

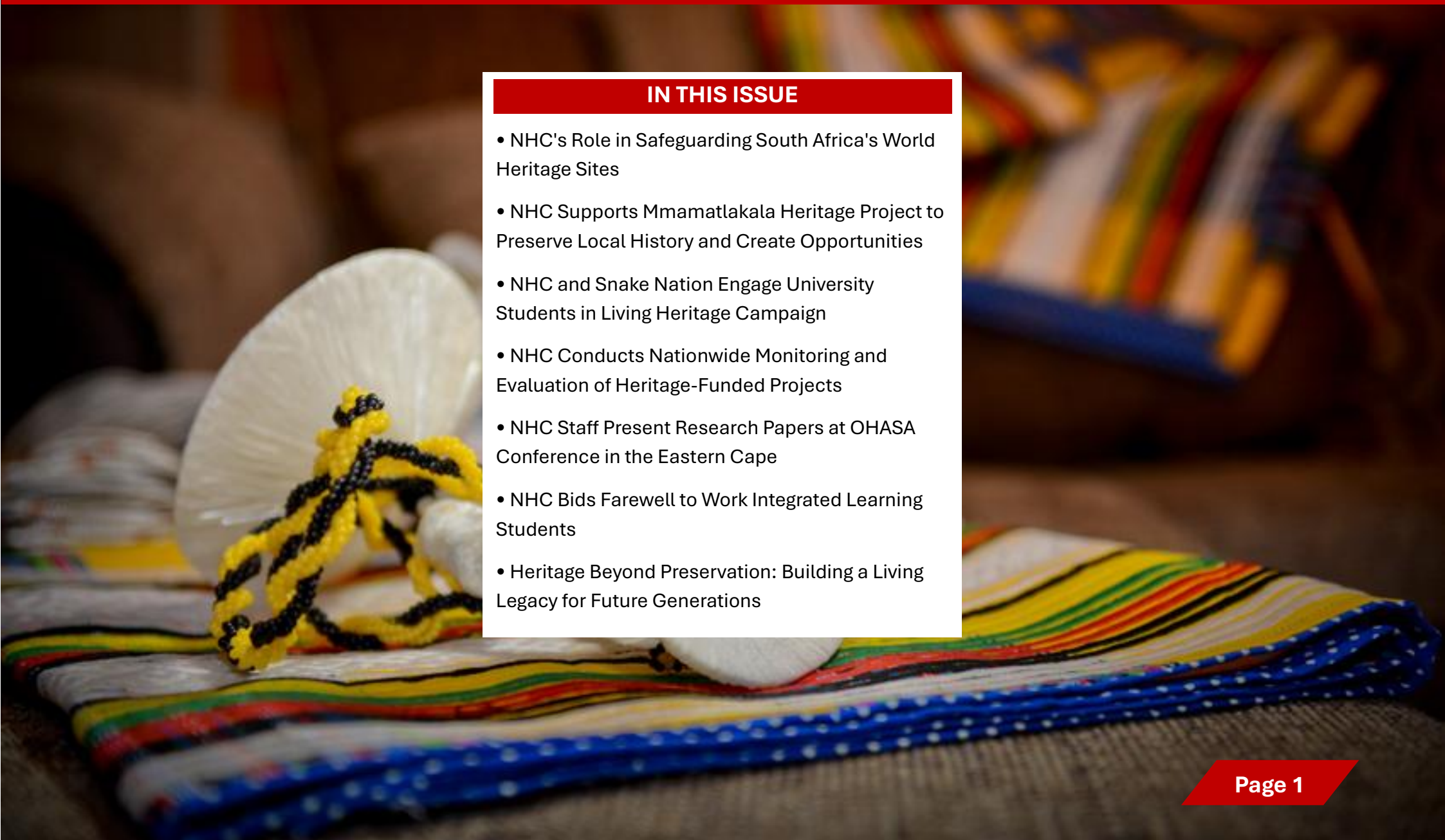
nhc
National Heritage Council
SOUTH AFRICA
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# HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

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*Champions of African heritage towards social cohesion.*

# HERITAGE IN FOCUS



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*Adv. Tshepo Maake*
*Acting: Chief Executive Officer,*
*National Heritage Council of South Africa*

# MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Heritage is more than the preservation of monuments, buildings and historical records. It is a living legacy that shapes our identity, strengthens our sense of belonging and connects present and future generations to our past. As the National Heritage Council (NHC), we have a responsibility to protect this legacy and ensure that heritage remains relevant and accessible to all South Africans.

This October/November edition highlights the NHC's ongoing work to safeguard and promote South Africa's rich and diverse heritage. Our role in protecting the country's World Heritage Sites highlights the importance of preserving places of cultural and historical significance for future generations.

We continue to recognise the importance of involving communities and young people in heritage preservation. Our engagement with Snake Nation through the Living Heritage Campaign provides an opportunity to connect university students with heritage and encourage their participation in keeping it alive. Young people have an important role to play in ensuring that our heritage is preserved, understood and passed on.

Our support for the Mmamatlakala Heritage Project demonstrates how preserving local history can also create opportunities and strengthen community identity. Such initiatives highlight the value of community-led heritage projects in keeping local stories and histories alive.

Research and knowledge-sharing also remain important to our work. The participation of NHC staff in the OHASA Conference in the Eastern Cape provided an opportunity to present research papers and contribute to discussions on heritage. In addition, our nationwide monitoring and evaluation of heritage-funded projects reinforces the need for accountability and ensures that funded initiatives are assessed against their intended objectives.

This edition also acknowledges the contribution of our Work Integrated Learning students. Their time at the NHC has formed part of their professional development, and we wish them well as they take the next steps in their careers.

As we reflect on the work highlighted in this edition, we remain committed to protecting South Africa's heritage and strengthening partnerships with communities and stakeholders. Preserving our heritage requires collective effort, sustained commitment and an appreciation of the histories that shape our nation.

I invite you to read this edition and engage with the stories that reflect the NHC's work and its continued contribution to heritage preservation and promotion.

**Acting Chief Executive Officer**

**Advocate: Tshepo Maake**

# NHC's Role in Safeguarding South Africa's World Heritage Sites

WORLD HERITAGE



# NHC Supports Mmamatlakala Heritage Project to Preserve Local History and Create Opportunities

MMAMATLAKALA



# NHC and Snake Nation Engage University Students in Living Heritage Campaign

LIVING HERITAGE



# NHC Conducts Nationwide Monitoring and Evaluation of Heritage-Funded Projects

MONITORING



# NHC Staff Present Research Papers at OHASA Conference in the Eastern Cape

OHASA CONFERENCE



# NHC Bids Farewell to Work Integrated Learning Students

WIL STUDENTS



# HERITAGE BEYOND PRESERVATION:

# BUILDING A LIVING LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. (Opinion Piece)

**Heritage is all around us. It lives in the languages we speak, the stories told by our grandparents, the traditions we celebrate and the places that remind us of where we come from.**



Image source: Handmade Trust

It connects us to our roots, shapes our identity and gives us a sense of belonging. In a diverse country such as South Africa, our heritage is one of the most valuable parts of who we are as a nation.

Yet, when we speak about preserving heritage, we often think of historical buildings, monuments, museums and artefacts. While protecting these resources is important, heritage is much bigger than what we can see and touch. It is also found in our indigenous knowledge, cultural practices, oral histories, traditional music, languages and the everyday experiences passed from one generation to another.

The challenge is ensuring that these traditions and stories do not disappear with time. This responsibility belongs to all of us.

Government, heritage institutions, communities, schools and families each have a role to play in keeping our heritage alive. Most importantly, communities must be given the opportunity to tell their own stories, share their knowledge and take an active role in protecting what makes them unique.

Young people also have an important part to play. They are not only the future custodians of our heritage; they are part of its story today.

By encouraging young people to learn about their history, embrace their cultural identities and use technology to document and share their heritage, we can make it meaningful and relevant to generations growing up in a changing world.

Heritage also has the power to create opportunities.

Through cultural tourism, creative industries and community-led initiatives, our heritage can contribute to local economic development, create livelihoods and bring communities together. Protecting our heritage should therefore be seen not only as a cultural responsibility but also as an investment in our people's future.

The National Heritage Council's responsibility extends beyond safeguarding what previous generations have left behind. It is about encouraging a society that understands, values and takes pride in its heritage.

As we look to the future, we must remember that heritage is not something we simply inherit and leave untouched. It is something we must nurture, celebrate and pass on.

Because the greatest legacy we can leave future generations is not only the history we preserve, but the stories, knowledge and traditions we ensure they never lose. End//

# NHC'S ROLE IN SAFEGUARDING SOUTH AFRICA'S WORLD HERITAGE SITES



Images source: Official World Heritage List

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) contributes to protecting and promoting the country's heritage resources through advocacy, technical support and collaboration with provincial authorities and other stakeholders.

***A key part of this work was the NHC's advocacy for the inscription of the 14-component Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation:*** Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2024. The NHC continues to provide technical and advisory support to strengthen the sites' management, conservation and sustainability.

World Heritage Sites are places recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for their Outstanding Universal Value.

As of date there are **1273 sites listed on the UNESCO World Heritage** List across the globe. South Africa ratified the 1972 World Heritage Convention on 10 July 1997. The country has 12 sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List: seven cultural, four natural and one mixed.

The cultural sites are the Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa; Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape; Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape; Robben Island; Khomani Cultural Landscape; The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa; and Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites.

The natural sites are the Cape Floral Region Protected Areas: iSimangaliso Wetland Park – Maputo National Park; Vredefort Dome; and Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains. The Maloti-Drakensberg Park is the country's mixed sites, shared with Lesotho.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) is South Africa's focal point for the Convention. It coordinates the nomination of sites and oversees the country's related management and conservation commitments. The NHC's mandate, set out in the National Heritage Council Act of 1999, includes coordinating and transforming the heritage sector and promoting and preserving heritage resources.

Members of the public and organisations can propose sites through national processes set out by DFEE. Formal nominations to UNESCO are submitted by the State Party through DFFE. Proposals must provide information about a site's location, significance, boundaries and management and protection arrangements.

“World Heritage Sites are important key drivers and contributors to; economic transformation envisioned in African Union Agenda 2063, job opportunities, tourism, social cohesion, education, and Research,” Ms Grace Mayile, the world heritage Specialist shared.

World Heritage Sites can support tourism, employment, education, research and social cohesion. Their protection requires cooperation among government, heritage institutions, communities and other stakeholders. End//





# NHC SUPPORTS MMAMATLAKALA HERITAGE PROJECT TO PRESERVE LOCAL HISTORY AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

The initiative, implemented by Tsebo Pele Science Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, aims to document indigenous knowledge, develop young people's skills and explore economic opportunities through heritage preservation.

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) is supporting the Mmamatlakala Heritage Site Project, an initiative led by Tsebo Pele Science Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship to preserve local history, document indigenous knowledge and explore economic opportunities for rural communities.

***The project seeks to safeguard Mmamatlakala's cultural identity by recording the stories, traditions and experiences of community elders, many of which have been passed down through oral history rather than written records.***

Project leader Tswelelo Piet Mashita said the initiative aims to make heritage a resource for education and community development.

***"Our motivation is not simply to preserve historical information, but to transform heritage into a resource for education, community development, tourism and economic opportunities,".***

The project uses oral history interviews, photography, video recordings and digital mapping to document historical sites, cultural practices and community stories. It also aims to establish a digital heritage archive where historical information can be stored and accessed by learners, researchers and future generations.

**Youth development is another key focus.**

The project seeks to equip young people with practical skills in digital photography, videography, research, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), heritage documentation and entrepreneurship.

Tsebo Pele's future is to develop Mmamatlakala as a heritage tourism destination. Proposed activities include guided heritage tours, cultural performances, traditional crafts, storytelling sessions and educational visits by schools and universities.

These activities could create income-generating opportunities for residents, particularly young people and women, through tourism services, cultural products, traditional food businesses and digital content creation.

The project is supported by the NHC and seeks to build partnerships with traditional leadership, community structures, educational institutions and government stakeholders. Tsebo Pele's wider network includes the University of Limpopo Digital Hub, Waterberg and Capricorn TVET Colleges, and Mogalakwena Local Municipality.

Despite progress in community engagement, heritage awareness, oral history documentation and digital mapping, the project faces several challenges. These include limited historical records, funding constraints, restricted access to technology and the need to protect and maintain heritage sites.

***Through the initiative, the NHC and Tsebo Pele aim to demonstrate how preserving local history can also contribute to education, skills development and rural economic growth.***

End//...



## NHC AND SNAKE NATION, ENGAGE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN LIVING HERITAGE CAMPAIGN




The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC), in partnership with Snake Nation, has engaged university students in living heritage through campus activations featuring praise poetry, traditional music, film screenings and cultural performances. ***The activations took place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Westville campus, on 15 October; the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) on 18 October; and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), Bellville campus, on 24 October.***

Implemented in collaboration with university societies, the programme aimed to encourage young people to take an active role in preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge, languages and cultural traditions.

Speaking at the activations, NHC representative Gugu Hlatshwayo, Coordinator Education Advocacy, urged students to learn about their cultural backgrounds and take responsibility for passing this knowledge on to future generations.

***"Heritage is not our parents' responsibility. It is ours," Gugu said.***

She warned that young people risk losing valuable cultural knowledge if they do not learn from older generations while they still have the opportunity.




"You are the last generation that will still find a grandmother who can tell you the meaning of your clan names, teach you your cultural values, the importance of the different ceremonies and traditions that are practiced. If we do not ask now, we will have to Google yourselves one day and find nothing," she said.

The programme featured a Praise Poetry Competition, student film screenings, traditional music and cultural performances. Students also participated in interviews, cultural discussions and heritage education activities.

Students were encouraged to enter the national praise poetry competition, which closes on 10 November 2026. The competition invites submissions of poetry recited in an indigenous language and reflecting participants' cultural backgrounds and experiences.

At Wits, the activation was held in collaboration with the Zulu Society and Basotho Society. The societies' chairperson, Bheki Senzo, welcomed the partnership and expressed hope that it would continue.

*"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Snake Nation and the National Heritage Council for this partnership. This is the first time Wits has hosted an event of this nature, and I hope the collaboration will continue to provide students with opportunities to preserve, promote and celebrate our cultural heritage," Senzo said.*

The UKZN activation took place at the Westville campus, while the CPUT event in Bellville was organised in collaboration with the AmaXhosa Society.

Through its partnership with Snake Nation, university societies and Heritage Ambassadors, the NHC used creative and cultural activities to highlight the importance of living heritage.

The campaign also highlighted the role of young people in learning indigenous languages, documenting cultural practices and recording oral histories to ensure that this knowledge is passed on to future generations. End//

# NHC CONDUCTS NATIONWIDE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF HERITAGE FUNDED PROJECTS




The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) is conducting nationwide monitoring and evaluation visits to projects funded through the NHC Annual Funding Programme and the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP) across six provinces. The exercise aims to assess implementation progress, identify challenges, provide guidance on compliance requirements and strengthen accountability in the utilisation of public funds.

To date, the NHC has visited 45 heritage projects across Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Free State, Northern Cape and North-West Province. The projects cover various areas of heritage preservation and promotion, including oral history, indigenous knowledge systems, community storytelling, digital archiving, historical research and skills development.

Through the monitoring and evaluation process, *the NHC assesses whether funded projects are meeting their approved objectives, identifies implementation challenges and determines where additional guidance, support or intervention may be required.*

The visits also provide an opportunity for the NHC to engage directly with project leaders, implementing organisations and beneficiaries, gaining first-hand insight into project activities, achievements and the impact of funded initiatives within communities.

Speaking about the importance of the exercise, NHC Funding Manager, Ms Bongiwe Magasela, said:

***"Monitoring and evaluation is essential in ensuring that funded projects translate into meaningful outcomes for the communities they serve.***

Beyond tracking implementation, these visits provide an opportunity to engage directly with beneficiaries, identify challenges and assess whether public resources are being used effectively to achieve the intended heritage objectives."

The nationwide monitoring and evaluation programme is ongoing, with further visits planned for the month of November in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape.




Through this exercise, the NHC seeks to strengthen the implementation and impact of its funded initiatives, ensuring that they contribute meaningfully to preserving South Africa's historical knowledge, promoting cultural diversity, developing community skills and encouraging public participation in safeguarding the country's heritage.

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# NHC STAFF PRESENT RESEARCH PAPERS AT OHASA CONFERENCE IN THE EASTERN CAPE

Two National Heritage Council (NHC) staff members presented research papers at the 23rd Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) Conference, held at Pine Lodge in Summerstrand, Gqeberha, Eastern Cape, from 12 to 16 October 2026.

Four NHC staff members, namely ***Dr Tawane Mirriam, Mr Maimela Glen, Ms Mojapelo Sarah and Ms Mphahlele Tshegofatjo***, attended the five-day conference, which brought together heritage researchers, practitioners, archivists and other stakeholders in the knowledge sharing and exchange informed by research conducted within heritage and Indigenous knowledge systems field.

The conference was held under the theme “Voices Across Time and Space: Oral Histories of Resistance, Collaboration and Resilience”.










Dr Tawane, Executive: Core Business, presented a paper titled "The Positionality of Traditional Leadership Towards Heritage Management in South Africa". Her research examined the relationship between traditional leadership and heritage sites, many of which fall within the jurisdiction of traditional leaders and/or councils.

During her presentation, she highlighted the longstanding connection between traditional leaders and these sites, arguing that they should play an active role in their conservation, preservation and promotion.

"Traditional leaders are custodians of such living heritage, and it is only fair that they play a role in the conservation, preservation and promotion of such heritage sites," she said. The conference was held under the theme "Voices Across Time and Space: Oral Histories of Resistance, Collaboration and Resilience".

Mr Glen Maimela, Research Assistant, presented a paper titled "Indigenous Games in the Mainstream Education: Co-designed Approaches for Teaching and Learning in the Classrooms". The research was conducted in Ga-Mamabololo among the Bapedi Indigenous people of Limpopo Province.

His presentation disserted on the educational value of Indigenous games, which have traditionally provided opportunities for social interaction and entertainment while developing cognitive and social skills.

He also outlined four co-designed approaches to teaching indigenous games and other Indigenous Knowledge Systems in mainstream classrooms: the use of indigenous languages, learning by doing, learning in a circle and a hybrid approach.

The presentation also raised questions about the inclusion of children living with disabilities and the future of Indigenous games, particularly how these games could be made accessible to all children.

"The Indigenous games are part of everyone's heritage, therefore, we need to ask ourselves these important questions: where do we begin? How can we make the Indigenous games relatable for children living with disabilities? and what does the future of our Indigenous knowledge and heritage look like?" he said.

The two research papers examined the role of traditional leadership in heritage management and the place of indigenous games in formal education. Both papers will be included in the OHASA conference proceedings, scheduled for publication in October 2027, which will help position the NHC at the centre for research and knowledge production. End//

# NHC BIDS FAREWELL TO WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING STUDENTS

The National Heritage Council of South Africa (NHC) has bid farewell to its Work Integrated Learning (WIL) students, celebrating their hard work, commitment and contributions during their time at the organisation.

The students' placement at the NHC gave them an opportunity to put their classroom knowledge into practice, gain workplace experience and develop skills needed for their future careers. They also had the chance to learn from experienced professionals while contributing to the Council's daily activities.

For the students, the experience was about more than gaining work experience. It was also a chance to grow, learn and prepare for the world of work.

One of the departing students, Maduvhahafani Mawela, shared her appreciation for the opportunity, saying:

*"My time at the NHC has been a valuable learning experience. I am grateful for the opportunity to develop new skills, gain practical knowledge and learn from professionals who have contributed to my personal and professional growth."*



The NHC thanked the students for their dedication, enthusiasm and positive contributions throughout their placement. The NHC recognises the value of providing young people with opportunities to gain practical experience and build the skills they need to succeed in the workplace.

As they prepare for the next stage of their journeys, the students leave with new knowledge, valuable lessons and experience that will support their future career goals.

The NHC wishes all the departing students well in their future endeavours. Their time at the Council may have come to an end, but the skills and lessons gained will remain part of their journey ahead.

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## Upcoming Events

PMO and WHS Monitoring & Evaluation - Assessment of the State of conservation. Stakeholder engagement meetings:

WC- 17 Nov 2026

EC - 19 Nov 2026

KZN - 20 Nov 2026 & 7-8 December 2026

Unveiling of the UNESCO Plaque at the Union Buildings

04 December 2026.

# CONTACT US

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