



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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PER MAIL / E-MAIL

Dear Ms Thomson

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A 25M TELECOMMUNICATION TREE MAST DEVELOPMENT ON ERF 3244 (VGK KNYSNA) ON 35 VIGILANCE DRIVE IN HORNLEE, KNYSNA, WITHIN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

The Application for Environmental Authorisation and Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) dated 26 August 2019, received by this Department on 28 August 2019, refer.

Based on the information submitted to the Department, the applicant, Atlas Tower (Pty) Ltd, intends to erect a 25m telecommunication tree mast with a development footprint of approximately 112m² on the above-mentioned property. The erf is already transformed (church grounds), does not fall within a CBA or ESA area nor does it have any environmental sensitivities. It is zoned "Institutional" and located within the urban area. However, the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning alerted the applicant to the fact that the proposed development is located within a nationally proclaimed protected area (i.e. Knysna Lakes Area) as identified in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Amendment Act, 2009 (Act no. 15 of 2009). It is on this premise that the application was made to this Department.

The Screening Tool is meant as a tool to guide users and to allow them to screen the site for sensitivities before submitting an application to the Competent Authority. It is important to note that the Screening Tool does come with a disclaimer in terms of accuracy and completeness. It is important to ground truth these findings in an effort to obtain accurate results. A screening tool output done by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), and the results showed that the proposed area has a 'High Sensitivity' in terms of **Relative Palaeontology** and a 'Very High Sensitivity' for the **Relative Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme** with the sensitivity features listed as: *CBA, Protected Area, Indigenous Forest, FEPA, Focus Area for PAES*. The report explains that the site is void of any natural vegetation and is covered in grass and a few alien trees. Further, in terms of Palaeontology, the Heritage Screener Report as well as communication from Heritage Western Cape (HWC) indicates that there is no heritage significance on site and no further action under Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999, is required.

Whilst the proposed development may occur in a Protected Area, it does not meet the triggers as stated in the Listed Activity of Listing Notice 3, below:

3. The development of masts or towers of any material or type used for telecommunication broadcasting or radio transmission purposes where the mast or tower—
- (a) is to be placed on a site not previously used for this purpose; and
 - (b) will exceed 15 metres in height—
- but excluding attachments to existing buildings and masts on rooftops.

a. Western Cape

- i. All areas outside urban areas;
- ii. Areas designated for conservation use in Spatial Development Frameworks adopted by the competent authority, or zoned for a conservation purpose, within urban areas; or
- iii. Areas zoned for use as public open space or equivalent zoning within urban areas.

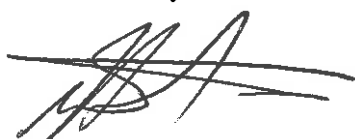
The report details that the height of the mast does exceed 15metres in height, however, it is within an urban area and the specific location is in an area zoned '**Institutional**'.

Be advised that, based on the information provided, the proposed telecommunications mast **does not constitute a listed activity** as defined in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended. Written authorisation is therefore **not** required from the Competent Authority prior to the undertaking of the said activity since it occurs within an urban area which is zoned 'Institutional'.

You may officially withdraw your application by submitting a letter (via hardcopy and email to EIAadmin@environment.gov.za) to the Department, notifying us of your intention. Once the letter is submitted, you will receive an official response stating that the file is withdrawn and the application closed on the system.

Kindly quote the abovementioned reference number in all further correspondence.

Yours sincerely



Mr Sabelo Malaza
Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Department of Environmental Affairs
Letter signed by: Mr Wayne Hector
Designation: Deputy Director: Prioritised Infrastructure Projects
Date: 20/09/19

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