

**SITE SENSITIVITY VERIFICATION (“SSV”) REPORT: THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT
OF A VISITORS’ SCIENCE CENTRE ON ERF 431 (A PORTION OF ERF 353), CARNARVON**



October 2024

Prepared for: South African Radio Astronomy Observatory
Liesbeek House, Liesbeek Parkway
MOWBRAY

Contact person: Alice Pienaar-Marais
E-mail: pienaar-marais@sarao.ac.za

Prepared by: EnviroAfrica
P. O. Box 5367
HELDERBERG
7135

Contact person: Bernard de Witt
EAPASA Reg.: 2021/3903
E-mail: bernard@enviroafrica.co.za

INTRODUCTION:

This SSV Report was undertaken in terms of the *Protocols for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on Identified Environmental Themes* (hereinafter referred to as “the Protocols”) as per Government Notice No. 320 (published in Government Gazette No. 43110 on 20 March 2020)¹. These Protocols, with effect from 09 May 2020 must be complied with for every new application submitted on the effective date and thereafter. According to the Protocols, the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (“EAP”) must verify the current use of the proposed site for development as well as the environmental sensitivity of the proposed site in terms of the Screening Tool to determine the need for specialist inputs in relation to the Themes (and proposed specialist assessments) included in the Protocols.

METHODOLOGY:

The SSV Report was compiled using desktop studies [that include using the DEA Screening Tool, BGIS and GoogleEarth) as well as a site visit that was conducted on 25 June 2024 to investigate, identify, and evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed development on the receiving environment. The SSV Report was compiled by the EAP (Mr. Bernard de Witt).

AIM OF THE SSV REPORT:

The aim of the SSV Report is to;

- Verify land use and Theme sensitivities as identified by the Screening Tool;
- Confirm whether or not the need exists for the specialist assessment(s) indicated in the Screening Tool Report; and
- Should the need for a specific specialist assessment be disputed, provide motivation as to why the specialist assessment is unwarranted for the proposed establishment of the approximately 4.2ha visitor’s science centre on Erf 431 (a portion of Erf 353) Carnarvon.

This will assist in providing an understanding of the natural environment on the proposed site.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The proposed site for the visitors’ science centre is a vacant land parcel that is located in between two urban land uses in the Central Business District of the town of Carnarvon. The vegetation on the proposed site is identified as Upper Nama Karoo and this vegetation type is categorised as Least Threatened. The on-site vegetation is in a disturbed state as a result of frequent trampling by pedestrians and this has caused numerous footpaths on the proposed site and also as a result the area towards north-eastern corner of the property being used as a soccer pitch. The coordinates of the four corners of the proposed site are the following:

(30° 58' 04.21"S, 22° 07' 20.25"E)

(30° 57' 57.58"S, 22° 07' 22.15"E)

(30° 57' 58.68"S, 22° 07' 29.99"E)

(30° 53' 04.73"S, 22° 07' 28.89"E)



Photo 1: View of the disturbed south-eastern parts of the proposed site



Photo 2: View of the soccer pitch towards the north-eastern parts of the proposed site



Photo 3: View of the wall of the dam located approximately 100m south of proposed site

Table 1. Themes and associated sensitivity

No	Theme	Sensitivity as per the Screening Tool	Confirm/ dispute sensitivity rating of Screening Tool	Verification of site sensitivity
1	Agriculture	Low	Confirm	An specialist has been appointed to compile a specialist investigation report for the proposed development on the proposed site, as this is a requirement in “ <i>The Protocols</i> ” even when the sensitivity rating for the Agriculture theme is Low.
2	Animal Species	Low	Confirm Confirm	<p>A specialist has been appointed to compile a terrestrial biodiversity investigation report on the proposed site, as the proposed development constitutes Item 27 of Listing Notice 1, i.e., The clearance of more 1ha of indigenous vegetation and Item 12 of Listing Notice 3, i.e., the clearance of more than 300m² of indigenous vegetation within a Critical Biodiversity Area.</p> <p>The terrestrial biodiversity investigation includes the Animal Species theme and how to minimise potential negative impacts on any sensitive animal species.</p>
3	Aquatic Biodiversity	Low	Confirm	The proposed site is devoid of drainage lines and wetlands. However, a dam exists within 500m to the south of the proposed site and so the proposed development requires an approval from the National Department of Water and Sanitation. A freshwater specialist as therefore been appointed to compile a freshwater specialist investigation report for the proposed development.
4	Archaeological and Cultural Heritage	Very High	Confirm	<p>The proposed development of approximately 4.2ha will change the character of an area exceeding 5000m² in size and so an approval for the proposed development is required from the South African Heritage Resources Authority in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999).</p> <p>A specialist has been appointed to compile a specialist investigation report that includes the Archaeological and Cultural Heritage theme. The report has been included as an appendix of the Draft Basic Assessment Report (“BAR”) and the South African Heritage Resources</p>

				Agency has been requested to comment on the Draft Basic Assessment Report.
5	Civil Aviation	Low	Confirm	The EAP is of the opinion that the Screening Tool has given an accurate sensitivity rating of Low for the Civil Aviation Theme on the proposed site in the Central Business District of Carnarvon.
6	Defence	Low	Confirm	The EAP is of the view that the proposed site is devoid of features that warrant a sensitivity rating higher than the Low sensitivity rating given by the Screening Tool. The EAP is therefore of the view that the sensitivity rating for the Defence Theme is indeed Low.
7	Palaeontology	Medium	Confirm	<p>The proposed development of approximately 4.2ha will change the character of an area exceeding 5000m² in size and so an approval for the proposed development is required from the South African Heritage Resources Authority in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999).</p> <p>A specialist has been appointed to compile a specialist investigation report that includes the Palaeontology theme. The report has been included as an appendix of the Draft Basic Assessment Report ("BAR") and the South African Heritage Resources Agency has been requested to comment on the Draft BAR.</p>
8	Plant Species	Medium	Confirm	A terrestrial biodiversity specialist has been appointed to compile a terrestrial biodiversity investigation report for the proposed development on the proposed site. The investigation report includes the Plant Species theme and how to minimise potential negative impacts on any sensitive plant species.
9	Terrestrial Biodiversity	Very High	Confirm	<p>A specialist has been appointed to compile a terrestrial biodiversity investigation report on the proposed site, as the proposed development constitutes Item 27 of Listing Notice 1, <i>i.e.</i>, The clearance of more 1ha of indigenous vegetation and Item 12 of Listing Notice 3, <i>i.e.</i>, the clearance of more than 300m² of indigenous vegetation within a Critical Biodiversity Area.</p> <p>The report contains recommendations to be implemented so that the potential negative impacts of the proposed development on terrestrial biodiversity are minimised.</p>

Table 2. Specialist assessments as per the Screening Tool Report

No	Proposed Specialist Assessment	Verification of Site Sensitivity And Motivation On The Need For Specialist Investigation
1	Landscape/ Visual Impact Assessment	A visual impact specialist has been appointed to conduct a visual impact investigation report and compile a visual impact investigation report.
2	Archaeological and cultural Heritage Impact Assessment	A specialist has been appointed to compile a specialist investigation report that includes the Archaeological and Cultural Heritage theme.
3	Palaeontological Impact Assessment	A specialist has been appointed to compile a specialist investigation report that includes the Palaeontological theme.
5	Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment	A terrestrial biodiversity specialist has been appointed to conduct a terrestrial biodiversity investigation on the proposed site and compile a report.
6	Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment	A specialist has been appointed to compile a freshwater specialist investigation report.
7	Socio-economic Assessment	A specialist has been appointed to compile a freshwater specialist investigation report.
8	Plant Species Impact Assessment	A terrestrial biodiversity specialist has been appointed to conduct an investigation on the proposed site for the proposed development and the specialist has compiled the required report. The report includes <i>inter alia</i> , the Plant Species theme. In light of this, a separate Plant Species Impact Assessment for the proposed development is unwarranted.
9	Animal Species Assessment	A terrestrial biodiversity specialist has been appointed to conduct an investigation on the proposed site for the proposed development and the specialist has compiled the required report. The report includes <i>inter alia</i> , the Animal Species theme. In light of this, a separate Plant Species Impact Assessment for the proposed development is unwarranted.

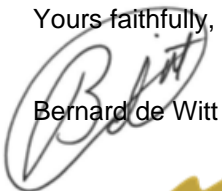


Figure 1: View of the proposed site (red polygon) and surroundings

All the investigation reports compiled by specialists and the letters of comment obtained from the relevant Organs of State will be responded to and included in the Basic Assessment Report.

Please do not hesitate to contact EnviroAfrica for any further information on the above.

Yours faithfully,



Bernard de Witt



Environmental Assessment Practitioner

EnviroAfrica cc

P: +27 21 851 1616 C: +27 82 448 9991

F: +27 86 512 0154

A: Unit 7, Pastorie Park, Corner of Reitz and Lourens Streets, Somerset West 7130

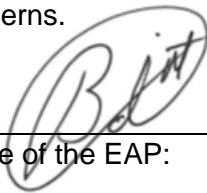
P. O. Box 5367, Helderberg 7135

W: www.enviroafrica.co.za E: bernard@enviroafrica.co.za

DECLARATION OF THE EAP

I, Bernard de Witt, EAPASA Registration Number: 2021/3903 as the appointed EAP hereby declare/affirm that:

- the information provided or to be provided as part of this SSV Report, is true and correct:
- in terms of the general requirement to be independent:
 - other than fair remuneration for work performed/to be performed in terms of this non-application, have no business, financial, personal or other interest in the activity or application and that there are no circumstances that may compromise my objectivity;
- in terms of the remainder of the general requirements for an EAP, am fully aware of and meet all of the requirements and that failure to comply with any the requirements may result in disqualification;
- I have disclosed/ will disclose, to the proponent, the specialist (if any), the Competent Authority and registered interested and affected parties, all material information that have or may have the potential to influence the decision of the Competent Authority or the objectivity of any report, plan or document prepared or to be prepared as part of this NOI;
- I have ensured/will ensure that information containing all relevant facts in the SSV Report was/will be distributed or was/will be made available to registered interested and affected parties and that participation will be facilitated in such a manner that all interested and affected parties were/will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to participate and to provide comments;
- I have ensured/will ensure that the comments of all interested and affected parties were/will be considered, recorded and submitted to the Competent Authority;
- I have ensured/will ensure the inclusion of inputs and recommendations from any specialists, where relevant;
- I have kept/will keep a register of all interested and affected parties that participate in the public participation process;
- I am aware that a false declaration is an offence in terms of Regulation 48 of the EIA Regulations; and
- All specialist investigations must comment on how the potential impacts relate to climate change concerns.



02 October 2024

Signature of the EAP:

Date:

EnviroAfrica CC

Name of company (if applicable):