cultural digitisation, and the preservation of Khoi and San heritage.
- ◇ Cultural, Natural and Resistance Heritage: Initiatives exploring traditional leadership, resistance movements, and culturally or spiritually significant sites.
- ◇ Education and Training: Programmes aimed at promoting heritage awareness, knowledge transfer, and public education in support of nation-building.

Preference will be given to projects that actively involve youth, women, and persons with disabilities.

The NHC has also clarified that organisations currently funded under the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP) or existing NHC funding cycles will not be eligible unless they have fulfilled all reporting requirements or completed their agreed deliverables.

Applicants are encouraged to begin preparing their submissions early to ensure compliance with all requirements. The NHC has confirmed that its team is available to provide guidance and support throughout the application process.

For more information on application criteria and requirements, visit [www.nhc.org.za](http://www.nhc.org.za) or contact the NHC via email at [funding@nhc.org.za](mailto:funding@nhc.org.za). For media enquiries, contact Mr Tsiredzo Mandane at 079298 9394 or [t.mandane@nhc.org.za](mailto:t.mandane@nhc.org.za).



**CALL FOR HERITAGE FUNDING 2026 OPEN**

**CLOSING DATE: 15 MAY 2026 AT 23:59**

Do you have a heritage project that can help preserve, protect, and promote our heritage? The National Heritage Council (NHC) has officially opened the 2026/2027 Heritage Funding Call for community-based projects focused on research, documentation, heritage education and knowledge transfer.

FUNDING IS AVAILABLE FOR THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- LIVING HERITAGE
- CULTURAL HISTORY, NATURAL HISTORY & RESISTANCE HERITAGE
- HERITAGE EDUCATION & TRAINING

Priority will be given to projects involving youth, women and people with disabilities.

Applications must be submitted online via the NHC Grant Management System. Apply here: [www.nhc.praxisgms.co.za](http://www.nhc.praxisgms.co.za)  
For more information, visit <http://www.nhc.org.za/funding> or email: [funding@nhc.org.za](mailto:funding@nhc.org.za) for queries.

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National Heritage Council NHC South Africa



## NHC OPENS CALL FOR 2026/2027 NELSON MANDELA UBUNTU INITIATIVES PROPOSALS

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) has officially opened the call for proposals for the 2026/2027 Nelson Mandela Ubuntu Initiatives, inviting non-profit organisations across the country to take part in a transformative effort to promote Ubuntu as a living heritage.

Inspired by the enduring legacy of Nelson Mandela, the initiative seeks to extend the spirit of Mandela Day beyond a single moment into a sustained, year-long movement. The programme aims to strengthen social cohesion, encourage active citizenship, and support meaningful community development.

This year's theme, ***"Reclaiming Ubuntu for a Better and Just Society,"*** highlights the importance of restoring shared values that unite and uplift communities. Through the initiative, the NHC will support one community-based Ubuntu project in each of South Africa's nine provinces, focusing on practical, everyday expressions of Ubuntu.

Dr Thabo Manetsi, Chief Executive Officer of the NHC, emphasised the importance of the programme, stating that Ubuntu lies at the heart of South Africa's identity. He stated that the initiative is designed to empower communities to actively live out these values in ways that create meaningful and lasting social change.

The call is open to a wide range of eligible applicants, including registered non-profit organisations (NPOs), non-profit companies (NPCs), faith-based and community organisations, traditional councils, as well as schools and universities. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to implement impactful, community-level projects that promote Ubuntu and encourage positive communal living.

Priority will be given to initiatives that align with key focus areas, including community development and poverty alleviation, primary health and hygiene, youth and vulnerable group empowerment, and the promotion of Ubuntu values, social cohesion, and nation-building.

Projects are expected to be small-scale, community-driven, and responsive to local needs. Applicants are required to submit a detailed proposal along with supporting documents, including a valid NPO registration certificate, tax clearance (Tax PIN), and a bank account confirmation letter.

Dr Manetsi further highlighted that the NHC is seeking initiatives that go beyond celebration and actively demonstrate Ubuntu in action—projects that bring people together, educate communities, and strengthen shared humanity.

### Application Details:

Opening Date: 01 April 2026

Closing Date: 31 May 2026

Submission Email: [ubuntu@nhc.org.za](mailto:ubuntu@nhc.org.za)

Subject Line: Ubuntu Initiatives Proposal

The Ubuntu Initiatives Programme forms part of the NHC's broader mandate to preserve and promote South Africa's heritage while advancing unity, social cohesion, and nation-building.

For detailed guidelines, applicants are encouraged to visit the NHC website or direct their enquiries to the email address provided.



## CONTACT US

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