



PHOTO'S: MATTHEW HENDRIKS

Groundbreaking event as sod is turned for Heritage Centre

DEBBIE HENDRIKS

“At last we will have a place to call our own, a place of anchorage for the Khoi and San indigenous people of this land.”

This were some of the comments of the First Nation people who attended the groundbreaking event where the sod was turned for the building of the first in its kind Cultural, Heritage and Media Centre for the Khoi and San at the Riverlands development in Observatory, Cape Town.

This event, which took place on a perfect, clear and wind still day, with Lion’s head standing majestically in the background, was the culmination of decades of struggle to find a place of anchorage where the Khoi and San can celebrate, enjoy and exhibited their heritage, history and culture for the world to see.

Nowhere in South Africa is a place that is exclusively dedicated to the culture and heritage of the first nation people.

Chief !Garu Zenzile Khoisan, head of the Gorinhaiqua Cultural Council and chair of the Western Cape First Nation Collective (WCFNC) said in his keynote address, that “it has indeed been a long road to get here, to come with high cultural protocol and ceremony and break sod, marking our permanent return to our true place of anchorage in the First Nations Cultural and Heritage Centre”.

Mayor of Cape Town, Alderman Geordin Hill-Lewis said that “this First Nations Heritage Centre that is about to be constructed is quite a remarkable thing because to my knowledge, this is the only stand-

alone heritage centre for KhoiSan history and culture in South Africa.

“The fact that there is not a single, stand alone cultural, heritage and history centre to celebrate and preserve KhoiSan history and culture, is quite an extraordinary thing, and in a way scandalous,” was the reaction of the Mayor, who with Premier Allan Winde, and deputy-mayor Eddie Andrews, were among the dignitaries who attended the sod-turning event.

The mayor further said “this is indeed a meaningful day that is quite remarkable and worth celebrating and my hope is that the centre will start a broader revival and celebration of first nations culture here in our city and even throughout our country.

James Tannenberger, spokesperson for Liesbeek Liesure Property Trust (LLPT) and CEO of Zenprop Property Holdings, said in his introduction and welcoming that once the centre is constructed it will be operated and managed by the (WCFNC).

Tannenmberger said “the LLPT recognises that without the WCFNC leaderships’ commitment to finding common agreement with the developer on how best to celebrate and commemorate the history and heritage of the Riverlands site, reaching this significant moment would not have been possible.”

A fitting start to the ceremony was the blowing of the Khoi-bow by Hilton Schilder, well-known and talented musician of Cape Town.

Later the youth of the drama group South Roots International regaled the guest with their riveting performance of conducting the Khoi cultural protocol, singing in the ancient Khoi-language, and performing Khoi cultural dancing, like the rieldans, even inviting

some of the guest to join them – much to the delight of the crowd.

This exceptional drama group were present at all the sentinel moments of the Western Cape First Nations Collective in their quest to secure the first Heritage Centre for the first nations people in South Africa.

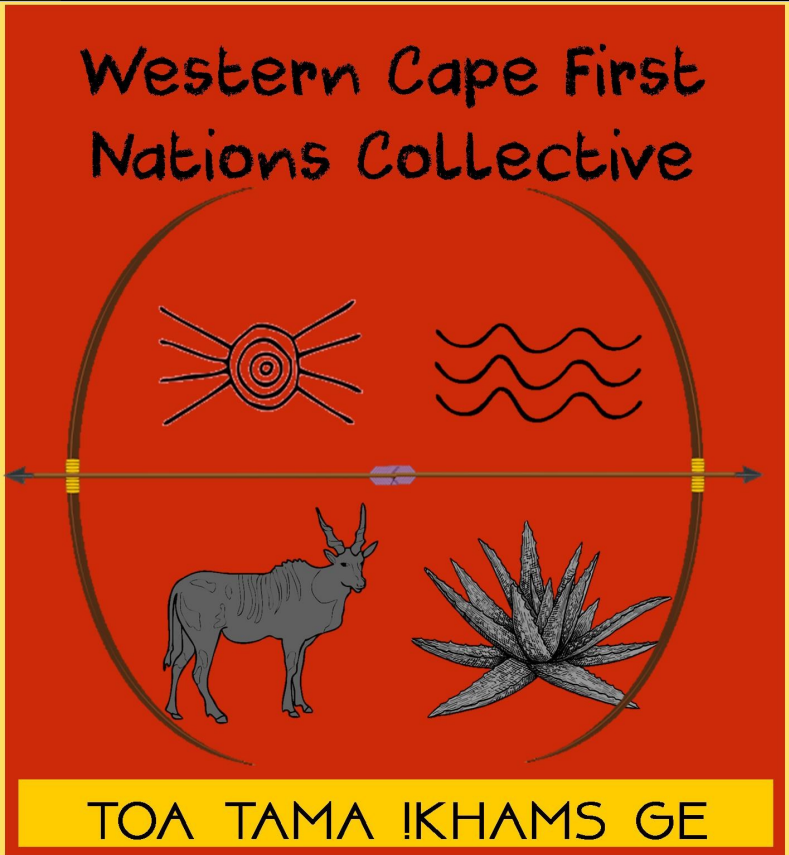
Premier Allan Winde, Premier of the Western Cape Province, said in his speech that “today is a line in the sand of a very ancient heritage. And it is a special day for us is in recognising it.

“It is about history, about culture, about remembering, it is about stories – but it is actually about honouring. It is about honouring the heritage and the past,” the Premier said.

Jo Noero, architect of the heritage centre said with the First Nations Collective he wanted to create a building that looks towards the future – not the past and not the present – “and it should acknowledge the ambition of young children to learn about their history and preparing them for the future”.

Chief Zenzile reiterated that it has been indeed a long marathon that the WCFNC and the first nations had to run to get back to this place “from which our ancestors were removed as part of the first illegal land grab in our country”.

He reminded the audience that it was “here, on Gorinhaiqua territories in what was known as the Two Rivers Urban Park, that Jan van Riebeeck crudely sub-divided Khoi territories and illegally gave land to his colonial fellow travelers after receiving permission from the Heren 17 in Holland”.



Back from left: Austen Jackson, John Jansen, Tania Kleinhans-Cedras, Aaron Messelaar, Deon Petersen, Jeremy Jackson.

Front from left: Hilary-Jane Solomon, Zenzile Khoisan, Shireen Martin, Chantal Revell.

Western Cape First Nations Collective celebrates sod-turning at Riverlands

On Wednesday 20 March 2024, the Western Cape First Nations Collective and its associated and aligned structures and leadership celebrated a sentinel moment in the history of South Africa’s Khoi and San descendants, when we, will full cultural protocol, turned sod for the construction of our Heritage Precinct at the River Club development in Observatory, Cape Town.

We were joined in the watershed moment of celebration by representatives of the developer, Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust as also by Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis and the Premier of the Western Cape premier, Alan Winde.

This was truly a day of celebration for us as the Foundation Nation, for it affirmed everything for which we have strived over a very long period of time, most notably the affirmation of our Right of Return to lands of which our forebears were brutally dispossessed.

With the turning of sod we give thanks to Almighty God for His great faithfulness, for His promise of giving us hope and a future, a place of anchorage in the First Nations Cultural and Herit-

age Centre which will be constructed at the site where the sod has been turned.

It is here, on a road named after the great Gorinhaiqua leader Gogosoa, with views of our iconic mountain and the culturally significant Liesbeek River, that we will honour the great ones within the history of the Khoi and San people who did not waver, who sacrificed everything in defence of our people and the lands where we were the first good stewards and custodians.

This event, steeped in our deeply painful history marks the point of no return, for it truly affirms the integrity of the relationship between the developer Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust and the Western Cape First Nations Collective, the custodian of all first interests within the River Club development.

This event marks the actual commencement of the building of the First Nations Cultural and Heritage Centre and the broader precinct, including the First Nations indigenous garden and gathering place.

With this watershed event we send a clear and unmistakable signal to all those who had waged a

destructive campaign against the WCFNC and its quest to create a permanent anchorage for First Nations in this historic part of our country from which our forebears were driven by a merciless colonial onslaught.

Here, as the foundations are being dug we will lay to rest all of the evil plans and projects of those who tried to sabotage our campaign, who terrorised our leaders and their families with the most vile public attacks, including the most foul and putrid attacks on the good names and characters of our leaders, and even stooped so low as to terrorise our families.

Here, as we set the foundations for our nation to come into its own, we are conscious of the incredible human, emotional and material cost we’ve had to pay to secure this place of anchorage.

With this joyous moment of celebration in the life of our First Nations foundational peoples we declare that our detractors can no longer hide behind the campaign of lies, dirty tricks and falsehoods which they employed to stop our dream from being realised.

Indeed, without any doubt, truth has slayed the lie, and the cowardice of those who laid ambushes for us has been exposed by the courage and dignity of our people who have banished these charlatans, fakers and liars from our ranks.

It is in all humility that we affirmed, with the highest cultural protocol, that we indeed are the authoritative voice of our people and their interests, because this collective is composed of all of those leaders and structures, guided by our faith, principles and values that have been at the coal-face of the Khoi and San resurgence in South Africa that has fought for the restitution, restoration and recognition of Khoi and San peoples in South Africa.

With this turning of the sod, we are vindicated in our position of exercising our right of indigenous cultural agency, of engaging with our development partners to secure a liberated zone, a First Nations Cultural and Heritage Centre which will showcase the history, heritage and cultural of South Africa’s First Nations – a legacy that will stand as a permanent landmark of restoration for seven generations in perpetuity.



JOYFULL MOMENT: Ron Martin, Clive Ephraim, Charles Quint, Zenzile Khoisan with Premier Allan Winde and the mayor of Cape Town Geordin Hill Lewis at the sod-turning ceremony for the first nations Heritage Centre.

PIC: MATTHEW HENDRIKS

Sod-turning event for Heritage centre

Continued from p. 1

Near the Riverlands site, on the shores of the Salt River, was the place where the Battle of Gorinhaiqua took place in 1510, where Francisco D’Almeida and many of his soldiers were killed when they attempted to steal cattle, as well as women and children from the Gorinhaiqua kraal.

Chief Zenzile continued by saying it is “here where the foundational people were nearly eviscerated, almost completely wiped off the face of the earth.

“But isn’t it true that most foundational people are the people of the ‘kannie-dood’ (die hards). We are the people that cannot be killed, we are the people that refused to die.

“And now those who has gone before, in this place, as we inaugurate it, will celebrate for us, because what this partnership with the LLPT has done, it has allowed us, as indigenous peoples to end the endless trivialisation of our narrative, the bludgeoning of our voice and allowed us to exercise our indigenous agency by joining hands with a willing corporate partner – a partner who heard our cry.

“What we will inaugurate today is something not for ourselves alone, but for this generation and seven generations in perpetuity,” the chief said.

He continued by saying, “We will

leave a landmark that will show that this people that were once almost eviscerated have a culture, a language. We have all of the beauty that resonates through the Khoi bow that Hilton Schilder played for us today. We have rhythm.”

Mentioning those who are opposed



CHIEF !GARU ZENZILE KHOISAN

to the development, chief Zenzile said that no detractor can hold them back. “We want to tell those on the mound opposite the River Club development, you can’t touch this. We are here, we are marching forward. We will have our heritage centre where will celebrate the best of our heritage.

“We will bring out the heritage that was buried, and our children and all the children of the city, will have one space where the stone that the builder refused, will once again be inserted into the cornerstone – not just of this city, not just of this province, but indeed this country, that sometimes feel as dry as a tinderbox.”



A VISION OF THE FUTURE: A sketch of the view on the outside and inside of the Heritage Centre.



South Africa was this month reminded once again of how far it still has to travel to ensure that human rights are a reality truly experienced by all her citizens.

On 21 March 2024 South Africa celebrated Human Rights Day, almost one month from 27 April, which will mark 30 years since the birth of the democratic republic.

However, while there are some who have good reason to celebrate democracy and the Bill of Rights crafted into the internationally heralded constitution, underpinning the democracy, there are many who did not fare so well in the new dispensation that replaced the internationally reviled National Party regime and its apartheid ideology.

It is this very sense of having been horse-traded and betrayed by history that was most apparent on 13 and 14 March during a research symposium in Walmer Estate, Cape Town that had been organised under the auspices of the Commission on Khoi-San Matters.

The Commission on Khoi-San Matters is a statutory body established as directed by the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act (ACT 3 of 2019), which is tasked with the processing, research, investigation and recommendation of applications for recognition of South Africa’s Khoi and San indigenous leadership and communities.

It was at the research symposium that

the Commission and officials from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

(CoGTA) listened to presentations from academics and comments from Khoi-San indigenous leaders about the histories that had not yet been incorporated into the narrative of the democratic republic and the imperfections and limitations of the TKLA.

Most significantly, what emerged during the discourse between the Commissioners, the government officials and the academics and the Khoi and San delegates to the symposium was that there was a deep sense of disappointment among the Khoi and San representatives that the descendants of South Africa’s foundational peoples had been horse-traded during the negotiations process for expediency.

Of particular concern to many of the delegates who made comments or posed questions was that there seemed to be a disjuncture between the TKLA and quest of South African Khoi and San peoples for recognition, restoration and restitution, of which the Commission on Khoi-San Matters is supposed to

Human rights: Frustration at long wait

From the desk of the Editor

be a central instrument through which their recognition is supposed to occur.

What further became apparent during the symposium is that the majority of the applications for recognition that had been received by the CKSM did not conform to the pre-requisites as stipulated by the TKLA.

There was also a visible sense of frustration from both the representative of CoGTA deputy minister that in three years there had not been one indigenous leader, structure or community that had been put forward for recognition by the CKSM.

How different then, that five days after this important symposium and one the eve of South African Human Rights day, a contrasting narrative emerged at the River Club (now Riverlands), in the heritage-rich Two Rivers Urban Park in Observatory.

Here, on 20 March 2024, the descendants of South Africa’s Khoi and San, after exercising indigenous cultural agency, after engaging earnestly and with integrity with a private developer, was able to secure the respect that it had

not been able to in more than three decades of engagements with the South African state and its ancillary agencies.

Here, on that historic day, the rancour of centuries of dispossession, discrimination and dehumanisation the First Nations Collective, in a partnership of integrity with the Liesbeeck Leisure Properties Trust was able to secure a truly remarkable victory for South Africa’s Khoi and San descendants.

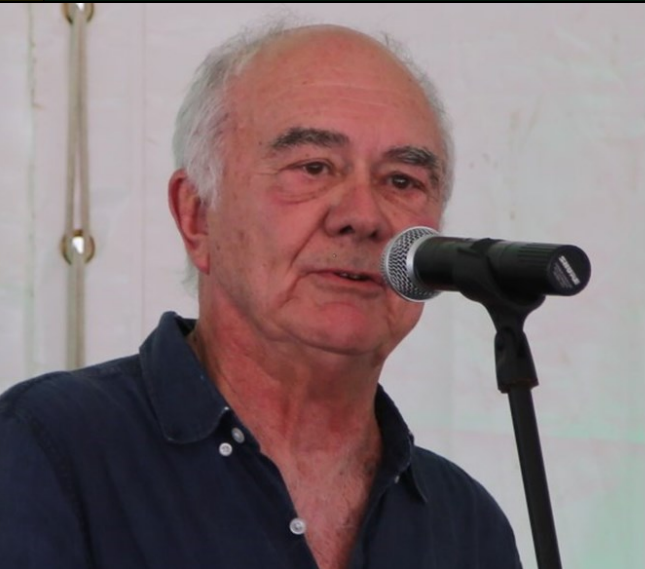
As a result of that partnership the First Nations Cultural and Heritage Centre and precinct, under the custody and stewardship of First Nations leadership have secured hope and a future for seven generations in perpetuity for the descendants of South Africa’s First Indigenous peoples.

It is a high watermark such as this that the South African government should aim to strive toward, match or better, because as this government dithers, the proverbial Rome is burning.

And as Rome burns the descendants of the country’s very first freedom fighters, who have been condemned by bad policies and institutions not fit for purpose to a life devoid of recognition, have hope and a future.

Indeed, as everyone now swirls in the smoke and uncertainty of a pending elections, it is time to reflect on and take a cue from the promise that is held out for the Khoi and San descendants in Riverlands.

Zenzile Khoisan



JO NOERO: Architect of the Heritage and Culture Centre.



ALLAN WINDE: Premier of the Western Cape Province.



GEORDIN HILL-LEWIS: Mayor of the City of the Cape Town.

Heritage Centre looking to future

It is a wonderful privilege to be here today and to be a part of this process. I will split what I want to say into four pieces. The first one is the extraordinary participation in this project, where we have two groups who were working towards a common goal – but with very different ambitions. On the one hand we had the developers who wanted to get things done as well as they could, but with budgetary constraints which is very real in their world.

On the other hand we had the first nations collective who wanted the world – they just had wonderful ambition – and sometimes it was a painful, but a very exciting process of negotiations around critical issues where we reached a series of decisions that culminated in what you see on the screens behind me.

I would like to thank two people in the process who really helped make this possible – Chief Zenzile – he was wonderful – and Elbert de Kock from the Liesbeek Development group, who had a strong hand in keeping this thing in place.

The next issue is the relationship that was building within the site. When I first became involved with the project, we were working with a 350m² space on the ground floor of the shopping centre with a view of the river. Then we migrated out of the shopping centre to the site where we will turn the sod – to a 500m² free-standing building – largely due to the intense pressure by the First Nations Collective led by Chief Zenzile.

The heritage centre will face north; opens to the east where the river is; to the west where Lion’s head is, and it’s on a north/south access.

Our idea was that this would fuse building and landscape together, which in ancient terms according to First Nations culture was exactly what happened. Even though the ancestors couldn’t build buildings the way we are doing now, their relationship with the landscape was an integral one and we hope that this building will mimic what they achieved when they lived here.

The third issue had to do with how we conceived of this building. One of the words that kept banging about in the beginning was this idea of modesty. But we were not quite sure what the word meant because for me as a 21st-century person, modesty means something that is self-effacing, that withdraws and wants to be almost invisible. And that was not wat was meant.

So, I looked up what the word modesty in Latin was. It derives from the word *modestum*, meaning in the right proportion. We understood then what we needed was a building that is bright and forward and can withdraw into the background.

Now we have a modest heritage centre tucked behind a gigantic concrete mural wall, which is 9 m high by 27 m long. The design of the mural wall will be done by first nations artists. But it led us to the idea of talking about a modest, small building with a huge ambition and that is really what it is.

The fourth issue, and again I refer to the chief, because he played a very important part with the collective in putting these ideas together, was that he was absolutely determined that this should be a modern building.

It should be a building that looks towards the future – not to the past and not to the present – and it should acknowledge the ambition of young children to learn about their history and preparing them for the future.

We made an unashamedly modern building which hopefully matches the ambition of the first nations people.

A place to tell histories, stories

I want to thank the First Nations Collective – thank you for the work that was put in to enable us to get here. Then I want to say to the partners on the other side of Riverlands, thank you to the developers, to the process, it didn’t take nine months, but nine years to the birthing of today.

Today is a line in the sand of a very ancient heritage. And it is a special day for us is in recognising it. I have been listening to what has been said – both by the chief and the mayor – it is about history, about culture, about remembering, it is about stories – but it is actually about honouring. It is about honouring heritage and the past

Today is about recognition of a people, of a past and a space where we are going to create an opportunity for the future.

Opportunities of telling our stories so that our children can understand, and whether it was nine months or nine years to give birth to this space, it was a tough journey.

The chief spoke about that journey over thousands of years, with wars, with pandemics, with people trying to suppress, with all sorts of pressures, a people, and yet here we are today in recognition and enabling this space that will be here forever.

And that is the real meaning of today. We have to thank every single person that made it possible. We will have a place where history and stories are told. Chief Zenzile said that to me as I walked in that this is a place of anchor – a place that enhances and connects us, an anchor that connects us to Mother Earth.

I had the absolute privilege to be at another part of our province, opening a similar kind of heritage centre in a museum in the De Hoop Nature Reserve, a place where scientists, and archeologists, and historians have been working for quite a long time on what they call the modernisation of man.

Now if you are in Europe and they say to you when did man modernise, in other words when did humanoids became the human being that we think of today, had language and told stories and created art and music, when did that modernisation happen – when did we start making tools and start inventing things.

And in the museums in Europe they tell us it happened 25 000 years ago. We have news for our brothers and sisters on the opposite side. The news is that the work that happened in the caves alongside the coast talks about the modernisation of man. It happened right here, not 4 or 5 000 years ago, but 125 000 years ago! That is when language started, when art started, that’s when tools – we heard a musical bow this morning – like bows were invented to make hunting easier and less dangerous.

And chief we need to think of ways to get the first nations to actually start engaging with those scientists that are here from around the world because we need the stories to be joined up. Because that is your story, that is our story, that is the story of the modernisation of man on this planet.

And it didn’t happen anywhere else, but right here at the top of the world. And what we are going to be inaugurating today and why we are sticking a spade in the sand and recognising today, is that very anchor. That very anchor where mankind as the world knows it today started its modern journey right here, where first nations are being recognised. It should have been done in history way before our time, but there is no time like the present so that is why today is such a special day.

One of its kind Heritage Centre

What an extraordinary important day. It gives me a sense of great pride and pleasure to take part in this historic sod-turning event on the banks of the Liesbeek River.

This First Nations Heritage Centre that is about to be constructed is quite a remarkable thing because to my knowledge, this is the only stand-alone heritage centre for KhoiSan history and culture in South Africa.

That is quite and extraordinary thing, almost scandalous in a way. I know there are spaces dedicated to KhoiSan history at the Cradle of Humankind and in the Museum of Natural History in the Company Gardens – and those are meaningful and appreciated.

But the fact that there is not a single, stand-alone cultural, heritage and history centre to celebrate and preserve KhoiSan history and culture, is quite an extraordinary thing.

So, this is indeed a meaningful, meaningful day that is quite remarkable and worth celebrating. The design that we are inaugurating today is the result of intensive processes of public participation and collaboration between the WC First Nations Collective and the developer LLPT and their partners Zenprop.

Not only will this space be a wonderful celebration and education of first nation’s history and culture, it will also serve as a reminder that it is indeed possible to marry three crucial elements, namely job creating, development and investment; ecological protection and cultural preservation.

This first nation’s heritage centre, alongside the beautiful Riverlands development, which include a 2 hectare echo park for the public; a rehabilitated 6km Liesbeek River, with trails and running tracks, is proof that you can indeed balance all of these things together.

The Two Rivers area hold historical and cultural significance to the Khoi and San people of this region. And it is absolutely crucial to honour that history and to create a space for remembering, storytelling and learning. Once completed this centre will help tell those stories through art, through music concerts, like that extraordinary performance today. Thank you for exposing us to all of this.

My hope is that the centre will start a broader revival and celebration of first nations culture here in our city and throughout our country. Cape Towns biggest strength is it rich diversity of people. Nowhere on earth will you find a more colourful melting pot of cultures, languages and religions. That is what makes our city so vibrant and interesting.

We have a duty to not only promote that diversity in its current form, but to remember properly every part of its roots. We need to tell the full story of Cape Town’s history by creating dedicated spaces for those stories to be told and for those stories to be heard.

It is an important part of our government’s agenda to restore and clean up Cape Town’s river and vleis and the health of this eco-system is very important to us. So seeing the return to its natural riverine state, with indigenous landscape and plants and sections of the concrete canal removed altogether, will be a wonderful sight. And great news for all of the kingfishers, herons and toads and all the other little creatures that will call this eco-system home in the future again.

May this Heritage Centre serve our first nations Capetonians well. But perhaps even more important, may it be the catalyst among all Capetonians among all ages to show much more curiosity and understanding of this very oldest part of our history.

Honouring the heritage of First Nations in Cape Town

Recognising the deep historical and cultural significance of the broader Two Rivers area of which the River Club forms part, the Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust is extremely proud to have developed a Social Compact with a broad and diverse group of the Khoi and San leaders, stalwarts, councils and forums in the Cape Peninsula and beyond.

The Social Compact with this diverse first nations group, which has come to be known as the First Nations Collective, will see the River Club development contributing to the recognition and honouring of the heritage of the first peoples of the Cape Peninsula.

The establishment of this relationship was the culmination of an intensive and extensive public participation process with many of the descendants of the indigenous Khoi and San peoples’ concerns and aspirations.

These concerns and inspirations have not only been heard, but also taken into consideration for the first time when representatives of the Liesbeek Leisure Property Trust, a private entity, and the First Nation’s Collective, reached a general consensus.

An agreement was reached on how this project could in some impactful way, conserve and provide a place of anchorage for the San and Khoi, and to restore and nurture the intangible heritage of the broader area.

This on-going engagement has resulted in a commitment being made to introduce a number of heritage features within the development precinct, including:

The establishment of a heritage and ecological trail within and around the site. This will become part of

Heritage and ecological trail

the National Liberation Heritage Route that has been planned by national government as part of its Khoi-san Legacy project.

Through the desire for the first nation to have a central gathering space, the construction of a circular landscaped ceremonial space, as opposed to the original amphitheatre concept.

The circular ceremonial space is a more contextually

Circular Ceremonial Space

appropriate gathering space for the First Nations people as opposed to an amphitheatre, which is more commonly associated with the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations.

The construction and landscaping of an indigenous

Indigenous Garden

garden within and around the site along the river frontage.

The construction by the developer of a Cultural, Her-

Cultural, Heritage Media Centre

itage and Media centre to be managed for the Khoi and San through the trusteeship of the First Nations Collective.

Sentinels with KhoiSan Symbols

The conceptualisation of sentinels (or monument poles) containing symbols central to the First Nations’ narrative and the placement of these sentinels at key gateways on the site.

Content for the signage components associated with the sentinels, as well as other information nodes along the heritage-eco trail, has also been workshopped by members of the professional team, including Noero Architects, in collaboration with the First Nations Collective.

The main public access road leading through the site



has being formally named Gogosoa by the City, at the suggestion of the Collective who wanted to honour and commemorate one of the most iconic First Nations leaders, Gogosoa.

He was a Chief of the Gorinhaiqua at the time of Jan van Riebeeck’s arrival at the Cape, and had dominion over vast areas, including the River Club, Two Rivers Urban Park, Observatory, Rondebosch, UCT, and beyond.

Since the finalisation of the Social Compact, the First Nations Collective representatives have worked-shopped closely with the project team and together with their recommended architect, Noero Architects,

have been involved in the design phase of these features, with their inputs being incorporated into the final plans that have been submitted to City of Cape Town.

We look forward to commencing construction of the Cultural, Heritage and Media centre early next year, which, once completed will be the first venue of its kind in Cape Town that will be focused on educating the public on the First Nations’ history, oral traditions and customs and which will be entirely managed by the Khoi and San through the trusteeship of the Western Cape First Nations Collective Trust.

Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust would like to recognise the First Nations Collective leaderships’ unwavering commitment to finding common agreement with the developer on how best to celebrate and commemorate the history and heritage of the River Club site while creating much needed job creation and investment for the City of Cape Town at the same time.

We know this has not been an easy road and we would like to thank the Collective for their ongoing support for the development.

We look forward to delivering this ground-breaking, world-class development that offers so many heritage, economic and environmental benefits for all citizens in Cape Town and the Western Cape.



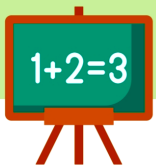
Celebration of the First Nations’ rich history and heritage

An historic social compact was recently signed between the developer and the Western Cape First Nations Collective, which represents the vast majority of senior Khoi and San leaders and their councils in the Cape Peninsula. It sets out several heritage features that will be constructed as part of the redevelopment for the First Nations and public to enjoy. This includes a Cultural, Heritage, and Media centre, which will be operated and managed by the First Nations; an indigenous medicinal garden; heritage-eco trail and garden amphitheatre to function both as sites of memory and living cultural practice and celebration.



Construction of Inclusionary Housing

The redevelopment will also include developer subsidized inclusionary housing for key workers in the area. These units will make up 20% of the residential component of the development and will be integrated into the project.



Provision of a number of new public amenities

A number of other public amenities will also be included in the redevelopment for surrounding communities to enjoy. Zoning rights have been granted for uses including shops, restaurants, a gym, conferencing facilities, a hotel and a new private school. Around R200 million will be spent on infrastructure including roads, helping to ease traffic congestion in the area.

Reaffirmation of Commitment to the WCFNC

On behalf of the Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust I would like to reaffirm our commitment to honouring our social compact with the Western Cape First Nations Collective (WCFNC). While groups opposed to the project continue to try and put a stop to it, I am proud that the LLPT and the WCFNC remain united in a common vision of seeing the First Nations’ culture and heritage given pride of place in the world class redevelopment so it can be celebrated and commemorated by future generations.

We thank the WCFNC for their commitment as partners and support for the redevelopment, including joining as eighth respondents to oppose the recent interdict application to stop the River Club project in the Western Cape High Court. We look forward to continuing working closely with the Collective during the construction phase and our ongoing partnership being guided by the principles of collaboration, respect, and transparency.

Jody Aufrichtig, Trustee of the LLPT

We look forward to delivering a beautiful and inclusive space that is accessible for all Capetonians to enjoy and which will contribute towards job creation and economic growth. For more information on the world-class River Club redevelopment visit www.theriverclubct.co.za

Financial, human resources hampers Khoi-San Commission

The Commission on Khoi-San Matters (CKSM), has now been operational for nearly three years. During this time the CKSM has held numerous consultation sessions with Khoi and San leaders and communities and has received and processed applications for recognition. First Nation News asked Prof. Nico Adam Botha (right), Chair of the CKSM the following questions:



FNN: How did the CKSM understand its mandate at the time it was established and, specifically, when you and the other Commissioners were appointed?

PROF. NICO BOTHA: in terms of the Act (Act 3 of 2019), the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act (TKLA) the minister can appoint up to seven commissioners, but the Commission currently consists of only four. One of the four has been appointed on a part-time basis.

A very important matter to be taken into consideration if we go back to when the Commission was first appointed at the beginning of September 2021, is that there was no blueprint or manual for the Commission to work from.

We started from scratch. We had to do the branding of the Commission, as well as developing the application template and a host of other issues which, understandably, were not in place when we started.

We thought from the onset that there was clarity as far as our mandate is concerned and as spelt out in the Act:

- to receive applications lodged for the recognition of Khoi-San communities and leaders;
- to investigate these applications;
- to have research done if needed and to submit recommendations for recognition to the responsible Minister with whom the decision making power lies either to grant recognition or not.
- If recognition is granted a certificate of recognition is to be issued.

The CKSM was appointed to undertake and facilitate a fairly far-reaching mandate, affecting the recognition of leadership and communities from within a section of the South African population that had not been previously officially recognised in the South African constitution.

FNN: How did the CKSM anticipate it would engage and discharge its mandate to facilitate applications for, investigate, report on, and make recommendations in respect of recognition of Khoi and San leaders and communities?

NAB: This is a rather complex question. Perhaps I should just briefly explain the processes which we embarked upon and are currently in place and aimed at executing our mandate as best as we can.

The Commission has had a suc-

cessful round of awareness campaigns. Initially we were starry-eyed and ambitious, thinking that we would be able to cover vast areas of the country in getting to the Khoi-San, that is the five main groupings identified in the Act, namely, Cape Khoi, Griqua, Koranna, Nama and San.

However, we simply did not have adequate human and financial resources to deliver on this.

Ultimately we had to settle for one awareness campaign per province, So, at least we can say, albeit in a very limited fashion, we have been to all provinces as far as our awareness campaigns are concerned.

On receiving applications there is a thoroughgoing process being followed. First, the Secretariat of the Commission has the main responsibility. Our Head of Secretariat, scrutinises the applications on the basis of a checklist emanating from the application form. This is to see whether there is compliance with the requirements of the Act and to clearly identify information that has been omitted.

Application files, in most instances large arch lever files, are then allocated to the four commissioners to undertake a thorough study of the application and to submit an analysis report for adoption at a meeting of the Commission.

On top of this Applicant Members (these are the individuals authorised by the community or a Royal House to submit the application) are invited to an Applicant Member Investigation (AMI) where the Commission gets an opportunity to engage with the Applicant Member in a very safe space and in a friendly manner.

The engagement is aimed at learning from each other and at pointing out to the Applicant Member what the omissions and shortcomings in the application are and to advise on how these are to be corrected.

A recording of the proceedings is made. After the AMI extensive letters are written to the Applicant Member in which the shortcomings of the application is once again spelt out in detail.

The biggest challenge for the Commission to date has been receiving incomplete applications with lack of jurisdictional compliance.

The Commission was compelled to start a process within the application process as a service to Khoi-San people in assisting them to bring their applications up to speed.

A huge impediment is the under-

capacitation of the Commission and its Secretariat.

FNN: Was the CKSM properly and appropriately resourced to discharge a mandate that was as wide-ranging and complex as this?

NAB: Part of the answer to this question has already been anticipated in the afore-going question.

One of the issues the Commission has never been able to establish is whether there is an impact study that has been undertaken before the Act was signed into law by Pres. Cyril Ramaphosa in November 2020.

An impact study would typically make projections on the range of the mandate and specifically on the resources required for discharging such a mandate.

Different people, including officials in the Department of Traditional Affairs and the President of the country are beginning to concede that indeed the Commission is greatly challenged to execute its mandate in a complex historical situation.

“ We try as much as possible to understand the impatience and the frustration of Khoi-San people who have fought gallantly for at least some

FNN: What has been the experience of the CKSM in respect of consultations with Khoi and San leadership and communities?

NAB: In general, the encounter with Khoi and San leadership and communities has been quite pleasant to say the least.

Khoi-San people are intent to live up to the values of respect and a common humanity to mention just these two. However, the Commission is wary of not taking Khoi-San people for granted.

In the meetings of the Commission there is agreement that some of the difficulties experienced with the filling out of application forms should not be blamed on our people, but rather on the havoc and devastation caused by colonial-apartheid.

We try as much as possible to understand the impatience and the frustration of Khoi-San people who have fought gallantly for at least some form of recognition and yet again the process aimed at a limited mode of recognition is delayed for reasons beyond the control of the Commission.

FNN: What were the critical challenges the CKSM encountered during its consultation road show? What were the common themes

emerging during these encounters and what were the most critical challenges that manifested and emerged during these consultations?

NAB: I suppose that in taking the entire history of Khoi-San people into consideration – of slavery and genocide, land dispossession, of marginalisation and the trampling upon of their human rights – it is understandable that even those who accept the Act and the work of the Commission, would lament the limited mandate of the Commission.

There is hardly an instance of engagement with Khoi-San people across the board where issues of the first nation status, land and language would not pass the revue.

All we can do is to plead with Khoi-San people to develop a more strategic approach relating to the statutory recognition provided for by the Act.

Put differently, the statutory recognition should be seen as a launching pad for engaging on other outstanding matters mentioned here.

Can you give insight into the volume of applications received and processed by the CKSM?

NAB: Now that extension has been granted by the Minister until 29 May 2025 for the lodging of applications with the Commission, I expect that applications will come in thick and fast.

In checking with our Secretariat, I was told that we are standing at 121 applications at the moment.

However, I need to make the following very important point, not as a disclaimer, but a rational explanation why the number in itself can be hugely deceptive.

If one gives a number the following issues need to be taken into account.

1. The application form is rather complex in that there are four levels of recognition, that is, a community; a branch; a branch head, and a senior Khoi-San leader.

In one and the same template applications for the recognition in terms of these four categories are lodged.

2. Let us for example say that a community consists of one thousand members – the Act does not have any specific provision on the size of a community – such a community will then be entitled to have 10 branches based on the provision of the Act that a branch should consist of not less than 10% of the total number of community members.

If a community would indeed resolve to have ten branches it immediately renders the application much more complex in that it needs to contain an application for the recognition of the 10 branches as well as 10 branch heads.

Continued on the next page



COMMISSIONERS ON KHOISAN MATTERS

FROM LEFT:

Prof. Nico Adam Botha;
Mr. Douglas Bennet;
Dr. Edna van Harte and
Nokubonga Mazibuko.

Lack of resources hampers work of Khoi-San Commission

Continued from previous page

If we stay with this example for a moment, it would not be hyperbolic or an exaggeration to suggest that you are actually dealing with twenty applications in one, that is a community, ten branches, ten branch heads and a senior Khoi-San leader.

FNN: How does the CKSM rate the applications received thus far in terms of veracity, as also levels of understanding of compliance by applicants in meeting the requirements of the TKLA?

NAB: Unfortunately to date the Commission has not received a single application that is jurisdictionally compliant with the Act at the time of submission.

Once again, the Commission tries as much as possible to understand why that is so and has put measures in place to assist applicants in updating their applications and bringing them up to speed or full completion.

Apart from the measures already mentioned we are canvassing the support and assistance of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) in the different provinces to sit down with applicants and to help them understand the Act better and to complete the application form properly.

FNN: Is the CKSM concerned about the volume and quality of applications for recognition received to date and does the CKSM anticipate that there will be an increase in the volume of applications?

NAB: We anticipate a serious increase in the number of applications and for that reason we are constantly knocking at the door of the Department of the Commission and the Secretariat.

Currently there is a major challenge relating to the cost

containment measures of Treasury.

The Commission remains hopeful that we shall be given at least one more commissioner, more researchers and one or two compliance officers to beef up the capacity of the Secretariat.

Without adequate human and financial resources it will remain very difficult for the Commission to deliver on its mandate.

FNN: What mechanisms has the Commission on Khoi-San Matters put in place to ensure that more applications for recognition are processed and that the applicants for recognition adhere to and comply with all elements of the recognition process?

NAB: We hope and pray that the mechanisms put in place already, and some new creative ones, as well as adequate administrative and financial support from the respective department may yield good results.

We are currently working on a new creative investigative process which is supposed to be a mix of Applicant Member Investigations, awareness campaigns and public hearings.

We are also working on the appointment of a panel of researchers to expedite the research needed by the Commission and soon we hope to have the services of a researcher in anthropology and history.

As soon as we bring together all of the data and information gathered through our own investigations and the research done for the Commission, we can sit down and begin drafting our recommendations for recognition.

Remember the Commission has got a five year term and as mammoth as the task might appear to be, we are confident to get it done and deliver on our mandate.

We owe this to the Khoi and San and the generations to come.

FNN: The CKSM recently held a two-day research symposium in Cape Town. What was the motivation for holding this event, what were the primary themes and outcomes that emerged from this encounter and how did this symposium inform the work of the CKSM going forward?

NAB: This is a very good and indeed extremely important question. For starters, we were hoping that the symposium would be remedial in nature in the following sense.

That the outcomes will be such that it provides the Commission with the necessary research data to assist applicants in bringing their applications up to speed with specific reference to the criteria set out in the Act.

Compliance with the criteria for communities and leaders to be recognised is required.

In identifying the objectives of the symposium the Commission was clear that they should speak to:

- the criteria like providing evidence or proof of existence as a unique community distinct from other communities;
- customary law and customs;
- cultural heritage manifestations;
- hereditary and/or elected leadership, and
- the geographical areas occupied by the Khoi and San or shared with other communities.

We have had a debriefing session a day after the symposium and different workstreams are currently working on reports relating to the symposium.

We are also collating the presentations made at the symposium and soon after some thoroughgoing stocktaking, we shall be able to form a much clearer idea on whether or not the envisaged outcomes have been achieved.

(More articles, photos on page 10 & 11)

“ We are also working on the appointment of a panel of researchers to expedite the research needed by the Commission and soon we hope to have the services of a researcher in anthropology and history.

‘Khoi-San are knowledge holders not stake-holders’

“**K**hoi and San leaders, as well as communities were strictly guided by an evidence-based framework and that, when measured up against this framework, it invariably had emerged that some applications were untenable and non-compliant.”

This was said by the Prince Zolile Burns-Ncamashe, Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) in his opening address at the research symposium of the Commission on Khoi-San Matters (CKSM) in Cape Town.

The Deputy Minister was referencing the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act (TKLA) upon which the work of the CKSM is based. He stated that the TKLA “has been invalidated by the constitutional court”, which, according to the CoGTA deputy minister, can be directly ascribed to the actions of “hellbent NGOs”.

Burns-Ncamashe noted that CoGTA was deeply concerned over the pace of recognition, specifically because since the CKSM had been established there had not been one recommendation to the minister.

In reflecting on the caution with which the recognition process was being dealt with, the deputy minister noted that earlier processes for verification of Traditional leadership, such as the Nhlapo Commission, revealed that this occurred within a “litigious environment” and that because of this “there are cases still in court”.

In his own response to what, at times, could be described as a turbulent engagement with the Khoi and San indigenous leadership, the deputy minister called for the engagement to be conducted to the necessary decorum that is associated with people who represent their constituencies.

“The House of Traditional (and Khoi-San) Leadership members will be subjected to a code of conduct,” the deputy minister noted.

His sense of the critical contribution on what the Khoi and San people bring to the broader South African nation was explained when he stated that the Khoi and San are “people with a distinct culture that must be preserved, it must not be assimilated.”

“The Khoi and San are knowledge holders, not stake-holders,” Deputy Minister Burns-Ncamashe added.



Prince Zolile Burns-Ncamashe, Deputy Minister of CoGTA.

A day for the history books as first nations

Long-term vision being realised

The sod-turning event is an indication of what is about to begin and realised soon in preparation and completion of our Heritage Precinct Centre. It has been a long, hard, challenging journey, but the Most High is faithful, and the event is marked for amazing things to come. It is my privilege to release Most High's blessing on the sod-turning ceremony. All of those who were present will be blessed as they journey with us, as we see the evidence of the expression within the next few months of the First Nation's Heritage Precinct Centre! This HPC Centre has a long-term vision that encapsulates seven generations to come and into the future. Psalm 145:4 – *One generation will declare the Most High's deeds to every following generation and declare His mighty works.*



Hilary-Jane Solomon, Secretary of the Western Cape First Nations Collective

Our deep appreciation must be recorded for our fearless servant-leader, the Chair of WCFNC who stood his ground in very, very difficult situations. Chief Zenzile, we salute you and pray the Most High's blessings, favour, and strength for the next lap of the journey. Soon and very soon, the HPC will light up the roads in and out of the City. You all will experience it and it will remind you of your part in this sod-turning ceremony. Thank you and bless you all.

Miracle of restoration for first nations

Finally I can see and sense this place of anchorage, and our right of return is becoming a reality. Countless battles were fought, not only in the present but since the first battle in 1510. We are a spiritual people, and we thank our Heavenly Father for carrying us, as we know the spiritual warfare was more fierce than the physical battles we fought. Many claim and make statements to what they believe should have happened, but only those who stood the test of time and fought the good fight truly know that what had manifested at the sod-turning event was nothing less than a miracle of a restoration of the First Peoples of SA. Finally we see the manifestation of what should have happened years ago, in our very own precinct, with our own historians, researchers and leaders in the driving seat. Only those that did not walk the long walk with the pioneers and true stal-



Princess Chantal Revell, Executive member of the Western Cape First Nations Collective

warts of the Khoi and San revival that led to this historic occasion, will be ignorant to make negative comments on this significant event that will change the landscape for our future. Only those that have been at the coalface of the battles won will appreciate the ceremony and spiritual significance of event. I salute the leadership of the First Nation Collective, and our Chairperson Chief Zenzile Khoisan! I salute the spouses, partners, children and family that paid the price over and over and had to endure so much anguish and pain due to their Mothers and Fathers, husbands and wives that form part of the WCFNC.

Something tangible

We as the Griqua Royal House and Griqua peoples at large are happy to notice that something tangible will be there in the name of all Khoekhoe and San peoples. For me it was a long waiting moment to know that we are not dependent in this regard on the government which makes empty promises, but rather on the private sector. It was a moment to reflect on how the Khoi-San will have a Heritage and Media Centre – the first in the world for our indigenous peoples. We are grateful that this centre will be built on this historical soil attached to the Khoi peoples, which makes it even more significant.

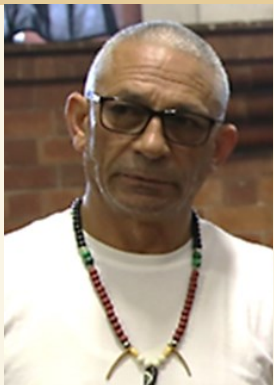


High Comm Aaron Messelaar, Member of the WCFNC

World-class place of anchorage

The Western Cape First Nations Collective welcomes the sod-turning ceremony as a most critical event in the Riverlands development because it confirms that there can no longer be speculation about our First Nations Cultural and Heritage Centre. The WCFNC Projects Office has been directly involved, under direction of the Western Cape First Nations Collective Trust, in ensuring that our First Nations Cultural and Heritage Centre and its broader precinct adheres to what had been proposed and ultimately approved by the leadership. This includes that this facility must be a world-class place of anchorage of which all our people can be proud. We affirm that the WCFNCT from

which we derive our mandate has been vindicated, because every part of the journey, from planning to approvals and execution reflects our active involvement and input. It is indeed a great honour to have faithfully executed the task that has been assigned to us and we look forward to the unveiling of a centre that truly celebrates our people and our heritage.



Chief Jeremy Jackson, Head of WCFNC Projects Office

Journey to healing



It is a huge privilege to be part of such an historical event in the history of our struggle to free ourselves from the emotional, psychological and physical destruction caused by the evil of colonialism and apartheid. The real journey of healing ourselves from those evils of the past started with the sod-turning event at the place where our Heritage Centre will be built. No individual or grouping will stop us from achieving our objective namely our freedom as the first Indigenous people of South Africa. Aluta Continua.

Chief John Jansen, Member of the WCFNC

Real reparation

The sod-turning event represented the final tangible step in the exercise of our cultural praxis, cementing our Right of Return to our ancestral land. The construction of our Heritage Precinct along the banks of our sacred river is beyond mere symbolic reparation of our people; it is real reparation, made possible through hard negotiation. Our ceremony showed the world that anything can be achieved through sheer dedication to one's cause for intellectual, spiritual and cultural freedom of our foundational people, whose journey and ultimate deliverance will determine the freedom of all nations within our diaspora. One cannot build an enduring structure on a broken foundation, hence our nation will not stand unless its foundational people are fixed. Let this event and ceremony show the world that we, through cultural praxis, can fix us.



Chief Ron Martin Head of Cultural praxis of the WCFNC

Redressing distorted history

As a representative of Khoe-San Indigenous Women in Action, who attended the sod-turning event on 20 March 2024, I was humbled to be part of such a huge event in a form of a traditional ceremony. It is the restoration of a lost historical site of the Khoi San peoples that has been forgotten for many years. By having the two spheres of Government, the Mayor of the City of Cape Town and the Premier of the Western Cape attending the event, was for me a sense of commitment towards the healing of the Generational trauma inflicted upon us. This event is an attempt to redress the distorted history of the Khoi Khoi and San peoples. Across the world Indigenous peoples are assisted by developers. I want to congratulate the leadership of the First nation collective for taking the Khoisan struggle to this level.



Chief Mary Jansen Chairperson of Khoe-San Indigenous Women in Action

turn the sod for first Heritage Centre



Riverlands
and the
First Nations
Heritage and Media Centre

TOP: Iconic: Khoi and Jazz pioneer Hilton Schilder opened the sod-turning ceremony by playing the Khoi bow.
RIGHT: Youth lead the way: Performers from South Roots International, with song dance and spoken word protocol.
PICTURES: MATTHEW HENDRIKS



Participants at the sod-turning ceremony included First Nations elders, prominent political leaders and representatives of the developer, Liesbeek Leisure Property Trust.

Teenwoordig by KhoiSan symposium



HISTORIESE GELEENTHEID

Prins Zolile Burns-Ncamashe, adjunk-minister van CoGTA (links bo) saam met Khoi en San leiers, wat deelgeneem het aan die navorsing-symposium wat deur die Kommissie van Khoi-San Sake in Maart in Kaapstad gehou is.

Kritiese kwessies, wat uit die soms onstuimige en robuuste besprekings gekom het, was die feit dat die Kommissie na drie jaar (uit 'n vyf jaar termyn) nog nie een Khoi-San leier of Khoi-San gemeenskap vir erkenning aanbeveel het nie.



AAN DIE STUUR
Nkosi Langa Mavuso, Adjunk-voorsitter van die Nasionale Huis van Tradisionele en Khoi-San Leiers, Dr. Edna van Harte, Prins Zolile Burns-Ncamashe, adjunk-minister van CoGTA, Prof. Nico Botha (voorsitter van die Kommissie), en Nokubonga Mazibuko.

CKSM research symposium: Unravelling quest for recognition

IFN CORRESPONDENT

A research symposium, convened in Cape Town by the Commission on Khoi-San Matters 13 to 14 March 2024 has revealed significant complex realities and deeply concerning fault lines in the interpretation and actual process of the recognition of the Khoi and San.

It is their leadership and communities that the CKSM is specifically tasked with facilitating under the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act (Act 3 of 2019).

Over two days government officials, leaders of various Khoi and San indigenous houses and structures and a collection of highly accomplished academic examined what the process of recognition of South Africa’s foundational peoples entails.

Critical issues that emerged from the sometimes-turbulent discourse related, among others, to the CKSM’s failure, after deliberating for three years of its stipulated five year term, to recommend even one leader or community for recognition.

Then there were other intricate matters that were discussed, such as the authenticity of narratives contained in applications processed by the commission, propriety over heritage assets, Khoi and San indigenous knowledge and intellectual property and even if the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, in its present form, is fit for purpose.

“We were hoping that the symposium would be remedial in nature, that the outcomes will be such that it provides the Commission with the necessary research data to assist applicants in bringing their applications up to speed with specific reference to the criteria set out in the Act,” stated CKSM chairperson Professor Nico Botha, reflecting in the event after its conclusion.

Prof. Botha explained that in identifying the objectives of the symposium the Commission had hoped the symposium would address critical issues necessary for compliance with the criteria set down in the legislation as necessary for applicants seeking recognition.

However, while the legislation caters for recognised Khoi and San leadership to be represented in national, provincial and local houses of traditional leadership, the composition of these houses still lacks any participation by Khoi and San indigenous leaders.

Nkosi Langa Mavuso, Deputy Chairperson of the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, in delivering a message of support to the symposium, stressed the need for unity amongst the Khoi-San.

He also raised the alarm about the slow pace of recognition for leaders

and communities from this critical part of the broader South African Nation.

“The fact that not a single community has been recognised since the formation of the CKSM three years ago is a source of great concern for the National House,” Nkosi Mavuso stated.

Mavuso further stated that the National House of Traditional Leaders hopes that the CKSM would facilitate at least some recognition before the end of the year.

He then called on the Commission to move expediently towards recognising communities and leaders with valid claims so that they may participate in the local, provincial and national structure.

Among the several other presenters at the symposium were academics who have been involved with cutting edge work within their respective disciplines on various aspects of Khoi and San heritage, culture, identity, indigenous knowledge systems and linguistics.

Traditional leadership law expert Prof. Christa Rautenbach in her presentation examined critical fault lines within the recognition legislative framework which could potentially present problems for applicants for recognition.

Among the most critical fault lines identified by Rautenbach is that there is actually “no living Khoi-San customary law” which could raise problems in respect of “ambiguity” when it comes to the interpretation of the legislation.

Among the aspects that needed to be understood, she argued, are questions related to culture and governance, adherence to customary roles and levels of authority which form, function and develop over time.

Rautenbach noted that in terms of the Act, the criteria for Khoi and San recognition could give rise to

“different standards and treatment under the law”.

In terms of living customary law, the traditional law expert called a process of “research and documentation”.

This would result in “legal recognition for Khoi and San customary law” and this would require collaboration with the Khoi and San to “breach the knowledge gaps,” Rautenbach stated.

Another critical contribution into the research symposium came from Dr. Lerato Mokwena of the University of South Africa’s linguistics department.

Mokwena noted that in the South African context identity was a complex matter that had become “politicised and racialised” and that this included identities that had been “assumed and ascribed”.

She drew on the analogy of the “rainbow nation” concept that had been championed by anti-apartheid icon, Archbishop Desmond Tutu. This concept, she asserted, is associated with races, identities and ethnicities.

Dr. Mokwena related the experience of her research among the Xu and Khwe San communities in Platfontein, near Kimberley.

The experiences of these communities, and the dire conditions within which they existed, she noted, amounted to them being “othered”.

Their social exclusion, revealed how the Xu and Khwe and other marginalised groups were made invisible within the supposed rainbow.

“Exclusion reveals the philosophical illusion that South Africa is a rainbow nation,” Dr. Mokwena added.

Prof. Keyan Tomaselli, who has pioneered knowledge co-production with various indigenous communities, particularly the San, presented on the question of rethinking indigeneity.

Tomaselli explained that his work had revealed the need for the “inversion of the conventional researcher/ researched relationship”,

particularly in participatory research practices.

The anthropologist and veteran documentary filmmaker cited critical authentic sources such as Vetkat Kruiper as an example of “ethical partnerships” that develop through a process of “tests of trust and integrity.”

Zenzile Khoisan, veteran journalist and specialist writer on heritage, culture and identity titled his presentation to the symposium Exercising Indigenous Cultural Agency.

Khoisan indicated that the negotiators “for expediency had horse-traded the rights of the Khoi to recognition, restitution and restoration” during the negotiations with the apartheid regime.

He noted that this process had been repeated during the crafting of the new constitution, which re-enforced all elements preventing restoration of the Khoi and San, including the arbitrary 1913 land restitution cut-off date when the majority of Khoi and San land had already been dispossessed.

“By asserting Indigenous Cultural Agency, the descendants of the Khoi and San seek to achieve full identity recognition; all rights as defined in international conventions, protocols and declarations, as also the amendment of all aspects of the South African constitution preventing appropriate restitution and restoration of South Africa’s Khoi and San descendants,” the veteran journalist stated.

The CKSM Western Cape research symposium was a critical indicator of how the very constituency, Khoi and San leaders who have already or are prospective applicants for official recognition, are approaching the verification process.

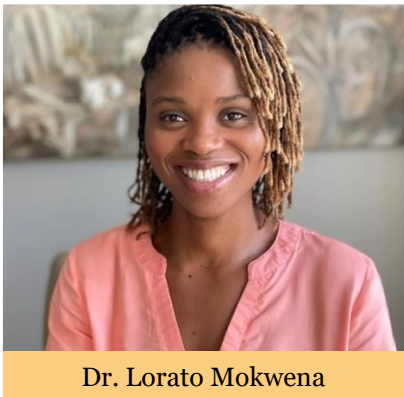
Speaking about the CKSM engaging academics as part of its verification, heritage expert Ron Martin stated people are weary of “academics who acted as gatekeepers” of knowledge.



Chief !Garu Zenzile Khoisan



Prof. Christa Rautenbach



Dr. Lorato Mokwena



Prof. Keyan Tomaselli

Visionêre denkers het steun van committed leiers nodig

Uit-die-boks-denkers is skaars en dikwels word hulle bespot, beledig, gedreig en selfs vermoor.

Dink maar aan Josef die Dromer. In Genesis 37-41 word vertel dat hy gespoil was deur sy pa met mooi designer klere, soveel so dat sy broers jaloers geword het.

Toe vertel Josef boonop vir sy broers van sy droom waarin hulle voor hom neerbuig. Hulle tjek toe die laaitie brêg te veel en gaan verkoop hom as 'n slaaf in Egipte.

Daar lê hy 'n paar drome uit vir die koning en op die ou end eindig als mooi uit vir almal. Moral of the story is dat mense met 'n visie 'n gawe het, maar moenie arrogant word nie.

In Amerika was daar twee visionêres in die sixties wat dieselle droom gehad het vir hulle mense.

Martin Luther King Jr. sê toe hy droom van die dag dat seuns en dogters gejudge gaan word volgens wat hulle kan doen en nie volgens hulle velkleur nie.

Malcolm X antwoord al wat hy sien is 'n nagmerrie. Hulle is toe altwee ge-assassinate. Malcolm sommer deur sy eie mense. Hulle was egter nie alleenlopers soos Josef nie, maar was omring met vertroueling wat hulle kon trust.

Die naam Wes-Kaapse Eerste Nasies Kollektief sê al klaar dis definitief nie 'n one-man-show nie. Kyk, 'n visie



begin altyd by een persoon wat uit-die-boks dink, maar as hy of sy nie die regte committed leiers het nie bly dit 'n leë droom.

Op Woensdag 20 Maart 2024 sit ons in afwagting, ook hoë koppe van die Wes-Kaapse regering, vir die grootste Khoi-San gebeure in onse moderne geskiedenis, maar ook in die lewe van die wêreld se eerste nasies. Die spit van die sooi vir die Eerste Nasie Erfenis-sentrum.

Presies om 14h00 voed die mondboog se oeroue note ons dorstige siele - gespeel deur Hilton Schilder wat kom uit 'n huis vol jazz-klavierspelers, en wat oor die jare sy eie Kaapse Khoi-ghoema-klank geskep het.

Stamhoof !Garu Zenzile Khoisan begin, anders as Josef die Dromer, nie om homself te prys nie. Nee, hy vat ons selfs verby die Kollektief na 1510 toe Suid-Afrika se eerste vryheidsvegters die skelm Portugese verdryf het; dan 1659-1660 onder leiding van Nomoaä-Doman se oorlog teen die gronddiewe van oom Jan. Daarna bedank hy almal wat tot vandag hulle verset teen onreg. In die 1750's het

Adam Kok I, 'n slaaf wat homself losgewerk het, 'n demokratiese beweging begin met sy oopdeur-beleid vir almal wat moes vlug voor die gewelddadige Onkiekwa op perde met geweer en Bybel.

Hy was 'n ware visionêr. En tog, sonder die steun van Chief Gogosoa se raadslede sou hy nooit in die geskiedenisboeke beland het nie.

Drie punte staan vir my uit in Chief Zenzile se toespraak wat so elektries was dat as daar loadshedding was, sou sy passie self verder krag verskaf het.

Hy het, soos die visionêr Adam Kok die deure van die sentrum wat hierdie jaar voor Krismis klaar sal wees, vir almal – nie net Kapenaars nie – wyd oopgegooi: vir al onse mense tot in die verste hoeke van Namakwaland, die Gamtoos, Groot Karoo en die Kalahari.

Toe sogenaamde “Khoi-leiers” onder ons soos Judasse optree met hul slinksheid en hebsug, was die bejaarde leier van die Kalahari-Boesmians, Oom Petrus Vaalbooi en 90-jaar oue dr. Katrina Esau van Upington hier om die Kollektief te ondersteun. Hy bedank verder almal wat deur die eeue heen vryheidsvegters was vanaf 1510 tot vandag.

Zenzile noem die vermorsing van tyd en miljoene Rand se onnodige hofsake, maar nie die name van die hofnarre nie. Egter, op 'n briljante wyse stel hy hulle aan die

kaak met 'n verwysing na Shakespeare se drama oor die moord op Julius Caesar. Terwyl politici die keiser doodmaak staan onder hulle iemand wat kastig sy vriend was, Brutus. Sy sterwenswoorde was: “Et tu Bruté?” wat beteken: “Jy ook, Brutus?”

Laastens fokus hy op drie kragtige begrippe wat ons verlede, hede en toekoms saamvat, naamlik die herstel van ons plek in hierdie land, restitusie (met onse sentrum as bewys) en grondwetlike erkenning.

O ja, die Afrikaanse stukkie: “Ons is die kanniedood!” het almal laat lekker kry, Dis mos daai vetplant wat oorleef al reën dit vir maandelank nie.

'n Visionêr wie se droom ek gedink het dood is, is die idee van die Reënboognasie, naamlik Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela – 'n volle Khoi-San aan sy ma se kant.

Toe wys die reënboogjongmense met die lewendige /xabara (riël) ons hulle steur hulle nie aan sogenaamde “rasse” nie. Aan die einde ululeer hulle en dis nie eens 'n Khoi-San-ding nie! Is dit nie wonderlik nie?

Die inhuldiging is afgesluit met die lig van die horings van die !Nau deur chieff Ron Martin; die blaas van die ramshoring deur chieff Julian Revell en die dankgebed deur hoofkaptein Aaron Messelaar wat God (Tsui-Goatse) se seën vra op die inhuldiging en om ons vorentoe te beskerm.

Visionaries need strong support

People who think out of the box are few and far between and they are often ridiculed, insulted, threatened and even murdered.

Someone like Joseph The Dreamer in the Bible. In Genesis 37-41 we read that he was spoiled by his father with beautiful designer clothes, and that led to jealousy among his brothers.

To make matters worse, Joseph told his brothers about his dream where they bow before him. They thought, oh this laaitie is bragging too much and they sold him to become a slave in Egypt.

There he interpreted a few dreams for the king and at the end everything worked out for everyone.

Moral of the story is that

people with a vision have a gift, but they must not be arrogant about it.

America in the '60s had two visionaries who had the same dream for their people. Martin Luther King Jr. said he had a dream that one day sons and daughters will be judged on what they can do and not because of the colour of their skin.

Malcolm X said all he could see was a nightmare. Both of them were assassinated – Malcolm by his own people. And they were surrounded by people they could trust.

The name Western Cape First Nations Collective tells you this is not a one-man show. A vision starts with one person that thinks out-of-the-box, but if that person

is not surrounded by the right committed leaders, it will stay an empty dream.

On Wednesday 20 March 2024 we are waiting with bated breath, with dignitaries of the Western Cape government for the biggest event in contemporary Khoi-San history – the sod-turning of the First Nations Heritage Centre.

At exactly 14h00 the notes of the ancient Khoi bow fed our thirsty souls. Played by Hilton Schilder, who over the years created his signature ghoema-sounds.

Chief !Garu Zenzile Khoisan starts, unlike Joseph The Dreamer, not by praising himself, but by taking us back to 1510 when South Africa's first freedom fighters who defeated the larcenist Portuguese,

as well as other battles that were won.

Three points in Zenzile's electrifying address stand out: Like the visionary Adam Kok, he will open the doors of the centre before Christmas, not just for Capetonians, but for all our people from the furthers corner of Namaqualand, the Gamtoos, Great-Karoo and the Kalahari.

When so-called Khoi-leaders acted like Judases with their greed and cunningness, it was elders like Oom Petrus Vaalbooi, leader of the Kalahari Boesmians, and dr. Katrina Esau of Upington who supported and became part of the Collective.

Chief Zenzile also thanked all the freedom fighters from 1510 till today.



IN RETROSPECT: Representatives of different KhoiSan groups gathered at the offices of the Human Rights Commission in Cape Town in February 2018 where the HRC revealed the report and recommendations about KhoiSan human rights abuses.
RIGHT: André Gaum and Chris Nissen with the report in 2018. **PICS: ZENZILE KHOISAN**

No political will to implement HRC KhoiSan recommendations

ZENZILE KHOISAN

The newly appointed chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), Rev Chris Nissen has expressed “grave concern and disappointment” that far-reaching findings and recommendations of this Chapter 9 institution on Khoi and San descendants have not yet been implemented by the South African government.

The commission’s chair stated that he was aware of and recognised “the anger and frustration of the people on the ground” who had participated in public hearings and commented within the SAHRC’s extensive investigation into the human rights status of the descendants of South Africa’s foundational people, after which it issued an extensive report on its investigation into the rights and status of Khoi and San descendants in South Africa more than six years ago.

The SAHRC investigation and subsequent report followed a litany of complaints to the commission, to various branches of the South African government as also to international bodies such as the United Nations and the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights. The South African government and its associated entities and institutions had been cited for human rights violations and marginalisation of the descendants of South Africa’s First Peoples.

“There are very real concerns that there is no political will to implement the far-reaching findings and recommendations of the South African Human Rights Commission, despite the fact that the report was issued more than six years ago, in which the SAHRC directed different government department to act on and implement our recommendation and report on the progress of these actions within specific periods, which apparently has not occurred,” Nissen stated.

The commission’s report detailing an investigation into human rights violations against the Khoi and San from colonialism to present dispensation was release into the public domain in February 2018.

This followed nationwide public hearings and consultations in which

Khoi and San descendants provided evidence and recommendations for redress before commission panels on critical issues such as land dispossession, constitutional recognition and restoration of Khoi and San identity, language, culture, heritage.

Among the most serious violations the majority to those who testified at the public hearings and in written submissions noted, was that Khoi and San people had been forced within the new dispensation to accept the discriminatory coloured label that had been forced upon them by successive colonial administrations and by the internationally reviled apartheid regime.

The release of the HRC Khoi and San human rights violations report was at the time widely heralded by most Khoi and San leadership and communities as a “watershed document” which had comprehensively documented the grievances about “gross violations of their rights as indigenous peoples”.

Many who publicly expressed themselves on the report noted at the time that the document and its very focused and detailed directives for implementation stated at the time that this report broke from what had become a tradition of “merely listening with half an ear and then just paying lip service to the issues of the Khoi and San”.

Among prominent indigenous leaders who provided evidence before the commission and welcomed the report at the time of its release was Conchoqua leader Chief John Jansen, who also serves as the Western Cape leader of the Khoi Cultural Heritage Development Council (KCHDC).

Jansen stated at the time that the “watershed report” should be viewed at a mechanism to “release the power of the indigenous people of this country”.

“This document should serve as a mechanism to unify our people to obtain our freedom and we should utilise this document as an important instrument to overcome the differences that have divided us and prevented us from achieving our objectives,” Chief Jansen had stated at the time.

Among the most important and noteworthy recommendations of the 2018 SAHRC report on human rights

violations against Khoi and San is that it called upon the South African government to:

- Take meaningful step to recognise Khoi and San people in South Africa;
- Effect land restitution for Khoi and San people that had been dispossessed;
- Officially recognise Khoi and San languages;
- Officially recognise the indigenous knowledge systems of the Khoi and San;
- The removal of the denigrative coloured label that had been widely rejected by Khoi and San descendants;
- That the government should ratify important international conventions of the United Nations, including ILO

“The Commission on Khoi-San Matters needs to be more visible and vocal and needs to engage the HRC on the report and ... they need to engage government with recommendations

Convention 169, which is a binding international instrument expressly directing nations and states to protect, promote and advance the rights of indigenous peoples.

Now, six years after the release of the report that had unleashed so much hope among Khoi and San peoples that the logjam would be broken and that there would be expeditious movement to ensure they are properly recognised and restored there is a growing pessimistic and negative sentiment.

He said the task of implementation the report’s findings and recommendations had been shifted from the HRC to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

“Since the release of the report CoGTA has taken over responsibility and engagements with and following through with the departments who were supposed to act on our recommendations.

“It is all in the hands of CoGTA and we are certainly disappointed at the slow and almost reluctant pace of change,” Nissen stated.

“An important recommendation of the report was that the Khoi and San

indigenous languages, as directed by the constitution, should be promoted and officially recognised, but now what we have seen is that the recognition of sign language has overtaken our recommendation for the recognition of Khoi and San languages.

“In this respect we are certainly concerned that the Pan South African Language Board has not done enough to promote and have the languages of the KhoiSan officially recognised,” Nissen said.

The HRC chair revealed that he was also extremely concerned that the Commission on Khoi-San Matters, which has been established in terms of the Traditional and Khoi-San Legislative Act to process, investigate and make recommendations on recognition for Khoi and San leadership and communities had not vigorously engaged with the HRC about the report.

“The Commission on Khoi-San Matters needs to be more visible and vocal and needs to engage the HRC on the report and, if needs be, they need to engage government with recommendations on possible amendments to the legislation to empower them to engage with the what the report calls to be implemented,” he noted.

Nissen cited numerous examples of how he and other members of the commission had engaged with leadership who felt “dis-affected, angry and frustrated” and that this seemed to indicate a broader problem that government departments, that have in recent years litigated against the findings of the SAHRC.

“We are in court at the moment in litigation over whether the findings and recommendations of the HRC are binding, and if needs be, we shall have to take it all the way to the constitutional court to confirm that our findings indeed are binding.

“In the case of the Khoi and San the SAHRC issued a report with similar recommendations under the chairpersonship of Dr Barney Pitso in 2010, but that report was embargoed and not implemented.

“What is needed for the recommendations and findings of our report to be implemented is political will, because without political will this matter will not be addressed,” Rev Chris Nissen added.



PHOTO: ANGUS BURNS

Celebrating our Heritage Moons

The Full Moon – the brightest object in the night sky – is a striking sight, and features in the art, myths and cultural traditions of all peoples of Earth. Centre for Astronomical Heritage is a non-profit company working to protect South Africa’s astronomical heritage. The Centre’s mission is to record, preserve, and disseminate information about South Africa’s tangible and intangible astronomical heritage.

With every Full Moon the Centre is inviting you to celebrate something special about South Africa, to revel in our shared heritage and to remember that we’re together under one sky. A Full Moon happens about once a month. Sometimes, there are two Full Moons in a month (the second one is sometimes called a blue moon), except February because it only has 28 or 29 days.

MARCH: HARVEST MOON

In March we celebrate the fact that Africa feeds our bodies and our souls. The Harvest Moon (first Full Moon of the month) celebrates the rich bounty of crops: summer grains (a staple food source in South Africa) and the last of the grape harvest (the source of our delicious and internationally famous wines). Grains such as maize, sorghum and millet are staple foods for many South Africans. Summer grains were harvested by indigenous people in a fairly large portion of pre-colonial South

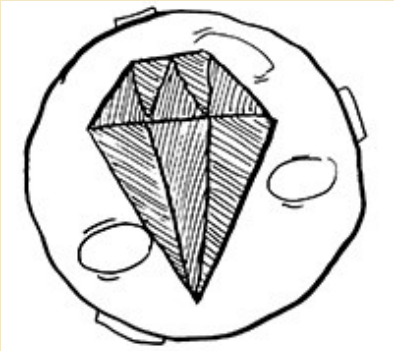


Africa long before any of the other crops had been planted. The Second full moon in March is the Ochre Moon, which celebrates the mineral ochre, used for personal adornment and to create beautiful and symbol-rich rock art. The Harvest Moon was seen on **25 March**, from around 9pm.

** During March, we also celebrate World Meteorological Day (March 23) and Earth Hour (March 28 from 20:30 to 21:30).*

APRIL: DIAMOND MOON

April celebrates treasures from deep beneath the earth. The April Full Moon is the Diamond Moon, because South Africa is where the largest diamond in the world was found (near Pretoria in 1905). Diamonds do not, as is very widely but erroneously believed, form from coal. Most diamonds that have been dated are much older than Earth’s first land plants! In South Africa Kimberley is the town that springs to mind when South Africans think about diamonds, but the largest diamond ever found in the world, the Cullinan Diamond, was not found there. It was found at Cullinan in Pretoria in 1905, by Frederick Wells (a



fact about which there is some controversy) and eventually sold to the Transvaal Colony government who gave it to King Edward VII of Great Britain as “a token of the loyalty and attachment of the people of the Transvaal to His Majesty’s throne and person”.

It was supposedly sent to England on a steamship and the safe containing it was guarded by detectives but this was apparently a clever diversion as the stone on the ship was a fake and the actual stone was sent to England by ordinary registered post in a very ordinary box.

The Diamond Moon can be seen on 23 April 2024 around 01:54.

2ND APRIL MOON: GOLD MOON

Gold is the material most South Africans associate with the mining industry. Gold production was the mainstay of South Africa’s economy for a very long time but that role is now challenged by platinum. George Harrison discovered gold at Langlaagte in July 1886 in what is considered the first find on the main gold bearing reef. Gold had, however, been worked by



South African indigenous people for many years before the arrival of the Europeans. This early working of gold is clearly evidenced by the artefacts found at Mapungubwe where burials with gold jewellery have been dated to the mid-13th century. The rare Gold Moon does not occur in the period 2020–2050. In the period 2050–2200, the Gold Moon happens on 30 April 2075.



2ND MARCH MOON: OCHRE MOON

Ochre was (and is) used extensively for personal decoration by the indigenous peoples of South Africa. It also formed an important part of the various paints used by the San in their rock art. The archaeological record from Blombos Cave on the Cape south coast contains ochre blocks decorated with geometric patterns and dated to 75,000 years ago, making it one of the earliest finds showing the use of ochre for personal adornment in the history of humans.

took the form of giving presents to each other. Ochre had to be dug out from distant, often inaccessible places and any group who had ochre in their area was rich, because it could be traded with Bushmen living far away and they could name their price. In the /Xam culture a girl would also paint zebra-like stripes of red-haematite on the young men to protect them from lightning. Examples of present day traditional uses of ochre are the red blankets of the Xhosa people and the application of a paste of ochre and butter to the hair and skin by the women of the Himba people of northern Namibia.

Ochre was also an important trade item among the San. Some had clay for making pots, or a good source of poison for arrows, and others redstone (ochre) to smear on the body or to paint with. Exchange

The Ochre Moon does not occur during the period 2020–2050. *The next Ochre moon is on 31 March 2056.*

MONTH	1ST FULL MOON	2ND FULL MOON
January	Mantis Moon	Leopard Moon
February	Dassie Moon	—
March	Harvest Moon	Ochre Moon
April	Diamond Moon	Gold Moon
May	Frost Moon	Fire Moon
June	Sisters Moon	Honey Moon
July	Meerkat Moon	Protea Moon
August	Peace Moon	Dusty Moon
September	Spring Moon	Blue Crane Moon
October	Whale Moon	Elephant Moon
November	Milk Moon	Wool Moon
December	Springbok Moon	Eland Moon



VICTORY AT LAST! Members of the Indigenous Siekopai community in the Amazon Rainforest will receive land titles to their ancestral land.

PICTURE: AMAZON FRONTLINES

Displaced Ecuador Indigenous group to go home after 8 decades

After an 80-year struggle to regain control of their ancestral lands in Ecuador's Amazon rainforest, the Indigenous Siekopai people are set to return after a historic court ruling ordered the government to grant the community property titles.

Under the November ruling, Ecuador's Environment Ministry is expected to issue a land title to the Siekopai by April for more than 104,000 acres (42,000 hectares) of land, along with a public apology for violating their rights.

"We've been demanding that the government complies with the constitution that recognises ancestral lands are the property of Indigenous communities," said Justino Piaguaje, a leader of the Siekopai people whose flooded forests – largely lagoons and swamps – are on the border between Ecuador and Peru.

"The ruling is recognition of a historic fight that goes back to our grandparents," he said.

However, implementing the court ruling could be hampered by the violence convulsing the country that led to President Daniel Noboa declaring a war on drug gangs and a state of emergency in January this year.

Once the court ruling is carried out, it would be the first time in Ecuador that an Indigenous community, whose ancestral territory overlaps state-protected land, has been given title deeds.

Other groups could also benefit from the ruling. More than 3 million acres (12 million hectares) of Indigenous territory are part of Ecuador's national parks or protected areas and do not have land titles, according to campaign group Amazon Frontlines.

"This is a precedent that opens the door for the defence of all Indigenous territories across the Amazon," said Jorge Acero, a lawyer for the Siekopai who is part of the Amazon Frontlines legal team.

The Siekopai were forced to flee their ancestral lands during the 1941 Peru-Ecuador war, and later prevented from returning when the Ecuadorian government made the land part of a wildlife reserve in 1979, without the group's consent.

During hearings at a provincial court, the Siekopai provided evidence of the boundaries of their remote and largely pristine homeland they call Pe'keya in their Paicoca language.

Using cameras, GPS receivers, satellite imagery and aerial drones, the community geo-referenced and documented the extent of their territory and identified sacred sites.

The Siekopai are one of 14 recognised Indigenous groups in Ecuador, with a small population of 800 hunter-gatherers inside the country and 1,200 more in Peru.

Nature conservation

As the world tries to put COP28 climate goals in practice, including a deal to move away from fossil fuel energy, respecting Indigenous land

Protecting the world's largest rainforest, a vast natural store of carbon, can help slow climate change which is powering more heatwaves, wildfires, floods, droughts and storms globally.

Giving land titles to Indigenous groups and bolstering their rights also means it is far more likely oil deposits scattered across Ecuador's Amazon rainforest will stay in the ground – a key to meeting goals to curb climate change.

Siekopai land is a biodiverse "oasis" home to Amazon river dolphins, giant otters and manatees, surrounded by oil drilling and oil palm plantations, said Piaguaje.

"There's pressure all around us and ... if the state discovers oil on our land the government must carry out a

plans to gradually shut down a large drilling project in the Yasuni reserve following the referendum.

Since 2018, Ecuador's top court has ruled in favour of two other Indigenous groups, the Cofan of Sinangoe, and the Waorani living in the eastern Amazon province of Pastaza, to block the development of extractive projects on their land.

Having land titles allows Indigenous groups greater say and control over their lands and the ability to push back settlers.

"The property title is a way to give judicial security to communities over territories, to guarantee that territories will be respected by the state and invading settlers," said Acero.

"It guarantees the physical and cul-



ORAL TRADITION: A three-judged panel listens to oral testimony from indigenous Siekopai elders and youth in Ecuador.

PICTURE: COURTESY KAREN TORO / AMAZON FRONTLINES

rights and formalising Indigenous land tenure can be a key climate solution, analysts say.

A growing body of scientific research shows that recognising and enforcing land rights for Indigenous peoples, and valuing their expertise and governance systems, are vital for nature conservation and the protection of the Amazon rainforest.

A 2021 United Nations report found that in nearly every Latin American country, Indigenous lands showed lower deforestation rates than other areas.

Scientists say the Amazon rainforest may be close to a tipping point, driven by clearances to make way for agriculture and cattle pastures, which could dry the region and transform it into savannah in the coming decades.

free, prior and informed consultation with us," he said. "But we'll never accept or agree to oil exploitation or any type of extractive industry on our lands."

Returning home

Across Ecuador's oil and gold-rich Amazon rainforest, other Indigenous groups have successfully pushed back development projects following a series of legal victories.

In August, Ecuadorians voted in a milestone national referendum to ban oil drilling in a part of the Amazon – the Yasuni National Park – home to Indigenous communities, along with gold mining in a forest outside of the capital Quito.

In November, Ecuador state oil company Petroecuador told Reuters it

tural survival of peoples and nationalities," he said.

"Without reclaiming and returning to their land – seen as central to Siekopai spirituality, memory and knowledge – the risk is that "a millennia culture disappears," warned Piaguaje.

"The ruling will help us revive our memory and cultural practices, to reconnect with our spiritual world.

"It allows us to promote our culture that is conserving nature based on millennia of wisdom of our grandfathers," said Piaguaje.

"We'll return to rebuild our home," he said.

(Reporting by Anastasia Moloney; Editing by Jon Hemming, Context News.)

Day of Celebration at sod-turning



FINALLY: The Heritage and Design team with the Western Cape First Nations project team after the sod-turning ceremony at Riverlands.



SHARING THE JOY: Premier Allan Winde (middle) with Jade and Ashley Hoffman.



HAPPY DAY: Jody Aufrichtig, Zenzile Khoisan and Allan Winde.



Sharing a proud moment is Belinda Jackson and Luke Pather.



DEVELOPING PARTNERS: Tim Nichols, James Tannenberger, Bradley Parker, Elbert de Kock and Trevor Versveld.



Chiefs Mary and John Jansen.



ROYALTY: Premier Allan Winde with members of the Griqua Royal House, from left Chief Anzol Pietersen, Comm. Aaron Messelaar and chief Rachel Cloete.



Bruce Kadalie and Deon Petersen.



IN CONVERSATION: Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis and Charles Quint.

A DAY TO REMEMBER
It was a day of ceremony savoured by all who participated in this historic, watershed event.

PICTURES: MATTHEW HENDRIKS



ENERGETIC: South Roots International entertained with their high energy performances, even taking Chief Zenzile Khoisan for a twirl.