

HERITAGE WESTERN CAPE

DECLARATION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES AS A PROVINCIAL HERITAGE SITE

In terms of Section 27(6) of the National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999, and by virtue of a resolution of the Council of Heritage Western Cape dated 28 September 2020, Erven 79294, 79295-RE, 79574-RE, 79575-RE, 79576-RE, 79577-RE, 79578-RE, 79579-RE, 79580, 79581, 79582, 79583-RE, 79584-RE, 79585-RE, 79586, 79587, 79588-RE, 79589, 79590-RE, 79591-RE, 79594, 79595, 80951-RE, 80952-RE, 80955-RE, 81181, 82166-RE, 82167, 82169-RE, 82170-RE, 82171-RE, 7577, 75771, **known as "Princess Vlei", Off the M5, Retreat, Cape Town** as more fully described in the schedule below, is hereby declared as a Provincial Heritage Site.

Schedule

The demarcation of the Provincial Heritage Site is as follows:

Erven 79294, 79295-RE, 79574-RE, 79575-RE, 79576-RE, 79577-RE, 79578-RE, 79579-RE, 79580, 79581, 79582, 79583-RE, 79584-RE, 79585-RE, 79586, 79587, 79588-RE, 79589, 79590-RE, 79591-RE, 79594, 79595, 80951-RE, 80952-RE, 80955-RE, 81181, 82166-RE, 82167, 82169-RE, 82170-RE, 82171-RE, 7577, 75771, **"Princess Vlei"**, in Retreat, as described in attached Diagram A.

Significance

The heritage significance of Princess Vlei is embedded in four key themes, namely cultural, spiritual, recreational and environmental significance. Princess Vlei represents a unique landscape of peoples' identity which is considered exceptionally important and desirable by the community as a heritage resource.

Princess Vlei is a significant natural heritage resource that has high historical social value as it represents the living expression of the Khoi and San from past to present.

Princess Vlei's geographical location as a natural gateway to the south contributes significantly to its aesthetic value within the community. The sense of place of the wetland system extending through Grassy Park to Strandfontein enables an ecological stepping stone that contributes to environmental value as a biodiversity benchmark site.

Colette Scheermeyer
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Heritage Western Cape

DIAGRAM A

PROVINCIAL HERITAGE SITE NOMINATION APPLICATION

IN TERMS OF SECTION 27 OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT (ACT 25 OF 1999)

This form precedes the submission of the 'Nomination Document' and is designed to assist with the grading of heritage resources in terms Section 3(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, as part of the process of declaration as a Provincial Heritage Site (Section 27). Nominated heritage resources that are of special provincial significance will be graded as Grade 2 and considered for Provincial Heritage Site status.

HERITAGE WESTERN CAPE CASE NUMBER:

PROPOSED PROVINCIAL HERITAGE SITE: THE PRINCESS VLEI



The Legend of the Princess, a landscape of people's identity

"The Vlei is more than the water,
the Vlei is more than the vegetation around it ,
the Vlei has a soul.
And it gives expression to our souls, and to what we believe in....."
Phillip Bam, Grassy Park resident

Brief Statement of Significance: (A full statement of significance is required as an attachment)

In the 21st century the city has become a "living organism" constantly growing to support development of economic, political as well as cultural landscapes. The cultural landscape of Princess Vlei as part of the pattern of history of "living organism", the City of Cape Town (CoCT), has been growing in significance.

"Urban heritage reflects not only the values normally embodied in "monuments" (memory, artistic values etc.), but it also represents civic identities and the "living" expression of historic evolution."

Not only is Princess Vlei a significant natural heritage resource but it has high historical social value as it represents the "living" expression of historic evolution of the Khoi San from past to present. The evolution of this people of great significance is intrinsically associated with the sense of place within the cultural landscape of this part of the city. This past decade has seen a rise in social, historical, natural and cultural significance attributed to the Vlei, which has been fuelled by attempts made by the local community to protect the area threatened by development.



The establishment of the Princess Vlei Forum on 31st October 2012 was 'to co-ordinate a long-standing struggle to protect the Vlei from commercial development.' In accordance with the community's vision of creating a nature and heritage park, the Forum focuses and promotes the heritage significance of the Vlei as heritage resource within the province. It is this resurgence of Indigenous Cultural Movements that has occupied a unique space within the community's cultural significance. The strong and special association represented by the spiritual historical connections of indigenous people is reflected in the cultural practices still practised at Princess Vlei today.

Of great significance is the name of this natural feature in our city derived from the Khoi San myth. The creation of this legend supported by archaeological evidence elevates the great value of oral history as a source of establishing heritage. Even though the Legend of The Princess explores different narratives, the essence is consistent and passed down through oral histories over multiple generations. One myth tells the story of the tears of a princess who wept after she was abducted and drowned by Portuguese sailors forming the Vlei. The claiming of lives of men to fulfil her retribution still persists.

Bradlox, in talking about the historical basis of the legend, refers to retribution by the Princess claiming lives through drowning. The legend of the princess is also associated with the battle between the Portuguese and Khoi warriors at the banks of the Vlei where Commander Francisco Almeida was killed. The legend of the Princess was portrayed in South Africa's first ballet performed in 1952. Ironically, the legend of Princess Vlei ballet was part of the Van Riebeeck Festival in 1952.



Fantastical stories are often passed on as folklore, where the myth takes on various twists and turns. Stories expressed as myth can be especially powerful. The relevance of the legend is not only in the factual content but insight into the expression of human culture - emotions, attitudes beliefs and everything else that goes into personal experience. In essence, creating, supporting and strengthening cultural identity.

The relevance of the Legend of the Princess gives us insight into the human culture and value system of indigenous people and culture. The belief that oneness with nature originates from respect for nature as one cannot exist without the other. At the Vlei, the undeniable connection and attachment to nature is embodied through the dominant symbolic force of the water body which came to life as a result of tears shed by the Princess. The link to Elephant's Eye in the mountain, visible from the Vlei, is believed to be where the Princess lived and the source of her endless tears. 'The Khoi believe the site provides the opportunity to reclaim their power by acting as a Pinnacle for the various groups to come together at this place. **Princess Vlei represents a place of unity, healing and identity.**



As an act of reclaiming power the Princess Vlei Forum initiated various community events. This has provided opportunities for uniting and reclaiming the community's heritage. The 'Dressing of the Princess' project entailed the rehabilitation of portions of the eastern edge of the Vlei for recreational and social use, The Red Flag Vlei campaign, Pray for the Vlei, Bring a Stone for the Princess and Youth Speak for the Princess aimed to bring the Princess to life and raising awareness of cultural heritage significance. The Heritage Committee of the Princess Vlei Forum is undertaking an oral history project investigating importance of the intangible aspects, oral history and myths and legends of the princess. Local author Mea Leachbrooke describes the ethereal nature of the legend

where it 'might not be entirely believed but is also not totally doubted.' However, the **formation of myths true power lies within the value that it serves not only the story of the individual but the collective stories for a community** defined as a *symbolic translation of a personal or collective experience, holding truth of the original, but shifting safely into the universal.*

Leachbrooke highlights that the community around Princess Vlei has, through 'holding the truth of the original', displays with pride their association with the First Nation People of South Africa. More importantly this community has been able to protect and maintain their history, reclaim their heritage and raised awareness regarding their connection to the land. Their stories have not always been 'safeguarded in the chronicles of history'. This safeguarding is the main contributing factor to the value and importance of the myths and legends particularly in communities where traditions and culture are underplayed. One of these, the role and significance of woman is still being underplayed today. Women were not valued and recognised in history, evident in the fact that the name of the drowned princess is not even known. It would be sacrilegious to allow the legend or the myth to drown by not giving sanctity to the rare occasion where the first people collectively valued woman centuries ago. The strong historical association of the legend of the princess lies in the story about a woman. **The recognition of the Princess represents the naming of the nameless, giving a voice to previously unheard voices and in doing so, affirming the rights of women.** As aptly cited by the Princess Vlei Forum

'the story of Princess Vlei is a quintessentially South African story, encompassing violence and dispossession as well as hope, healing and harmony... and some very feisty women.'



The Princess as legend has long been used as a place for water immersion Baptism. Various church groups come every Sunday from Nyanga, Gugulethu, Philippi and at Easter, they come from as far afield as Upington and Gauteng, baptising hundreds in a morning. This ceremony is experienced collectively as a spiritual experience symbolizing the purification or regeneration and admission. There is also a psychic mystical connection of spiritual value experienced by individuals when utilising the space for meditation. This why the Vlei is the favoured site and utilised extensively by locals and people from beyond and compared to the surrounding vleis.



Given traditional ties to myths and legends, aesthetic value and spiritual value, Princess Vlei is considered highly valuable for recreational activities. It continues to be a popular recreational space daily after work, over weekends and public holidays as a popular braaing and picnic spot. Both locally and nationally the destructive nature and spirit of apartheid in the 1960's in terms of the Group Areas Act (Act 77 of 1957) affected the dispossessed and disadvantaged non-whites. Communities were displaced to the Cape Flats, the surrounding areas at the Vlei. During this time there were very few recreational sites which were easily accessible and available to these dispossessed and disadvantaged communities. The Vlei was known 'Claremont Beach' and was the one place in the heart of the southern suburbs that provided place of refuge for non-whites. During the 1980's State of Emergency it was a beacon of hope to overcome the oppression and conflict experienced in Cape Flats – from the harsh township environment of burning tyres to the refuge of the green space of the Princess. Similarly **it is envisioned that this positive role of the Vlei can once again be**

utilised to overcome the current conflict and gang violence experienced on the Cape Flats where the Army is currently deployed in the surrounding hot spots of Parkwood and Lavender Hill. The general public amenity value as a social meeting place, a cultural spiritual place that allows all to observe and participate in the religious ceremonies of Baptisms and an place associated with significant events such as mobilising after the mall objection attests to the significance of place that is valued by a community. Thus, the value and significance of Princess Vlei as a natural and cultural gateway to the south is viewed as a key opportunity to instil community value and identity.

Princess Vlei's geographical location as a natural gateway to the south contributes significantly to it's aesthetic value within the community. The sense of place of the wetland system extending through Grassy Park to Strandfontein enables an ecological stepping stone that contributes to environmental value as a Biodiversity benchmark site. Princess Vlei has become an invaluable asset within the context of current environmental crises of our city brought about by climatic change. In turn this has directed a greater consciousness, sensitivity and value regarding our relationship with the environment. Additionally the Vlei contains significant indigenous plant and animal threatened species. For example it is one of the significant sites that contain important fauna required for breeding sites of the endangered Western Leopard Toad. The biodiversity represented by these various habitats at Princess Vlei boosts ecosystem service where each species, no matter how small, all have an important role to play. This includes the mitigation of winter floods, purification of water, provision of a habitat for indigenous plant and animal species, retention of nitrogen and the mitigation of the demands on public sewage and water works.. On the 9th December 2015, a memorandum of agreement was established to protect and conserve the biodiversity values of Princess Vlei in terms of the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board Act (Act No 15 of 1998).



Heritage is those things - tangible or intangible - which society and individuals choose to retain into the future from the past. **The heritage significance of Princess Vlei is embedded in four key themes, namely cultural, spiritual, recreational and environmental significance.** Princess Vlei represents a unique landscape of people's identity which is considered exceptionally important and desirable by the community as a heritage resource.

Proposed By: HWC

Date Proposed: 8 August 2019

Telephone: N/A

Cell: [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Name of Property: The Greater Princess Vlei Conservation Area i.t.o. MOA dated 12 June 2014

Street Number and Street: off M5

Suburb: Retreat

Town: Cape Town

Cadastral Information

Erf/ Farm Number: 75598; 75607; 75608; 75617; 75770; 75771; 78118; 79294; 79295; 79574; 79575; 79576; 79577; 79578; 79579; 79580; 79581; 79582; 79583; 79584; 79585; 79586; 79587; 79588; 79589; 79590; 79591; 79594; 79595; 79964; 80951; 80952; 80955; 81120; 81180; 81181; 81196; 82166; 82167; 82169; 82170; 82171

Registration Division: Cape Town

Longitude: E

Latitude:

Map Reference:

Recording Method:

TYPE OF RESOURCE

Place	☒	
Structure	☐	
Archaeological Site	☐	Unknown
Palaeontological Site	☐	
Geological Feature	☐	
Grave	☐	Unknown

Do moveable objects relating to the site form part of the Nomination? ☐Serial nomination (Is more than one site being nominated as part of a 'Joint Nomination') ☐

(For serial nominations, complete one form for each site, supply additional details about the information relating to the relation of the sites, and the management and phasing of proposed nomination be attached).

Sphere of Significance	High	Med	Low
International	☐	☐	☐
National	☐	☐	☐
Provincial	☒	☐	☐
Regional	☐	☐	☐
Local	☐	☐	☐
Specialist group or community	☐	☐	☐

What other similar sites may be compared to the site? How does the site compare to these sites? (Please expand on separate sheet)

Princess is located within an eco- system comprised of a series of wetlands. However ,Princes Vlei is the only vlei that displays the four key themes namely cultural, spiritual, recreational and environmental heritage significance. Princess Vlei is the gateway to cultural and natural landscape.

Owner: City of Cape Town managed by the City Parks Directorate

If the nominator is not the owner, the owner as well as the registered conservation body/s, whom has registered their interest in the area/s, must be furnished with a copy of this form and other associated documentation. Proof thereof must accompany this form when submitting it to Heritage Western Cape.

(If state-owned; responsible department and official position of contact)

Does the owner support the nomination?

Yes ☒ No ☐

The owner is the City of Cape Town and further engagement will be taking place. Initial engagement has taken place with the CoCT. No objection has been obtained

Owners signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Postal Address: Community Services, The City of Cape Town, PO Box 4511, Cape Town

Telephone: _____ **Cell:** _____

E-Mail: _____ **Web Page:** _____

Contact Person: *(If different from above. Please supply contact details)* _____

Telephone: _____ **Cell:** _____

E-Mail: _____ **Web Page:** _____

- ☐ * Expanded statement of significance; *(Refer specifically to significance criteria listed below)*
- ☐ * Motivation for declaration as a Provincial Heritage Site, including potential, threats and vulnerabilities;
- ☐ * Short history of the place;
- ☐ * Physical description of the heritage resource;
- ☐ * Locality plan (map) and Site Plan;
- ☐ * Photographs and plans;
- ☐ ** List of moveable objects relating to site that are proposed as part of nomination, or for archaeological or palaeontological site; list of repositories where these are housed;
- ☐ ** Bibliography of documentation relating to the heritage resource;
- ☐ ** Statement of current protections and restrictions (e.g. previous national monument; register of immoveable property; conservation area; current zoning; servitudes);
- ☐ ** List any heritage organizations consulted and their comments on the proposed nomination.
- ☐ *** Site plan (with proposed site boundaries);
- ☐ *** Conservation or management plans (send immediately if any exist);
- ☐ *** Heritage Agreement (if required).

(Please supply those marked () with this nomination form, as well as any others that are already available. Those marked (**) will be requested when the proposal first goes to HWC Council for endorsement (Tentative List of Provincial Heritage Sites). Those marked (***) will be required when the Nomination goes to the following Council Meeting for approval as a Provincial Heritage Site).*

1. HISTORICAL VALUE**a. It is important in the community, or pattern of history**

- i. Importance in the evolution of cultural landscapes and settlement patterns



- ii. Importance in exhibiting density, richness or diversity of cultural features illustrating the human occupation and evolution of the nation, Province, region or locality.



- ii. Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases that have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, Province, region or community.



- iv. Importance as an example for technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement in a particular period



b. It has strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organization of importance in history

- i. Importance for close associations with individuals, groups or organizations whose life, works or activities have been significant within the history of the nation, Province, region or community.



c. It has significance relating to the history of slavery

- i. Importance for a direct link to the history of slavery in South Africa.



2. AESTHETIC VALUE**a. It is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group**

- i. Importance to a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community.



- ii. Importance for its creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.

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- ii. Importance for its contribution to the aesthetic values of the setting demonstrated by a landmark quality or having impact on important vistas or otherwise contributing to the identified aesthetic qualities of the cultural environs or the natural landscape within which it is located.



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- iv. In the case of an historic precinct, importance for the aesthetic character created by the individual components which collectively form a significant streetscape, townscape or cultural environment.



3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

a. It has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of natural or cultural heritage

- i. Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality, reference or benchmark site.



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- ii. Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the origin of the universe or of the development of the earth.



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- iii. Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the origin of life; the development of plant or animal species, or the biological or cultural development of hominid or human species.



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- iv. Importance for its potential to yield information contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of the nation, Province, region or locality.



b. It is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

- i. Importance for its technical innovation or achievement.



4. SOCIAL VALUE

a. It has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

- i. Importance as a place highly valued by a community or cultural group for reasons of social, cultural, religious, spiritual, symbolic, aesthetic or educational associations.



- ii. Importance in contributing to a community's sense of place.



Degrees of Significance

5. RARITY:

a. It possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of natural or cultural heritage

- i. Importance for rare, endangered or uncommon structures, landscapes or phenomena.



- ii. Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practiced in, or in danger of being lost from, or of exceptional interest to the nation, Province, region or locality.



6. REPRESENTIVITY:

a. It is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of natural or cultural places or objects

- i. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a range of landscapes or environments, the attributes of which identify it as being characteristic of its class.



- ii. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of human activities (including way of life, philosophy, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique) in the environment of the nation, Province, region or locality.



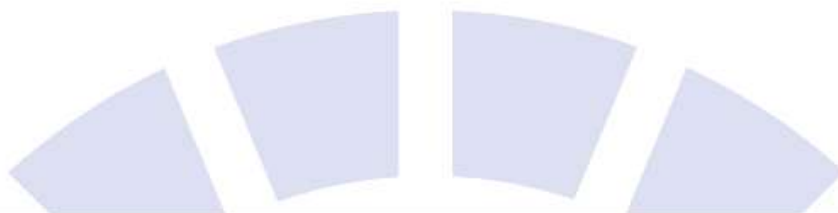
Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' or 'B' shape with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Date: 31 July 2019

PLEASE NOTE:

Applications are considered to be public documents and are open to public scrutiny. Should you wish your application to be kept confidential, please motivate your request on a separate sheet.



Attached please find the following:

1. Site Descriptor
2. Locality Map
3. Photographs
4. Historical Background
5. Submission by Chief Jansen of the Cocoqua Khoi-Khoi Tribal House, Western Cape Khoisan Leader CAPEKHOI/KCHDC to the Princess Vlei Forum Heritage Committee
6. Map of CoCT Conservation Development Framework
7. Press Coverage

1. SITE DESCRIPTOR

Princess Vlei is a wetland sited in the Cape Flats, surrounded by the suburbs of Grassy Park, Southfield, Heathfield and Retreat. It is also located on a major arterial link road, M5, which serves as a separator from suburbs to the east. This landmark site –significant waterbody is highly visible from the M5, with the backdrop of the mountain which includes Elephants Eye. As a consequence the natural landscape/park within a dense urban setting makes is very accessible to the surrounding communities.

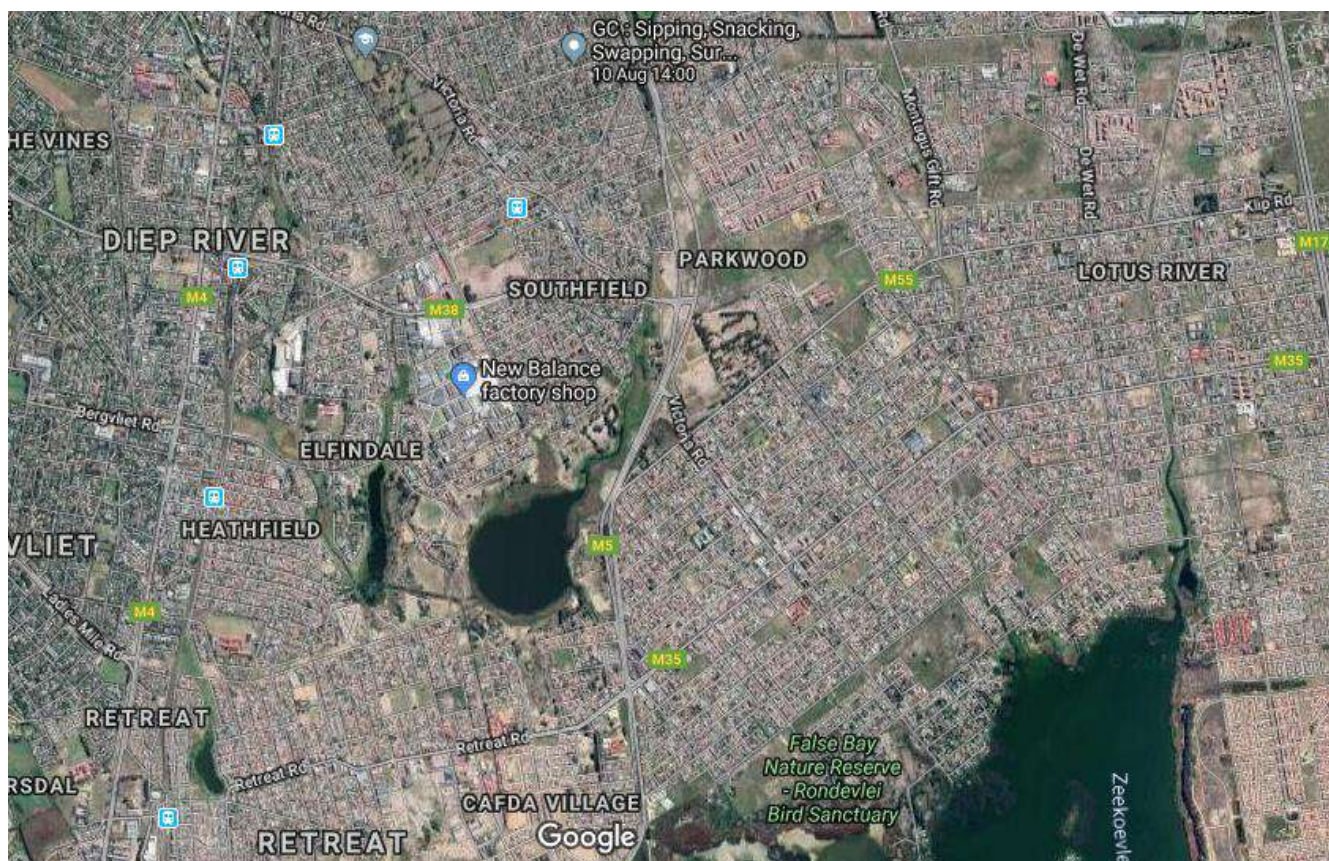


Aerial view illustrating the Princess Vlei within in the natural landscape/park surrounded by the suburbs of Grassy Park, Southfield, Heathfield and Retreat. (Source: <http://sourcetosea.org.za/catchment-treasures/eco-heritage/princess-vlei/>)

The extent of the area for nomination is a declared Biodiversity Agreement Site as stated in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between CoCT & Princess Vlei Forum dated 9 December 2015. In the MOU the nomination area is referred to as "The Greater Princess Vlei Conservation Area and is owned by the City of Cape Town managed by the City Parks Directorate. The Conceptual Development Framework commissioned by the city can be viewed as start of Conservation Management Plan.

Heritage Western Cape Section 27 Provincial Heritage Site Nomination _ January 2019

2. LOCALITY MAP



3. PHOTOGRAPHS

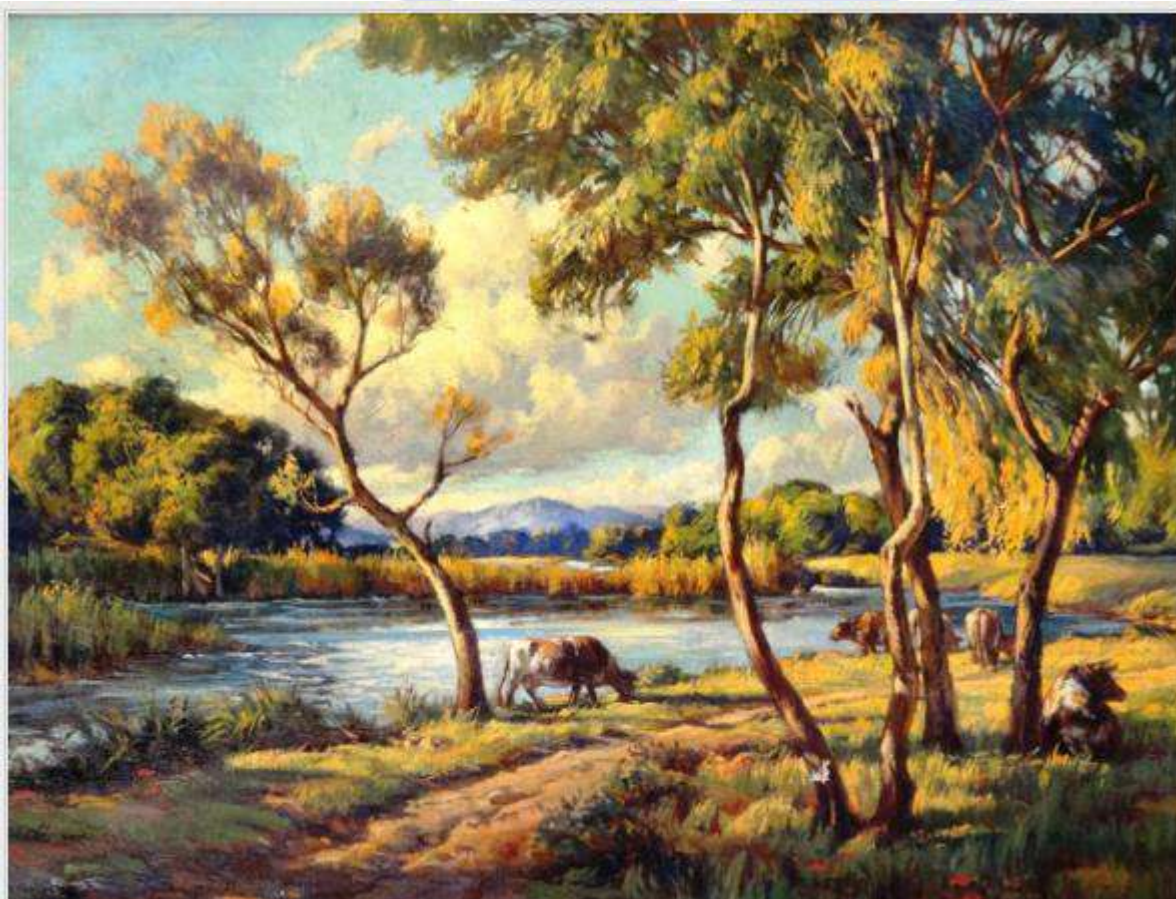




4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND compiled by The Princess Vlei Forum

The history of the Princess

A Quintessentially South African Story...



'Princess Vlei, Cape' painted by WG Bevington ARCA (1881 - 1953). Private Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa.

The story of Princessvlei is a quintessentially South African story, encompassing violence and dispossession as well as hope, healing and harmony... and some very feisty women.

Before the arrival of European settlers, it was a watering ground for early Khoi herders. The first encounter between these herders and Europeans was with the battle against Fransisco D'Almeida, which has been linked to the [legend of the Princess](#).

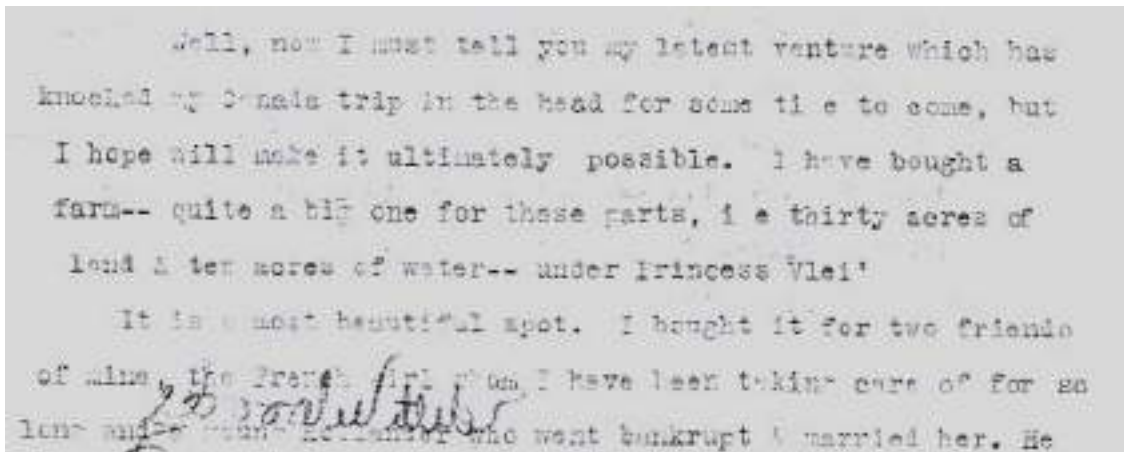
In the five hundred years that followed this encounter, the Princess' descendants were enslaved, raped, exiled and killed. However, but the early 20th Century, the Princess seemed to enter into a period of relative harmony, with residents of all races dwelling on or near its banks. One of the most colourful of these was Edith Mary Woods, who bought 30 acres of land, which comprised the entire vlei and about 10 acres of water.

According to Kelvin Cochrane, Woods, who later became the first female journalist at the Cape Argus and the first woman to fly an aeroplane over Kenilworth Race Course, fought for the emancipation of woman and refused to pay taxes.

She lived on the south side of the vlei, where Sassmere Estate is today. "Woods later brought over a French woman, Susan Perrode, and a Dutchman, Wouter Sass. Perrode and Sass married, although they later divorced, and Perrode opened the Jolly Carp Restaurant at the vlei.

The name 'Sassmere' was derived from the surname of Sass and 'mere' from the vlei. The Jolly Carp became a famous restaurant in the Cape, renowned among French sailors and the military for, among others, its fantastic Sunday afternoon teas. The military would march from Military Road to the restaurant. This is also where Military Road got its name from.

In 1945, Woods, sold the land and moved to Camps Bay. "This was when the owner, believed to be Mr Perks, opened a riding school at the vlei, with stables and a wooden and iron house, which can still be seen," Cochrane says.



Well, now I must tell you my latest venture which has
knocked my Canada trip in the head for some time to come, but
I hope will make it ultimately possible. I have bought a
farm-- quite a big one for these parts, 100 acres of
land & 100 acres of water-- under Princess Vlei.
It is a most beautiful spot. I bought it for two friends
of mine, the French girl whom I have been taking care of for 20
years-- and a man who went bankrupt & married her. He

Letter from Edith Mary Woods - thanks to Clive Delbridge

On the other side of the vlei lived two coloured families, the Jacobs and Adriaanse families. After World War II, the father of the Jacobs family was given the land on the Eastern side to open a fruit and vegetable stall as compensation after losing an eye in the war. The Jacob's farm stall flourished for several decades and became a well known and much loved landmark, and was taken over by Mr Jacob's son. In the fifties the council took the land back from Mr Jacobs, but allowed him to continue running the stall until the seventies, when the land was taken to enable the widening of Princess George Drive.

The Nationalist victory brought changes to the area. The Government began a process of ruthlessly forcing coloured and black people removed from their homes in Cape Town, and driven out to bleak council tenements on the Cape Flats. White families who lived around Princess Vlei were also removed to make way for the housing estates of Grassy Park, Lavender Hill, Lotus River, Steenberg and Retreat.

The government of the day designated most attractive natural areas as Whites Only. But Princess Vlei posed a curious dilemma for apartheid planners. Its beauty and natural assets proclaimed that, under apartheid logic, it should be retained exclusively for white use. But, as one of the few recreational spaces with borders abutting both "white" and "coloured" group areas, it was seen as lying too close to the "coloured" Cape Flats to be used safely by whites, and so became one of the very few natural recreational spaces open to coloured and black people.

For the families traumatised by forced removal, Princess Vlei provided a welcome respite from the desolate wasteland in which they found themselves. It was a place where they could escape the growing gangsterism and crime, reunite as families, and experience some of the tranquility of nature.

During these years, Princess Vlei grew to acquire a significance in the hearts of community members quite disproportionate to its physical size. Deprived of access to most of Cape Town's recreational beaches and scenic areas, coloured people from miles around adopted Princess Vlei as their own. It was nicknamed 'Claremont Beach', and the area around the small vlei was called 'Gala land'.

However, it was neglected by the authorities, and became run down and degraded. When Princess George Drive was widened in the late seventies, there was dumping on the vlei, and became more neglected. The road also served to separate the people from the vlei. But the threat posed by the mall has reminded the residents of the value that the vlei brought to their lives, and galvanised the community to reclaim it and create a new vision for the future of Princess Vlei. Thanks to Tasmin Cupido, Princess Vlei has a rich heritage, People's Post, 24 November 2009

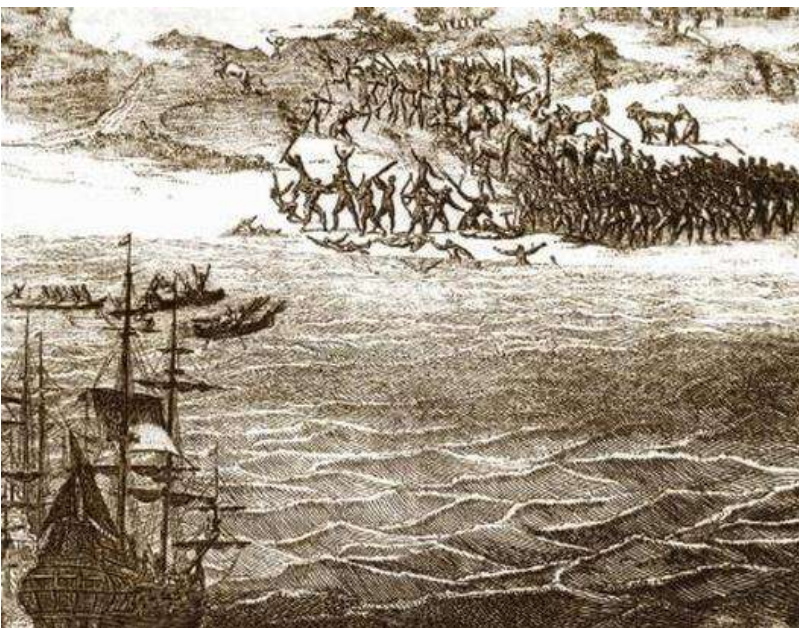
Heritage Western Cape Section 27 Provincial Heritage Site Nomination _ January 2019



The Jolly Carp was reknown for its afternoon teas (thanks to Clive Delbridge for the photo)

The legend of the Princess: a link between past and present identities

by Mea Lashbrooke



A depiction of the clash between d'Almeida and the Khoi

Stories are embedded in the fabric of our identity, especially those that are passed down through time. Their origins are long forgotten, but they remain a living link with those who went before us.

Legend arises from the narrative of a people and serves individuals as well as the collective. A legend might not be entirely believed but also it isn't totally doubted. Containing the kernel of real experience, legend remains just within the realms of possibility; but the embroidered storytelling inherent in legend stirs us in a way that a factual account might not. To remain vital and meaningful legends develop over time and so perpetuate lessons from history for each new generation. Your story, her story, their story, our story.

A legend should not be dismissed as fairy tale or myth for it is neither. Myths describe the unknowable—how the sun rises, how the leopard got spots. A fairy tale highlights consequence, morality and archetypal truths. Legend is a symbolic translation of a personal or collective experience, holding the truth of the original, but shifting it safely into the universal.

When a nation or group has its cultural identity assaulted by forces of colonialism and imperialism, these legends become even more significant as a link to the collective wisdom and experience of the now fragmented and dispossessed peoples.

The legend of Princess Vlei is one such legend, holding a thread both with the long lost Khoi and San tribes that were the first nation of our city and our country, and with the brutal encounter with European settlers which would shape history for generations to come.

The Legend of Princess Vlei

There are several versions of the legend of Princess Vlei and Little Princess Vlei, originally passed down orally by slaves at the Cape. The Constantiaberg backdrop to the vleis is known by some locals as Prinseskasteel, for the Princess is said to have lived in the cave near the top. This cave is now usually called the Elephant's Eye because the mountain resembles a sleeping elephant.) Two streams - Prinseskasteelrivier and Prinseskasteelrivier - flow from the mountain to the wetlands.

A depiction of Jan van Riebeeck's party meeting Khoi inhabitants for the first time, painted by Charles Bell (1813 - 1882)



The legend recounts that at the time when Europeans first dropped anchor at the Cape, a woman who bathed in her Vlei on the Flats - a cowherd perhaps, a lone Khoi or San woman - suffered at the hands of an invading hunter or sailor. The atrocity is variously told - violation, murder, abduction. The woman's tears were unstoppable and thus Little Princess Vlei was formed.

Within the history of the First People of South Africa, the Princess represents the dignity of a people, that which is sacred within all of us. And that was defiled. Over the centuries Europeans invaded Khoi territory, helped themselves to Khoi water supplies and cattle, and attempted to enslave both the Khoi and the San. As time went on these First People and their descendants were marginalised by modern and post-modern society. This history of conflict between invaders

and indigenous people, documented since 1488, has lent this legendary woman status. She is without doubt a 'princess'; for although research into San and Khoi culture indicates that neither the Khoi nor San recognised a hierarchy that included a princess (the San scarcely knowing hierarchy and the Khoi practising paternalism) this is a legend symbolic of degradation, disempowerment and injustice visited on the essence of a people who lived in tune with their environment.

Mid-twentieth century author Jose Berman married fact and legend in a story set in 1510. He used as his medium the documented version of a conflict between the crew of Francisco d'Almeida's vessel that was anchored at Table Bay on a return voyage to Lisbon, and the Gorachochu Khoi.

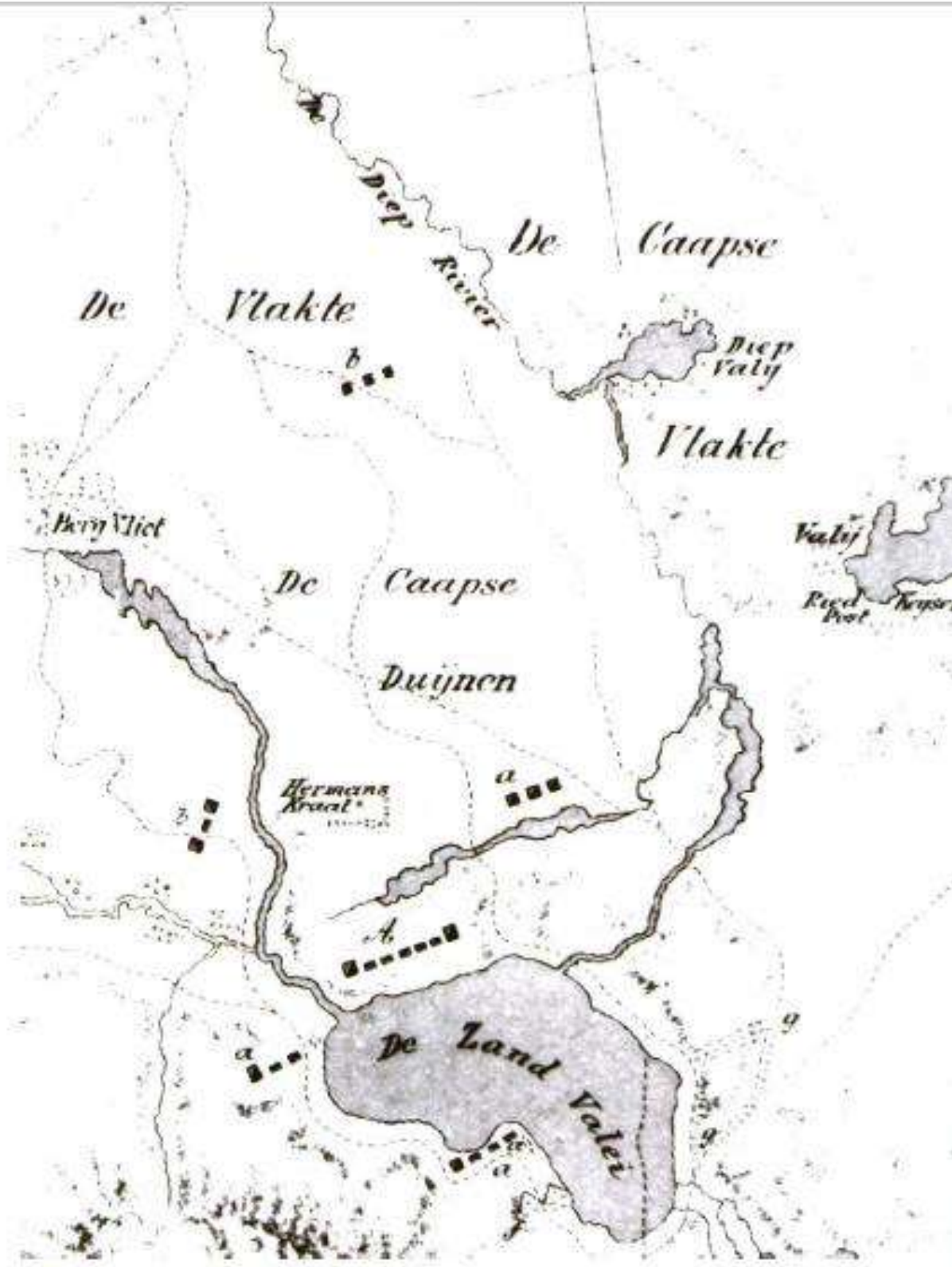
History relates that after the Portuguese had killed some fifty Khoi, in revenge for the Khoi taking more than was offered to them in a bartering transaction, near the river at what would be Observatory today, the Khoi gave chase. They killed more than sixty Portuguese on the beach at Table Bay, including d'Almeida, who died with a Khoi spear in his throat. In Portuguese history this was considered a serious defeat as not only was d'Almeida an aristocrat with connections to the King of Portugal, but the Portuguese far outnumbered the Khoi. In addition, the 59 year-old d'Almeida was hailed as a hero and was returning home to an honourable retirement. (Today this would be questioned as his political appointments in both India and on the east coast of Africa resulted in numerous bloody conflicts with the indigenous people.)

Although author Jose Berman uses the d'Almeida story, he sets his version of the Princess legend further inland than d'Almeida's crew had ventured—at Princess Vlei, where a princess, whilst taking her customary bathe in her Vlei, is abducted by a member of d'Almeida's crew. The significance of the Legend of Princess Vlei

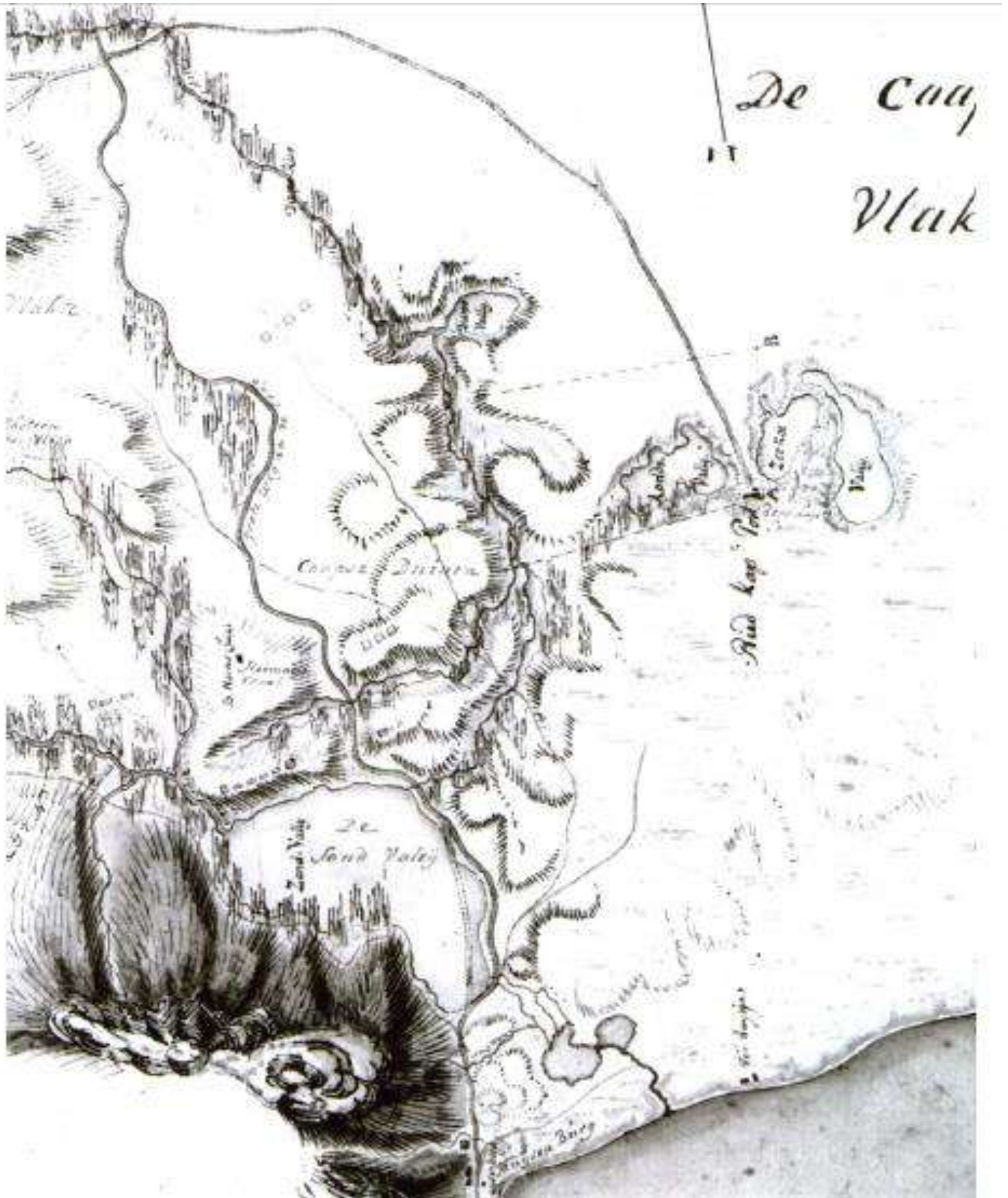
In the words of local resident Philip Bam, active contributor to both his local area and to Greater Cape Town, "Ek glo die storie wat my ma my vertel het!" The legend that holds our story is the one we must hold fast, the one to treasure. The significance of a legend is that in speaking the truth to us individually or collectively, it serves our different needs.

As community conservationist Kelvin Cochrane says, "Saving the Vlei from commercial development is a chance for the people to restore dignity to the Princess, to the Vlei, and to themselves."

Saving the Princess Vlei from commercial development will honour the Princess and the heritage that she represents, and this tradition and culture will be preserved in the city's memory. This is how we reclaim ourselves.



1600's Dutch Map of the Cape Flats where Princess Vlei was then known as Diepe Vlei



1600's Dutch Map of the Cape Flats where Princess Vlei was then known as Diepe Vlei

5. SUBMISSION BY CHIEF JANSEN OF THE COCOQUA KHOI-KHOI TRIBAL HOUSE, WESTERN CAPE KHOISAN LEADER CAPEKHOI/KCHDC TO THE PRINCESS VLEI FORUM HERITAGE

SUBMISSION

BY CHIEF JOHN JANSEN

COCOQUA KHOI-KHOI TRIBAL HOUSE

WESTERN CAPE KHOISAN LEADER CAPEKHOI/KCHDC

To the **PRINCESS VLEI FORUM HERITAGE COMMITTEE** 11 JULY 2019

This submission by Chief John Jansen is endorsed by the National Khoi Khoi and San movement, that consists of the following 23 Khoi Khoi and San tribes (so-called 'Khoisan'):

1. Cochoqua Tribe	2. Attaqua tribe	3. Outeniqua Tribe
4. Ghainoqua tribe	5. Gouriqua Tribe	6. Inqua Tribe
7. Humcumqua Tribe	8. Gamkwa Tribe	9. Gonaqua Tribe
10. Hessequa RIBE	11. Ghamtoors tribe	12. Ghamtobekwa
13. Goringhaicona	14. Ghainoqua tribe Boland /Overberg	15. Attaqua Zoar tribe
16. Goringhaiqua Tribe	17. Cumisoqua Tribe	18. Coboqua tribe
19. Bamnoqua Tribe	20. Namaqua Tribe	21. Songqua Tribe
22. Geisiqua Tribe	23. Gam Namaqua Tribe	

SUBMISSION: RESTORING PRINCESS VLEI AND HER PEOPLES

According to the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), SA is the third most bio-diverse country in the world. It is also the only country in the world to contain an entire floral kingdom. The Cape Peninsula, for example, has more plant species within its 22 000 hectares than the whole British Isles or New Zealand. Furthermore, Conservation International in 1998, identified South Africa as one of the seventeen mega-diverse countries in the world - countries where most of the Earth's species and high numbers of endemic species flourish.

South Africa's bio / mega-diversity plays a critical role in meeting human needs as well as maintaining the ecological processes, upon which our country and ultimately, the planet's survival depends. But this abundant bio/ mega-diversity is now threatened by the most serious environmental crisis that our planet has ever faced, namely climate change.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem services (IPBES)¹ released a groundbreaking report compiled by 145 experts from 50 countries. The Chair of the IPBES confirmed: *“The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.”*

The Report also tells us that *“it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global,”* he said. *“Through ‘transformative change’, nature can still be conserved, restored and used sustainably.*

The Report assesses changes over the past five decades, providing a context of the relationship between economic development its impacts on nature. It also offers a range of possible scenarios for the coming decades.

Based on the systematic review of about 15,000 scientific and government sources, the Report also draws (for the first time ever at this scale) on indigenous and local knowledge, particularly addressing issues relevant to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

“Biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people are our common heritage and humanity’s most important life-supporting ‘safety net’. But our safety net is stretched almost to breaking point,” said Prof. Sandra Díaz (Argentina), who co-chaired the Assessment. *“The diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems, as well as many fundamental contributions we derive from nature, are declining fast, although we still have the means to ensure a sustainable future for people and the planet.”*

The Report finds that around 1 million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades, more than ever before in human history. The report lists five direct drivers of change in nature with the largest relative global impacts so far. The report lists them as follows: (1) changes in land and sea use; (2) direct exploitation of organisms; (3) climate change; (4) pollution and (5) invasive alien species.

The Report notes that, since 1980, greenhouse gas emissions have doubled, raising average global temperatures by at least 0.7 degrees Celsius – with climate change already impacting nature from the level of ecosystems to that of genetics – impacts expected to increase over the coming decades, in some cases surpassing the impact of land and sea use change and other drivers.

Other notable findings of the Report include:

- Three-quarters of the land-based environment and about 66% of the marine environment have been significantly altered by human actions. On average these trends have been less severe or avoided in areas held or managed by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

- Urban areas have more than doubled since 1992.

So what does this serious crisis mean for Princess Vlei? The Vlei, too, is an important indigenous ecological area where the environment and the Khoi-khoi peoples’ history are deeply interlinked. It holds 4000 indigenous plant species, amongst them critically endangered species. This big body of

¹ The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is an independent intergovernmental body, established by member States in 2012. The objective of IPBES is to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.

water is a critical resource in an increasingly water-scarce province. Interlinked with this ecological importance, is the cultural heritage of the Khoi-Khoi people, as exemplified by the Legend of the Princess that has endured for centuries.

The IPBES and various United Nations reports show that the impacts of destruction are reduced in earlier habitats held or managed by indigenous peoples or local communities. The Khoi-Khoi people of the Cape Flats want to re-establish that role of stewardship for both Princess Vlei and our cultural heritage, with which it has been intimately connected for centuries.

Our Cape Flats communities face extreme social and historical challenges such as loss of identity, land, resources and way of life. We need the restoration of our cultural and ecological heritage in order to rebuild a semblance of our past to ensure our children's future. Our past is of a people whose lived values of sustainable use of resources, care for and stewardship of the environment. The restoration of Princess Vlei through national heritage status can abate the social ills plaguing our communities and ensure the future of our children.

Chief John Jansen

Chair: Western Cape Council: KCHDC (Cape Khoi)

The photographs that follow document cultural and environmental activities conducted at Princess Vlei by members of the Princess Vlei Forum.



Leaders of the National Cape Khoi/ Khoi Cultural Heritage Development Council (KCHDC) at the inauguration of the Princess Vlei.

Emma Oliver (member of Princess Vlei Forum) speaking at the inauguration while Chief Mary Jansen (Programme Director) and Bradley van Sitter (Khoisan activist and 2019 SONA prayer / praise singer) among other community members present.

The images below show the clean-up at and planting of indigenous trees at Princess Vlei.



CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



PRINCESS VLEI

EASTERN SHORE PRECINCT



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
HERITAGE SECTION
STAD KAAPSTAD

Heritage section portfolio



ZONE 2 MEDIUM INTENSITY Recreation & Entertainment

1. Cafeteria with outdoor seating
2. Market stand
3. Play
4. Fishing
5. Boat area
6. Picnic area
7. Jetty
fishing, boating, water sports,
relaxing of water edge
8. Clubhouse/terrace

ZONE 3 PASSIVE RECREATION

1. Pathways
Pathways to conservation, informal play,
walking, jogging, picnicking



DESIGN OBJECTIVES

1. User safety and surveillance
2. Increase diversity of recreation opportunities
3. Visual protection
4. Increase flow
5. Public access to water

MOBILITY NETWORK

Wide walkway/roadway at water edge
Informal meandering pathways

POSSIBLE TREE SPECIES

Acacia saligna
Pinus
Salix caprea



Planting of Acacia saligna trees along the edge of the wetland.



Planting of Pinus trees along the edge.

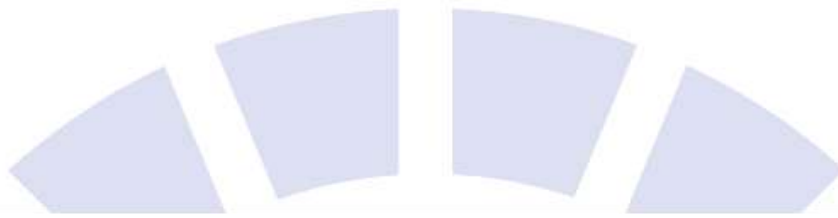


Multiple views of the site with direct access to water edge.

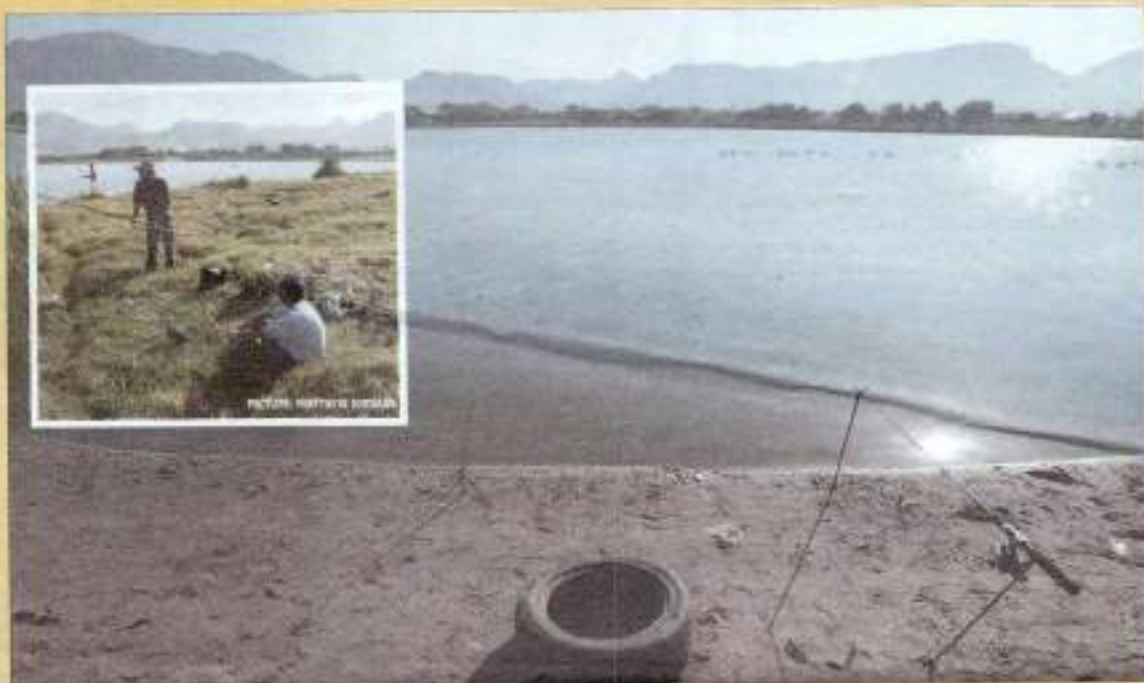


The site presents more opportunities for passive recreation, including picnicking and fishing.

7. PRESS COVERAGE



September 8, 2012



UNDER THREAT: There has been an outcry over plans to build a shopping mall at Princess Vlei. The community from the surrounding areas is against the building of a mall because they have been making use of the vlei for recreational purposes for many years. Godfrey Adams and Christopher Orgill, top left, have been fishing at the vlei for years now.

SAVING THE VLEI: Cassidy Lewis, left, and Micheala Adriaans attended a picnic last weekend for supporters of a campaign against the plans to build a shopping mall at the vlei.

PICTURES: DAVID RITCHIE

Help save Princess Vlei and honour memory of the princess

BRIDGET PITT

jbj saturday

ANYONE who grew up in Grassy Park will tell you stories about swimming in Princess Vlei.

"Our mothers said to us, 'Don't go swimming in Princess Vlei. The princess takes one life every year because she is so angry about what happened to her.'"

Legend has it that a Khoisan princess lived in the mountains in a cave called Princeskasteel,

(Princess Castle), which is now known as Elephant's Eye. In those days, the land teemed with animals, sweet water ran from the mountains, flamingos crowded the wetlands and hippos wallowed in the shallows – that's how Zoeloevlei got its name, because "seekoei" is Afrikaans for hippo.

The princess lived in a land of great beauty, and her favourite spot was Princess Vlei, where she loved to bathe. But one day, while she was swimming, some men who had come from Portugal on a ship, grabbed her. Some say they killed her, some say that they just

hurt her. All of them say that the tears she shed formed the Little Princess, the small vlei. Whatever the story, Princess Vlei is still one of our most beautiful vleis.

Sadly, it became polluted when Prince George Drive was upgraded. People started a project called "Dressing the Princess", to replant the fynbos that was once there and make the vlei beautiful again. Now there are plans to build a mall beside the vlei. Many people are trying to save our vlei and honour the memory of the princess.

● Bridget Pitt is a member of

WIN WITH JBJ

Draw a picture of what you think the Khoisan princess of Princess Vlei looked like. We'll have three age groups – up to six years old, seven to 10, and from 10 up. The winners will be entertained to a tea party by Simon Mantel at his Mantelli biscuit factory at Westlake.

Drop off your entries with Sonnia Brock at Newspaper House, 122 St George's Mall, or e-mail them to sonnia.brock@inl.co.za to reach us by noon on Friday. Entries can also be dropped off at the League of the Friends of the Blind, in 1st Ave, Grassy Park.

the Princess Vlei Forum which was formed to rehabilitate the vlei and save it from commercial development.

TEAM WORK: Two schoolboys finish planting their trees.



Sun shines on the vlei as schoolkids gather to plant trees for Arbor Day

JBJ REPORTER

IT WAS a beautiful sunny day at Princess Vlei, as more than 100 pupils from John Graham Primary and Lotus River High gathered to plant trees for Arbor day.

The children worked in teams of 10 to plant 50 trees and 150 plants.

The schoolchildren said how much they love the vlei, and how important it was to conserve natural spaces.

Nishaat Bassier said: "Princess Vlei is a beautiful place with all those trees that are there. We hope they don't destroy it by building a big, huge, tall mall... we need those trees."

Huda Adams said: "Princess

Vlei is just one of those places that needs to be looked after in a kind and caring manner."

Nikita January, from Lotus River High, said: "I am looking forward to showing my own children pictures of how much fun I had growing up near the vlei and telling them how my father always used to take me to the vlei to have fun or just to relax."

celebrated on
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potum
and develop
"Many of the young
benefiting from this

Mon June 10/13

Religious leaders fight vlei mall plan

Michelle Jones

RELIGIOUS leaders working in the areas around Princess Vlei have banded together to lobby city and provincial authorities to scrap a proposal to develop a shopping mall there.

About 20 community religious leaders gathered in Retreat yesterday to discuss fighting the mall.

John Oliver, the director of the Western Cape Religious Leaders' Forum, said the Princess Vlei Forum was considering taking legal action against the Western Cape government.

The Princess Vlei Forum is opposed to a proposal to build a private shopping mall on public land flanking the vleis.

Oliver said the purpose of yesterday's meeting was "to create a pressure group to say to the authorities

that, from a religious perspective, we can't have a shopping mall built here. It is a sacred site which has a powerful memory and history for people of faith."

"The religious community want to wave a flag that there is a divine balance which is being upset."

Adam Cloete, the head of the Cochuqua tribe, said there were sufficient shopping centres, but not enough places for people to remember their heritage.

"Our forefathers' footprints were there. This is a beautiful site and the tenants will have the benefit rather than the people."

Ebrahim Karriem, an imam from the Steenberg area, said: "We have to protect our environment. Our environment plays a big role in the upliftment of the community"

michelle.jones@inl.co.za

Suzman to face

Leila Samuels
Justice Writer

THE Judicial Commission (JSC) and choose" are relevant new judges, as Helen Suzman.

The found that the commission's interview "elevated" the gender composition of the judiciary to a point that is an appointment one white male from the Western Cape.

This is as papers the first at the Western Cape Court last week.

It is clear that the process of deciding who to appoint to the bench will be a big test for the Western Cape.



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Plans afoot to preserve heritage of Princess Vlei

CT 8/12/15

Environment Writer

THEY united to fight proposals to build a shopping mall and taxi rank in one of the few green lungs on the Cape Flats.

Now, three years later, with that battle won, the Princess Vlei Forum will sign an agreement with the city council tomorrow that will enable residents to work with the council in managing the Greater Princess Vlei Conservation Area.

Proposals to build the mall first surfaced in the late 1990s in the form of an unsolicited bid to the City and were met with strong opposition. Finally in March last year, the council decided to scrap plans for the mall.

Forum secretary Bridget Pitt said yesterday the forum had been formed in 2012 to co-ordinate the efforts by local residents and NGOs to oppose the building of the mall, and later had come up with a different vision for Princess Vlei that was closer to what the community wanted.

"Since the March 2014 victory, the forum has focused on exploring ways to rehabilitate, upgrade and improve the management of the

site. The memorandum of agreement will enable the forum to work with the City, streamline stakeholder engagement and help in mobilising funding," Pitt said.

The forum held workshops with local residents to come up with ideas of what they would like to see at Princess Vlei.

"In a nutshell, the values people came up with were about heritage and nature. They were proposing rehabilitation of the natural processes and the rehabilitation of facilities so they could enjoy the area. There was also a need to have some acknowledgement of the Khoisan heritage. The City has not committed to anything yet, but it has a draft plan which allows for jetties, walkways and paths, and the upgrading of braai facilities. There is a strong emphasis on rehabilitation of the fynbos and the reeds to improve water quality," Pitt said.

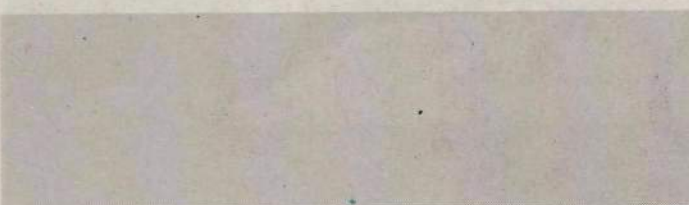
The draft plan proposes to upgrade and develop certain areas around the vlei as well.

"We flagged these because they would need to be sensitively managed. There could be room for a restaurant development, but it must not encroach on the vlei itself."



Exciting times

Task Force actress Amanda du Pont is finally getting her due
TV GUIDE



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DESIGN
Pilot's P

HENRIËTTE GELDENHUYS

ASTOUNDED, astonished and delighted were just some of the reactions from opponents of plans for development at Princess Vlei, who yesterday welcomed news of the city's sudden about-turn.

Weekend Argus announced exclusively yesterday that the city had halted plans to sell part of Princess Vlei to mall developers, putting an end to a contentious stand-off that has dragged on for more than 15 years.

The development was to have included a shopping mall, car park and taxi rank, but the plan was strongly opposed by environmental lobby groups and local residents who use the green area for ceremonies and recreation.

At the site yesterday, deputy mayor Ian Neilson helped turn what was to have been a protest into a celebration when he attended to explain the city's decision. Tents were erected where members of organisations opposing the development gathered. People flew kites, there was food on sale and musical entertainment.

Also at the scene was Hennie van Wyk, chief of the Karaxougua Khoisan tribe, who commended the city for its "positive" decision.

He said the Khoisan were the original owners of Princess Vlei and that the development would have created a "concrete jungle" at a place the Khoisan considered "sacred".

Members of the Southern African Faith Community Environmental Institute were



VICTORY: Chief of the Karaxougua Khoisan tribe, Hennie van Wyk, next to the symbolic grave of a Khoisan princess.

PICTURE: LEON LESTRADE

also there. The institute's eco congregation co-ordinator Kate Davies said the organisation

was pleased that local businesses from Grassy Park and Lotus River would also

retain the clientele they feared losing if a shopping centre was built there.

Phillip Bam, chairman of the Lotus River and Grassy Park Residents and Ratepayers' Association, said the city had made a "great decision".

He said people visited Princess Vlei to picnic, fish and be baptised, and that a mall development would have "placed concrete on a sensitive environmental space".

Neilson said on Friday that the city "has listened to the community" and decided that the proposal for a shopping centre on the Princess Vlei land was "inappropriate".

He added that the city looked forward to discussions with the communities surrounding Princess Vlei about "an alternative vision" for the

use of the area.

Bridget Pitt, from the Princess Vlei Forum, said they were delighted at the decision, which was "testimony to the vision people have for the area".

Graham Noble, executive committee member of the Greater Cape Town Civic Alliance, said: "I'm astounded. This is fantastic news. We've been fighting so hard to convince the city and the provincial government of the foolishness of the project."

The development plan was a "terrible idea" from an ecological, sociological and cultural point of view, he said.

Weekend Argus reported yesterday that Insight Property Developers would be compensated for the project's cancellation.

ay. The competition is a test of the scouts
PICTURE: JASON BOUD

kristen.vanschie@mt.co.za

Delight at Princess Vlei decision

Sunday Argus
23/03/14

ON - AUCTION - AUCTION - AUCTION
TY CERTIFIED DIAMONDS -
PATEK PHILIPPE - ROLEX -

Cape Dentures

A dental practice devoted to dentures

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mouthpiece veneers • teeth whitening • tooth coloured fillings

Plans afoot to preserve heritage of Princess Vlei

Environment Writer

THEY united to fight proposals to build a shopping mall and taxi rank in one of the few green lungs on the Cape Flats.

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The draft plan proposes to upgrade and develop certain areas around the vlei as well.

"We flagged these because they would need to be sensitively managed. There could be room for a restaurant development, but it must not encroach on the vlei itself."

Hill destroyed 12 shacks and left 50 people
Picture: COURTNEY AFRICA

"I first woke up the rest of my family at about 3am. I first heard sounds which I thought were like gun shots. Later,

there was smoke. I tried using water but the blaze was too much for me. I even threw sand on the fire but it did not help.

Meanwhile, a 26-year-old man died during a shack fire in the KTC informal settlement near Nyanga on Saturday.

"The man was sleeping alone in a shack when it caught fire at about 5am on Saturday. He succumbed in the fire. Five shacks were also destroyed in this fire," police spokesman PC Van Wyk said yesterday.
siyavuya.mzantsi@inl.co.za

Cape Times 24/03/14 Civic alliance wants Princess Vlei rezoned as a public park

Siyavuya Mzantsi

CIVIC group, the Greater Cape Town Civic Alliance, says it will approach the city today to rezone Princess Vlei as a public space.

This follows the city's decision to cancel the proposed sale of a portion of the land at Princess Vlei where developers wanted to build a shopping centre.

"We are delighted about the news that it won't continue with its plans to build a shopping centre in Princess Vlei," alliance spokesman Graham Noble said yesterday. "(It's) one of the places that is significant in the history of the Khoi people. It's one of the few

in this country that reflects the history of the Khoi.

"We will now approach the city and we want it to declare (the land at Princess Vlei) as a public park. It is important that Princess Vlei is accessible to all residents," he said.

Deputy mayor Ian Neilson said the city has been in discussions with the prospective

developer over the past year to investigate alternatives to the proposed development.

He said the only option was to cancel the proposed sale of the land and compensate the developer for the costs that he had incurred on the project. The city could not yet state the value of the compensation.

siyavuya.mzantsi@inl.co.za

REBECCA JACKMAN

AFTER more than a year of trying to engage in an open conversation with the City of Cape Town, the Princess Vlei Forum may soon be getting the dialogue it feels it deserves.

Following the Weekend Argus's article last week highlighting the forum's ongoing battle to improve and protect the currently neglected wetland area, deputy mayor of Cape Town Ian Neilson agreed to speak on the city's behalf.

"I will admit we have been fairly quiet on this matter, but I think now is the time to engage on a broader scale," he told Weekend Argus this week.

"Everyone recognises that Princess Vlei is a degraded site and something needs to be done about it, but the question is what."

He reiterated that the issue went back 15 years and it was important to look back to understand the situation now. The City of Cape Town as it is today was put into place in 2000, so the original rezoning rights were awarded to the potential developers by the South Peninsula Municipality, as it was, in 1998.

"Once they (the developers) had got that, the city would then negotiate a price with them. We inherited that situation. It's no longer a case of private negotiation now."

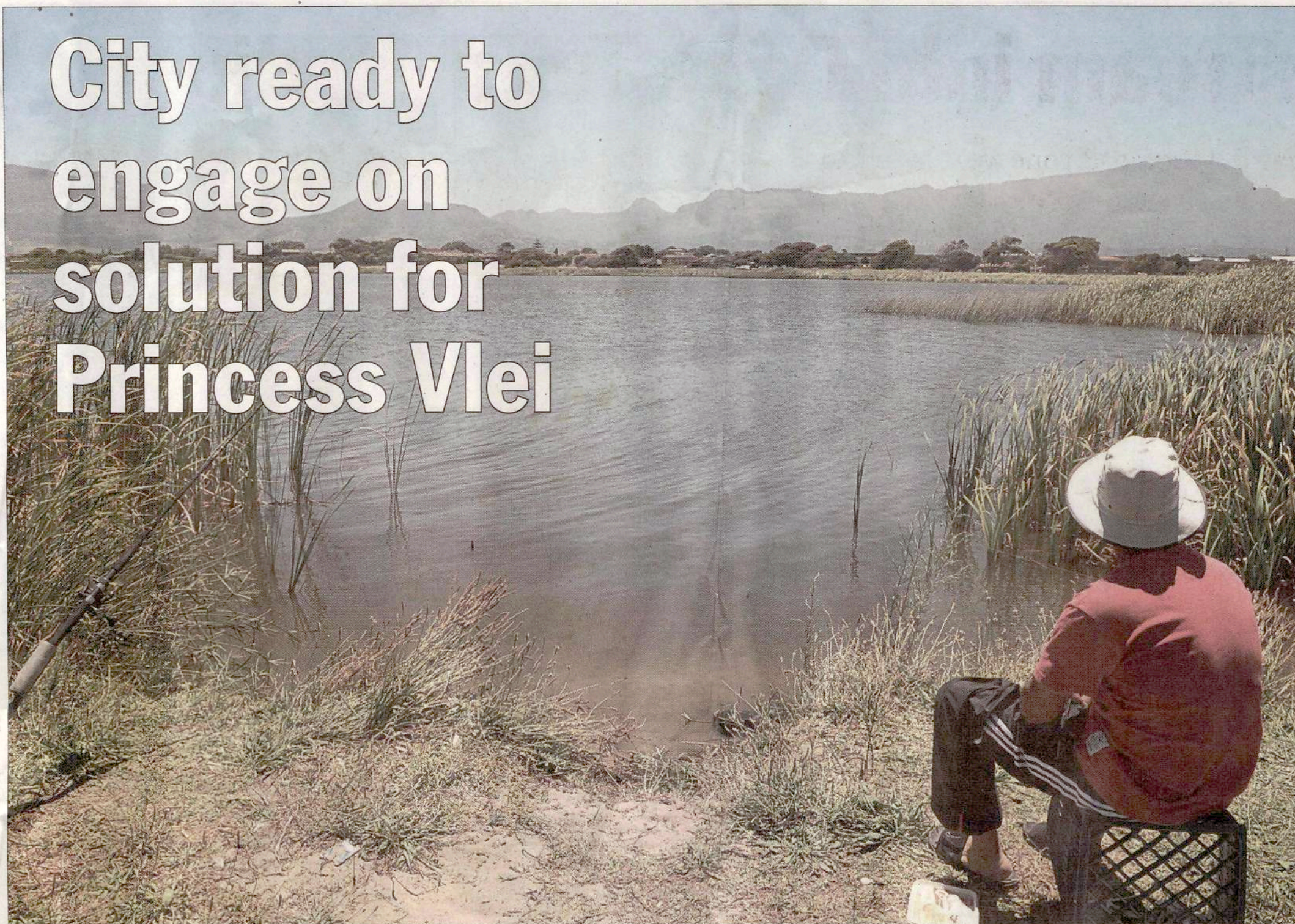
He added that there were new laws and therefore a new process that needed to take place, which included public participation. But Neilson wished to look at all options with all parties.

"We need to see whether there are options before going to public process, without incurring unnecessary costs and further public unhappiness," he said.

He said the developers had acted in good faith over the years and that the process, including proposals and designs, had cost them "millions". The developers declined to speak to Weekend Argus.

"We wish to make it clear that we welcome any opportunity to engage with the city in discussing the future of Princess Vlei, and have been attempting unsuccessfully to do so for over a year," said secretary of the Princess Vlei Forum, Bridget Pitt.

She added, on behalf of the forum, that she failed to see



WETLANDS: Princess Vlei and surrounding wetland areas have long been neglected, but the city has finally agreed to enter into open dialogue with potential developers and those wishing to preserve the area.

what these millions had been spent on.

"The recent floods in Cape Town displaced several thousand residents and, according to the mayor as quoted in the Cape Times, cost the city more than R3 million," she said.

"Expert predictions suggest that with global warming such extreme weather occurrences will increase in the future. By

compromising natural water systems which can mitigate against flooding, such as Princess Vlei, the city may be considerably increasing its own disaster management expenses."

Despite Neilson's promise to engage in an open, informal discussion with developers, "activists" including the forum and other members of the com-

munity are still concerned they could be kept waiting even longer for the open dialogue they had been requesting for such a long time.

Pitt said that while they were pleased the city was now willing to engage in discussion around the issue, they still had concerns about when that would actually happen. Neilson said he couldn't predict a time

frame at this stage because of the complexity of the matter.

Other concerns raised by the forum included the issue of exactly when these meetings would take place and who would be attending; a request for transparency from the city, as the developers in question had allegedly changed names and ownership; the fact that the city had previously denied the

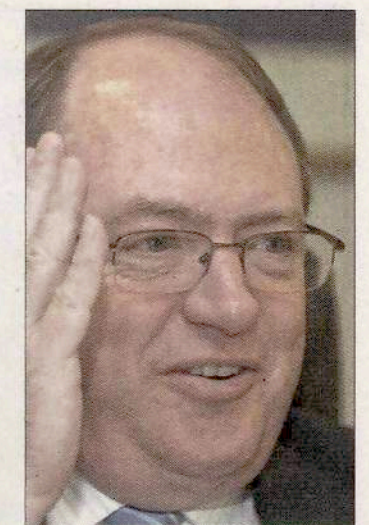
forum meetings due to a "pending legal case"; and that Neilson had said the claims that the proposed mall would destroy the area were overstated.

The legal case in question is an investigation allegedly being conducted by the Hawks regarding irregularities in the bid process.

"We are not contending that the development should not go

ahead because of the irregularities, but because we contend that developing the mall is an inappropriate use of the space and constitutes a serious abuse of our environmental and cultural heritage and our public open space," said Pitt, adding that the charges in question were not laid by the forum.

And with regards to "overstated" effects, Pitt said the



COMPLEX ISSUE: Deputy mayor Ian Neilson can't predict when the Princess Vlei issue will be resolved.

PICTURE: ADRIAN DE KOCK

mall would occupy most of the eastern shore of the vlei, which is the shore with the highest biodiversity, heritage, aesthetic and spiritual value.

Johannes Burger, ward councillor for the area surrounding Princess Vlei, said the vlei might be a hot topic, but people must also realise that there was a lot going on in the Retreat area besides that.

He emphasised that the Princess Vlei issue was very important, but people failed to realise that there were other surrounding wetlands that were also neglected.

"Nobody talks about the other wetlands," he said.

"When I speak about the wetlands it includes all of them."

"We need to talk about all those other areas of wetlands. They are part and parcel of that issue. You cannot butter half of your slice of bread and not the other."

Burger has been "part and parcel" of the area for the past 50 years.

He said the Cape Flats was part of his life and he wanted to protect it – all of it.

He said he was very familiar with the proposals for Princess Vlei, but the day he would be most interested in was the day somebody came and said: "This is what we can do for all the wetlands."

"It's not just one part of the community that must be uplifted, the whole area needs to be uplifted," he said.

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SAVING PRINCESS VLEI

Signing the 'end of a rocky road'

Raphael Wolf

THE City and the Princess Vlei Forum's recent signing of a Memorandum of Agreement represents a significant milestone in the campaign to save Princess Vlei from having a shopping mall built there, forum members say.

Belinda Walker, Mayco committee member for Community Services and Special Projects, signed it on behalf of the City, with forum chairperson Philip Bam doing so on behalf of the forum.

They signed the memorandum at a ceremony opened by Bishop Christopher Gregorowski with a prayer at the vlei.

The forum's press secretary Bridget Pitt said the signing enabled the forum to represent the community's interests in managing the vlei and assisting in mobilising funding for improvements to the site.

"The Memorandum of

Agreement will enable the forum to work with the City in managing the Greater Princess Vlei Conservation Area (GPVCA) and streamline the process of stakeholder engagement in the area," she said.

The signing follows the City's decision in March 2014 to scrap a developer's plans to build a mall on the vlei's banks.

The scrapping came after a sustained campaign against the construction of the mall.

The forum led the campaign, supported by communities and organisations across the City.

Pitt said the forum was formed in 2012 to co-ordinate efforts to oppose construction of the mall and to develop an alternative community vision for the vlei site.

It has focused on exploring ways to rehabilitate, upgrade and improve the management

of the site.

Bam said the struggle to save the vlei was testament to what could be achieved through co-operation.

Walker said the signing marked the end of a rocky road.

"You could not invent a more beautiful site than this vlei with the mountain behind it... this agreement marks a foundation stone to build not a shopping mall, but a place for the whole family to come in safety."

Bam paid tribute to the late John Oliver, a much respected founder member of the forum.

Walker and Ward 72 councillor Kevin Southgate represented the City, while Bam and forum secretary Lorna Houston represented the forum, with forum member Paramount Chief Hennie van Wyk from the Gorachouqua tribe as guest of honour at the signing.

raphael.wolf@inl.co.za



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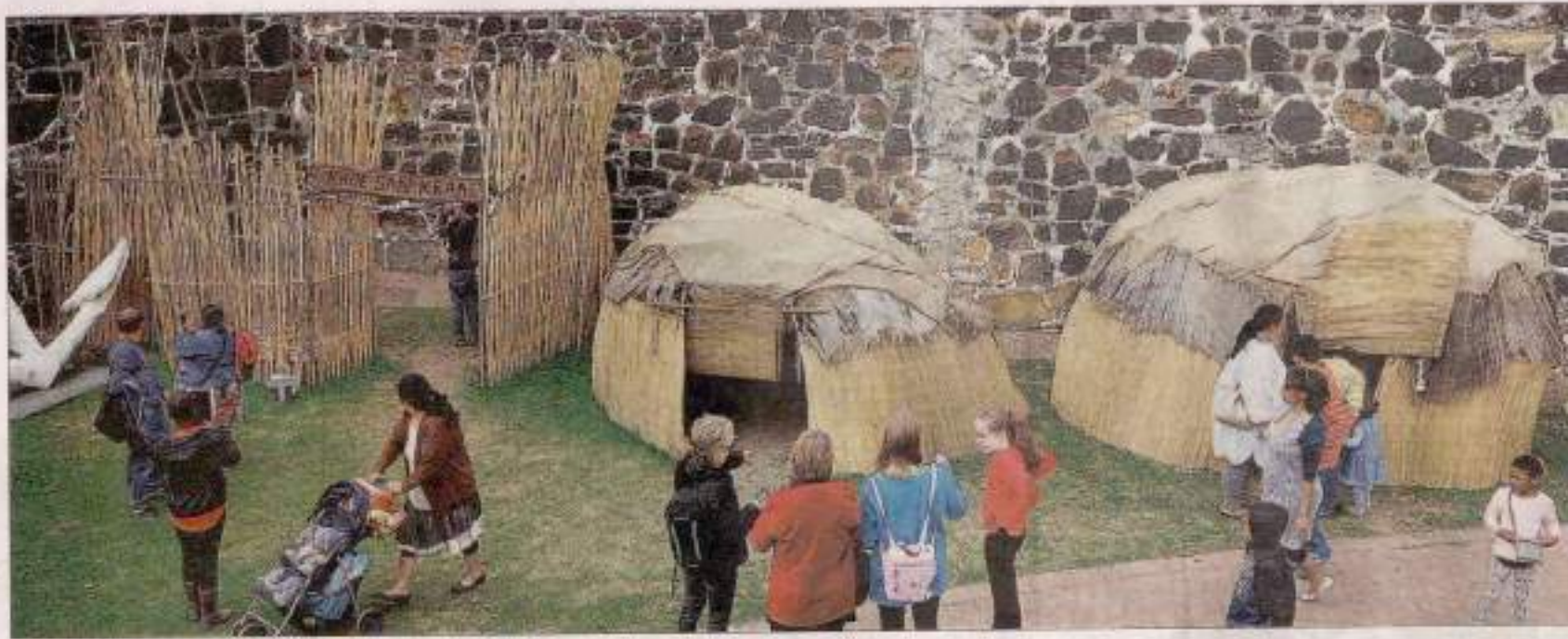
Through toy
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the 270 patients
Christmas.

The children
spoilt with a s
from volunteers
superheroes suc
Spider-Man and
"leapt" from the
as bedridden
watched through
windows.



AGREEING: At a memorandum of agreement signing at Princess Vlei are from left Bishop Christopher Gregorowski, councillor Belinda Walker, Princess Vlei Forum chairperson Philip Bam, councillor Kevin Southgate, Paramount Chief Hennie van Wyk and Lorna Houston.

Picture: MALCOLM CAMPBELL



HERITAGE: Kraals and huts were set up at the Castle of Good Hope.



Picture: COURTNEY AFRICA CONSERVATION: A mini-parade at Princess Vlei was part of their Heritage Day programme. Picture: COURTNEY AFRICA

SA'S RICH HERITAGE CELEBRATED

Spirit of ubuntu needed nationwide



ACROBATIC: Dancers from Indoni Academy performed Inkululeko at the museum.

Michael Nkhalane

DEPUTY President Cyril Ramaphosa has urged South Africans, black and white, to strive together to build a new and united society.

"The spirit of ubuntu needs to permeate everything we do," Ramaphosa said at the Kgosi Galeshewe stadium in the Northern Cape, at a Heritage Day event. This year's theme was "Celebrating our Human Treasures by Asserting our African Identity".

Ramaphosa said: "Ubuntu teaches us that we can only affirm our own humanity by recognising the humanity of others."

He warned that South Africa would not flourish if extreme inequality, high levels of joblessness, stealing from the poor and conspicuous consumption in a sea of poverty was not ended.

"The seeds of our economic renaissance will be rooted in a cultural revolution that will rekindle the values of kindness, generosity, selflessness and magnanimity."

"By paying closer attention to indigenous knowledge, traditional ways of mediating conflict and African restora-

tive justice, we stand a better chance of ending the unacceptably high levels of violence in our society," he said.

Ramaphosa paid homage to the many young people researching and preserving indigenous knowledge.

"We hold Kgosi Galeshewe dear in our hearts for leading the Ba Tlaping people against colonial subjugation and injustice," he said, adding that Galeshewe's name evokes the spirit of other struggle kings.

"They inspired generations of liberation stalwarts like Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, Sol Plaatje, Nelson Mandela, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, Braam Fischer, Helen Joseph, Dorothy Nyembe and many more."

"They bestowed upon us a rich heritage that defines our nationhood, values and aspirations," he said.

Millions of South Africans marked Heritage Day yesterday.

The Robben Island Museum (RIM) in partnership with the National Department of Tourism hosted an Open Day, where 1600 South Africans were given free trips to the island.

RIM spokesperson Nomonde Ndlangu said: "People were so excited, not to mention chil-

dren. Parents could not contain their excitement and said they would never miss out on such an opportunity."

"The island is always filled with tourists. By giving away those tickets, we were giving locals the opportunity to visit the island."

"It is embarrassing for a South African to be told by a tourist how beautiful Robben Island is. We're glad all the tickets were used," she said.

The Castle of Good Hope exhibited Khoi and other traditional art, while Iziko Museum's Slave Lodge exhibited traditional "coons" or "Idopee" attire. Skeletons on display at the museum had children fascinated.

The League of the Friends of the Blind and Fairmount High School girl corps led a mini-parade at Princess Vlei.

Imbo Traditional Dancers leader, Buyiswa Mawabo, said it was not good that heritage was celebrated only on the 24th.

"It is for this reason that we are losing our culture. We don't take pride in who we are. People will tell you that this day is a brain day. Where is that coming from?"

michael.nkhalane@ntl.co.za



MARCH: The League of the Friends of the Blind and Fairmount High School girls corps led a mini-parade at Princess Vlei. Picture: COURTNEY AFRICA



TRADITIONAL: Esther Mnguni showing Cyril Ramaphosa her traditional art in the Northern Cape. Picture: SIYASANGA MBAMBANI



BONES: Skeletons fascinated children at the Iziko Museum. Picture: LEON LESTRADE

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■ Lotus River High pupils are from left, Nikita January, Taric Cader, Steven Brown, Chloe Broadway, Tammy Sasman and Daniel Hector.



■ Everyone enjoying tea.



■ Left: Cecilia Johnson recites her poem.



■ Right: The tree planting ceremony with Sophie Norling, centre, her daughter Sylvia and Philip Bam.



Planting trees at Vlei in honour of women

BRIDGET PITT

The Khoi Princess of Princess Vlei would have been happy to see the gathering of remarkable women and community elders on her shores at a Women's Day event hosted by the Princess Vlei Forum.

The forum is an association of concerned community members and environmentalists to protect the Vlei from the threat of the shopping mall development, which was approved by MEC Anton Bredell earlier this year.

Women elders from the community and three old age homes Douglas Murray in Retreat, Lotus Place and Mandolin Place in Steenberg, gathered to plant three milkwood trees to honour strong South African women, past and present. One of the guests was Sophie Norling, 100, a passionate nature lover from Retreat.

She planted the first milkwood tree in her honour. The other two milkwood trees, planted by Joan Evans, 82, of Plumstead and Cecilia Johnson, 88, from Grassy Park, were in honour of the Khoi Princess, and Saartjie Baartman. Friday August 10 marked the 10th anniversary of the return of Baartman's remains to South Africa.

The women enjoyed a tea party at LOFOB hall in Grassy Park, hosted by Menngos, an organisation devoted to promoting local small enterprises. Menngos also supplied posies from flower-growing projects in Lavender Hill and Retreat.

At the gathering, Mrs Norling and other guests were invited to share their memories of the area around Princess Vlei. Mrs Norling spoke about raising her children at the Langvlei in Retreat, and

described how much she valued the natural beauty of the vleis. She thanked God for blessing her with a long life, family, and a long happy marriage to her husband who died in his 90s.

"I am very passionate about saving the Princess Vlei, because that is where my kids grew up," she said.

John Pietersen, 89, has lived near the Princess Vlei his whole life, and remembers swimming there and taking his horses to cool down in the water. He recounted the popular legend that the Khoi Princess had, on her death, become a mermaid who would lure young men to their death if they swam in the wrong part of the vlei.

"When we grew up, there were proteas growing everywhere in this area. We used to pick them, and eat veldkos from the bulbs - in those days we did not know we were damaging the environment." He described how Zeekoevlei dried up from a drought in 1982, and how a Mr White would give the children rides in his aeroplane.

Mr Johnson described how he would travel into town with his parents, who were farmers, to sell vegetables. He would be given half a crown, which he spent on "boeremusiek" records.

Cecilia Johnson, who has spent

64 of her 88 years near the vlei, recited a poem that she'd written to express the pleasure that the serenity of the vlei brought to her.

*My Haven of Refuge I found
Where the carp and the trout abound;
Where the Weeping Willow softly sway.
This dear Reader, is Princess Vlei.*

Pupils from Lotus River High School and Cedar House School were there to serve the food.

Nikita January, from Lotus River, explained that she is part of an environmental group at the school, which has been extensively involved in projects to rehabilitate and save the Vlei from unwanted development.

"I'm totally against the mall being developed at Princess Vlei," she said.

"As a teenager, I love malls, but we have enough to keep us going. We need nature, without nature, we would have no life. We are very committed to saving the Princess Vlei."

Philip Bam assured the guests that the Forum would engage the community in fighting to protect the Vlei. "Those of you who love the Princess Vlei, who grew up there, know that we will fight to save the Vlei. No mall, no taxi rank will be built on our beloved Vlei."

● Bridget Pitt is the spokesperson for Princess Vlei Forum.

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Newspaper House
122 St George's Mall
Cape Town 8001
PO Box 1983,
Cape Town 8000

EDITORIAL

Switchboard 021 488 4911
Fax 021 488 4615

Editor
Chantel Erfort
Telephone 021 488 4230
Email chantel.erfort@inl.co.za

News Editor
Brian Joss
Telephone 021 488 4608
Email brian.joss@inl.co.za

Reporters
Raphael Wolf
Telephone 021 488 4605
Cellphone 079 505 2927
Email raphael.wolf@inl.co.za

Roshan Abrahams
Telephone 021 488 4019
Email roshan.abrahams@inl.co.za

Sports Editor
Fuad Esack
Telephone 021 488 4622
Email fuad.esack@inl.co.za

Entertainment News
Email entertain.ccn@inl.co.za

Letters must include the writer's full name, address and contact number. Email to brian.joss@inl.co.za or fax to 021 488 4615.

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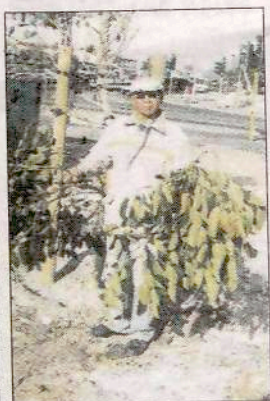
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Henry Thomas standing on the corner of Concert Boulevard and Prince George Drive, Steenberg

Trees vandalised

Henry Thomas, community worker, Steenberg

It is disheartening to see trees that were planted barely a month ago, have been vandalised by people who are unappreciative of the area that the City is trying to upgrade.

The residents of Steenberg must realise that trees play a vital part in our environment.

As a community worker I appeal to the community to take responsibility for the upgrading as it adds value to their properties and enhances the area.

Just further on bollards have been installed and they have also been vandalised with spray paint.

Paint cannot be removed so once again the public should be observant to prevent any further damage to the expensive bollards.

● Alderman Ian Neilson, executive deputy mayor and mayoral committee member for finance, City of Cape Town, responds: I couldn't have said it better myself. The City of Cape Town shares Mr Thomas's frustration at the vandalism and destruction of its

property and joins him in his appeal to the community to take responsibility for and respect the property in their areas.

Millions of rands have already been spent by the City on replacing and repairing damaged infrastructure.

These funds could have been far better spent on the provision of improved services or upgrades to facilities.

Residents can report any damaged property or provide details of those responsible for the damage to the City's call centre on 0860 103 089.

No value to free services

Carmen Nazier, Ottery

I find it difficult to understand the notion of society expecting to receive free services and demanding land, food and jobs from government.

If we take into consideration the fiasco spent on housing, social grants and so forth – it's spiralling out of control.

Government has encouraged this culture of non-payment by making promises in 1994 when campaigning for votes but free homes for all is just not realistic.

The bulk of the money should be spent on education, healthcare and pensions.

Let's take responsibility for our own actions.

Why, if you are poor, unemployed and with no home, do you insist on having children?

Why are you subjecting your children to living in squalor.

You are responsible for bringing a life into this world so stop blaming others if your child has a less than perfect upbringing.

We are creating this cycle of poverty by having more children than we can afford.

Government should be assisting the poor, not

supporting their lifestyle.

They should be educating our youth on their responsibilities as parents, because soon there will be no money to feed the hungry.

ANC on vlei

Emily Fairbairn and Yolanda Bana, executive committee members, African National Congress, Fred Carneson/ Suliman Teladia branch

We have joined the public campaign to stop plans to build a mall at Princess Vlei.

We are encouraged by the range of citizens from across the political and social spectrum who have joined hands to preserve the environment.

Every one of us should be supporting the campaign to save Princess Vlei from having a shopping mall on its banks.

As South Africans we proudly claim to have one of the best constitutions in the world, so let's implement it.

Our constitution says everyone has the right to "have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that prevent pollution and ecological degradation, promote conservation and secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development". This says it all.

The present generation in the surrounding community want the vlei to stay a vlei, and future generations will benefit from the green lungs a growing city needs; they will continue to relax, fish, walk and have fun.

Turning a vlei into a mall is ecological degradation.

There is a local business precinct which

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Friday
Min: 10°C
Max: 12°C
Hi: 08.44; 21.26
Lo: 02.31; 14.51

Saturday
Min: 10°C
Max: 14°C
Hi: 10.35; 23.04
Lo: 04.03; 16.52

Sunday
Min: 11°C
Max: 14°C
Hi: 12.04
Lo: 05.37; 18.15

● Does Adam Pikkie, Steenberg, have facts to back up his allegations about the flooding of drugs into Cape Flats and giving gangsters firearms to fight freedom fighters during the apartheid era? Or are his comments based on propaganda he heard at some time during his life?

I grew up during that period in the Cape Flats and, strangely, I never experienced this.

Why don't you put the past where it belongs and live for the now and future.

The change in government, which among other issues, deals with freedom, has in no way assisted the youth in freeing them from the hell of drug abuse.

There are more youngsters addicted to drugs and gangsterism

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than any other period in the history of this country.

Stop blaming the past regime as enough time has passed to see a difference that the freedom we speak of should have made. How sad that this is not the case. Reality: youth are dying – John, Grassy Park.

● Tree hazard: It is so true, the roads leading onto Concert Boulevard, 10th Avenue and Orrellaan. The reason you can't see is because the trees are obstructing your view – P Dirks, Steenberg.

could benefit from development without damaging the environment and taking away a people's space.

Princess Vlei conserves biodiversity, involves community and provides that capacity-building training ground.

Help save Princess Vlei, a place of natural beauty and heritage, and campaign to ensure service delivery from both government and nature.

● This letter has been shortened.

Mervyn's memory

W G Williams, Wynberg

I wish to express a sincere thank you the Southern Mail which portrayed the life of Mervyn Johnson ("Hamba Kahle Mervyn", Southern Mail letters, June 20).

Returning home from the memorial service, I just couldn't constrain the memories,

thoughts and comradeship I shared with him during his long stay in Wynberg.

He stood out as a real lighthouse and his rays of hope and loyalty to the numerous organisations he belonged to, will remain a legacy to us.

He served on so many committees and organisations, too numerous to mention, yet he was above all, a family man, so humble.

I have never seen him in a formal suit, he was always very casual and he did not throw his weight around to impress people.

He always took a back seat, no matter how formal the occasion.

He stood for justice and freedom working side by side with personalities such as Dr Helen Robinson, Anver Begg, Zubeida Bray, Mansoor Jaffer, not forgetting the late Dawood Parker, Mr De Vries and Mr Van Graan attending council meetings to report back to the residents of

Ward 63.

It was never too much for him and his colleagues to visit me bringing with flowers now that I am unable to attend meetings.

His late father was a caretaker at Livingstone High School in Lansdowne for many years.

He didn't have much education, but he was an intellectual who could address crowds from the cuff. Mervyn and his son Paul inherited these qualities from their father and grandfather.

Paul delivered a heart-rending and eloquent tribute to his father who touched the lives of everyone.

The massive crowd included residents, among them many of his ex teachers.

I salute him as a stalwart, who worked behind the scenes, while we as the community will remember him.

My condolences to his wife, and family and let us all realise that in the midst of life we are in death.

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PRINCESS VLEI SHOPPING MALL REPRIEVE

Fraud probe stops 'imminent' land sale

Melanie Gosling
Environment Writer

THE city would await the outcome of a fraud probe by the Hawks into the proposed Princess Vlei shopping mall before it could sell the land, deputy mayor Ian Neilson said yesterday.

The Princess Vlei Forum lodged the fraud complaints, alleging serious irregularities.

However, forum members were perturbed when they heard from the Reverend John Oliver shortly before his death last week that the city council was poised to sell the portion of Princess Vlei land to the mall developer before the police investigation had been completed.

Oliver had fought against the mall development.

The city council had made a

decision to sell the land to the mall developer some years ago.

Asked to comment, Neilson said the sale was not imminent.

One of the reasons was that the city did not know whether the outcome of the Hawks' investigation would lead to prosecutions, and if so, how this would affect the proposed sale.

"The National Prosecuting Authority is investigating

claims of fraud and corruption on both the development and the process. We understand that this investigation is at an advanced stage.

"We are waiting for a decision of the NPA on whether to prosecute and on whether this will have an impact on the sale process. This may be an important factor for the public to be aware of in their comment on the proposed sale – and on

council when it takes its final decision," Neilson said.

He said the land-use approvals for the mall were in place, and in terms of the original council decision some years ago, the city now needed to agree on a price with the developer.

This process was under way.

In selling the land, the city would have to follow the municipal asset transfer regulations.

Neilson said this would require an initial report to the council, public advertising and then a final report to the council on whether to proceed with the sale.

Kelvin Cochrane from the Princess Vlei Forum welcomed the fact that the city was waiting for the Hawks' investigation to be completed. "That is the right thing to do," he said.

Princess Vlei features pro-

minently in Khoisan folklore.

There has been passionate opposition to the shopping mall on the banks of the vlei, a green lung and popular recreation spot on the Cape Flats for generations, but the authorities gave it the nod.

The city's decision to allow the mall was the result of an unsolicited bid to the council many years ago.

melanie.gosling@inl.co.za

Hawks investigation must be completed before any sale to a developer

CAPE POINTS

✉ 122 St George's Mall, Cape Town 8001

☎ Fax 021 488 4793

✉ Email arglet@inl.co.za

A full address and daytime telephone number are required. The letter editor reserves the right to edit or reject.

The world has a twisted definition of morality

I have never met Zwelinzima but I don't know what he is. He is a man who has been in the news for a long time. He is a man who has been in the news for a long time. He is a man who has been in the news for a long time.

Similarly on November 9 last year, General David Petraeus resigned as director of the CIA, citing an affair that was discovered via an FBI investigation.

Since then, Petraeus, previously one of the most decorated US soldiers, has been globally disgraced. Considering that Petraeus led several clandestine structures that operated illegal and secret wars in several countries, I considered his carnal conduct peripheral.

Ironically his ability to kill and inflict suffering on millions of innocent people was ignored yet his illicit affair was of global interest.

The global media also spent vast resources analysing every detail of Bill Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky. People forgot

his sanctions and illegal bombing of Iran, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan that left millions dead and suffering? What kind of world do we live in, when a man sanctions mass killings but is disgraced by an affair?

By what definition of morality are these decisions made?

YAGYAH ADAMS

Cape Muslim Congress

Why no public participation?

SOMETIME during the 1990s, there was a new kid on the political block in George. (She became mayor of Cape Town many years

later.) In our street at Kleinkrantz, (Wilderness) there were only two resident families.

Upon hearing her motorcade my late wife and I ran out into the street to welcome her.

We waved hoping to get a handshake, but we might as well have been waving at the moon.

Sometime later when I was doing duty at the polling booth at Wilderness, the most hated man in the country, resident on the other side of the lagoon, came to cast his municipal vote. What a revelation.

The proven saviour of the Outeniqua Choo Choo engaged me in conversation until I was called to the booth.

In contrast the new kid did not deign to wave. This is history.

Today after having sacrificed Princess vlei where we as children used to lick "suikertolle" and swim and where my mentor, Dr Richard van der Ross, started a yacht club because there was no facility for people who were not white, the new kid on the block is hell-bent on robbing us of the last vestige of affordable food grown in Philippi in order to build RDP units.

She and those with her have become so blind that they cannot see the wood for the trees.

May I suggest that the grotesque white elephant in Green Point be used to house the poor, thus saving the taxpayers millions and bringing our workforce to the city where they will be able to walk to work in their "Mother" City.

In this new-found democracy of ours why was there no public participation?

ISAAC THOMAS

Lansdowne

CAPE TIMES

FOUNDED IN 1876

Peak hour

HOUT Bay residents have lost their court action to suspend construction of the Chapman's Peak toll office on Table Mountain National Park land.

They wanted to halt construction temporarily while they fought a separate case in which they hoped the court would find that construction of this commercial building on national park land was indeed unlawful.

The provincial government had failed to comply with several pieces of legislation, including having the piece of national park – no matter how small – deproclaimed.

The residents were no doubt hoping any attempt at deproclaiming national park land, which is afforded the highest protection possible, would be unsuccessful. That would then put an end to the toll office on Chapman's Peak Drive.

The court saw it differently. Judge Bennie Griesel found that by insisting on the provincial government going through additional legal "hoops", the residents were simply delaying, not preventing, construction of the toll office. He said halting it temporarily would mean great financial cost to the province, "without any tangible benefits accruing to anyone".

This case was a last-ditch effort by the public after a series of attempts to prevent the toll plaza buildings from being built in the middle of one of the most spectacular and unspoiled areas on our coast.

The real tragedy is that it should have come to this. Years ago another engineering company offered to repair and maintain Chapman's Peak Drive, at a fraction of the cost, without a toll. That offer was rejected, for no sound reason. SANParks said when the toll was first mooted that it did not want it anywhere along Chapman's Peak Drive. This was ignored. There was a huge public outcry at the proposed tolling of the road – now R62 for a round trip of 18km – but the outcry came to nothing. There was considerable public opposition to the toll buildings during the environmental impact assessment, but the authorities approved it. The land was taken without following the country's environmental laws, but that appears not to matter.

Perhaps the biggest loser will be public confidence. If the government can get away with activities that flout its own laws – and use public money to fight citizens who try to hold it to account in court – why should anyone bother?

SECOND OPINION

The last hurrah

THE LIKE, it was said of the Thames pageant, had not been seen for 350 years and would not be seen again. Something similar might well be said of almost every coronation event during the holiday weekend, even of the palace pop concert. Indeed, it could be said of the diamond jubilee itself. But it was most true of Tuesday's thanksgiving service at St Paul's Cathedral, the occasion where the queen looked most comfortable and at home.

Here, truly, was a Britain whose like will not be seen again, because it is passing so swiftly into history. It was not just the carriage procession, or the cavalry, or the massed military bands with their air of empire and antiquity that harked back to another age, but the church service itself, and above all, the congregation: mostly white, of a certain age and a certain background. But the Anglican cathedral experience is no longer as widely shared as it was. As the flag-waving crowds on the Mall testified, Britain is already a different place.

In this respect, the queen's diamond jubilee may with hindsight be seen not only for the extravagant spectacle and popular festival that it was, for the pageants and the street parties, but as the last hurrah for a way of doing things that is now, for most of the population, in the past.

From the balcony of Buckingham Palace the visual message was one of stability and continuity, but also of a monarchy pared to its essentials. Only the queen, her son and heir, and his two sons and spouses, came out to greet the crowds. There was a solemnity of purpose here.

In her six decades on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II has trodden an often delicate line between observing tradition and modernising. At times, the institution lagged behind the people; with last year's marriage of Prince William to Catherine Middleton, the two came back into sync.

But as this celebration fades into memory, so it may start to look more and more like a validation: a glittering – if endearingly rain-soaked – coda to a departing age. – The Independent

OTHER OPINIONS

It is folly to punish your neighbour by fire when you live next door. Publilius Syrus

The really frightening thing about middle age is that you know you'll grow out of it. Doris Day

Whoever comes last drinks muddy water. Kenyan and Ugandan proverb

What you risk reveals what you value. Jeanette Winterson

CAPE TIMES CONTACTS

Editor: Phone: 021 488-4911 Fax: 021 488-4744
 News: Phone: 021 488-4713 Fax: 021 488-4717
 Photos: Phone: 021 488-4713 or 021 488-4205
 Arts: Phone: 021 488-4068 Fax: 021 488-4744
 Sport: Phone: 021 488-4631 Fax: 021 488-4644
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Press Council

Vlei therapy far more beneficial than more retail therapy

CONCERNED about the well-being of Mother Earth, SAFCEI (Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute) endorses the people's response in objecting to the proposed development of the Princess Vlei for a shopping mall.

This support draws from a spiritual and moral basis for supporting Earth ethics. We wholeheartedly request that the Western Cape Provincial Government withdraw their support for the proposal and instead support the people's proposal for Princess Vlei. The people's proposed plan is a form of development that enhances and restores our natural ecosystem, and therefore improves our spiritual and mental wellbeing.

Aziel Gangerline from the Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs

and Development Planning claimed in the Cape Times of May 21 that the proposed development will only take 4 percent of the natural land around the Princess Vlei. According to the people's response, the 4 percent is a gross miscalculation. We need to further question how it is possible to justify that only a 4 percent encroachment justifies destroying a long-standing indigenous history.

The call for Princess Vlei to be protected came late, but the faith communities ask that this request be taken seriously. It is important to respect and preserve places which remind us of our indigenous heritage. WWF and the IUCN have highlighted the importance of sacred places for conservation. Faith communities have been involved in some of the earliest forms of habitat

protection in existence, both through the preservation of particular places as sacred sites and through religious-based control systems.

A visiting Australian Islamic scholar and environmental activist, Imam Afroz Ali, at a gathering at the League of Friends of the Blind (LOFOB) hosted by LOGRA Civic (Lotus River and Grassy Park Ratepayers Association) on May 29, shared similar sentiments. He said that the Princess should be used to connect people with their creator and with their environment. He continued that "disconnection and disorientation is the engineering that takes place through colonisation and additionally through apartheid. History, culture, tradition, heritage, leadership, people and land come under attack during colonisation.

A colonised people's language is degraded, made to appear inferior and even prohibited from speaking in public. The land is stolen and then systematically redesigned on the one hand as a replica of the colonised people's homeland and in the second instance, raped and degraded for its buried natural resources". He therefore suggested that Princess Vlei should be a green space to build peace in the city and honour the culture and heritage of the indigenous people of Cape Town.

How many shopping malls are there in our city and how many more do we need? For whose benefit is this one being built – the people or the developers? An alternative proposal is to revitalise Princess Vlei as a safe greenbelt for recreation and for the psychological and

spiritual nourishment and wellbeing of the broader community. We also need biodiversity corridors within our urban spaces which play a crucial function in restoring and maintaining the integrity of our unique floral Kingdom. The power of the natural environment on our spiritual and psychological wellbeing is beyond measurement. A healthy and spiritually connected society would provide a positive and powerful contribution to the wellbeing of our country and the Earth.

We urge the Provincial Government to listen to what the people are calling for, ignore the promise of short-term profits and to leave Princess Vlei intact for our children's children and nature's heritage.

AMEEN BENJAMIN
SAFCEI, CAPE TOWN

Act on police rot

I AM pleased that Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa has finally confirmed that the actions of some members of the SA Police Service are inconsistent with our constitutional ethos ("Mthethwa cracks whip on heavy-handed cops", Cape Times, May 30).

It is not the first time that minister Mthethwa has made such an analysis in relation to unconstitutional practices by police against civilians. We, the victims of police brutality, are not under any illusions that minister Mthethwa means what he says when he says police ought to be "subject to the will of the people they serve". What counts for me is not what the minister says in a public symposium but what he does in a private office in Pretoria and Cape Town.

Thus I would like the minister to walk the talk. Police are systematically protected by the political elite. What counts is where minister Mthethwa stands in action and in words when the police brutally kill and brutally mistreat civilians? Does he stand with the victims of police brutality or does he stand with the police, whose actions contradict what he calls "the ethos of human rights".

We cannot fail to talk about the lived realities on the ground of young "black" people because we are the subjects of police brutality day in and day out. We, as young "black" people in SA, are constant criminal suspects whether we are rich or poor. Whether "black" youth live in Rondebosch or in Delft, we are ceaseless criminals in the eyes of the SA police.

As Jonny Steinberg put it in one of his many writings about police brutality in SA, "black youth" are "risk factors" that SAPS members are looking for every day.

As a member of the ANC branch executive committee of the Cissy Gool branch in Woodstock and a former member of the Woodstock Police Forum, representing the ANC branch, I remain resolute that my activism in this community of Woodstock is more important than any blind allegiance to meaningless words or "dead words" as Ben Okri put it.

There are many good policemen that I interact with every day. These are the best leaders in our community and I am sure that minister Mthethwa wants more of them in his ministry, and the best way is to take decisive action against the "rotten police". Minister Mthethwa has all the leadership attributes to do this.

CHUMANI MAXWEL
WOODSTOCK

Stadium's last breath

THE LATEST suggestion to get the stadium area rezoned to allow for restaurants and retail space snacks of desperation.

Despite the fact that Green Point Ratepayers Association will oppose it and delay the process for years, the idea that restaurants and night clubs are cash cows is ludicrous.

As any restaurateur will tell you, it's probably the hardest business to make money in and is certainly not a silver bullet to save the stadium. As the old joke goes: "How do you own a restaurant worth a million rand? Start with a restaurant worth two million rand..."

As for nightclubs, you need just ask Kenny Kunene across the road how hard it is to make money in that business.

In my view there are only two practical solutions for the stadium.

1. Knock it down.
2. Mothball it.

While I prefer the first option, I expect



WRITE TO US

The Editor, Cape Times, Box 11, Cape Town 8000. Fax: (021) 488 4744, or e-mail: cletters@nl.co.za. Please restrict letters to fewer than 300 words. We reserve the right to edit and only letters providing a physical address and telephone contact number (neither for publication) will be considered. As a rule, letters which have been published elsewhere, either in print or electronically, will not be considered. Pseudonyms are not accepted.

It's a bridge too far for Cape Town.

I suggest the stadium simply gets shut down until we actually need it. Disconnect the water, electricity and any other services to the building. The stadium will now cost the people of Cape Town no money and should the time arise when someone wants to use it for a substantial amount of time, they can then pay to get it up and running again.

The DA need to come to terms with the fact that the stadium is never going to pay for itself. They must either budget for it to make a whopping loss, or get rid of the liability. The current rescue plans are risky at best and won't be enough to get it in back the black anyway.

ANTON DE WAAL
CONSTANTIA

A life of service

IT WAS with a sense of relief that I read Canon Chris Chivers's article on the thanksgiving service held in St Paul's Cathedral in celebration of Queen Elizabeth's 80-year reign on the British throne ("Selfless dedication to duty is Queen Elizabeth's crowning asset", Cape Times, June 6).

Here, at last, was a voice from within the Anglican Church, albeit from

London, honouring publicly in our local press, this remarkable Christian woman whose love for and whose commitment to God has been the spiritual reality underpinning her long reign and who, at the outset of which, and for almost a decade, was South Africa's queen.

The outpouring of genuine affection for Queen Elizabeth during these past few days of celebration throughout the Commonwealth has been deeply moving.

Her love for all peoples and her commitment to serve them, unhindered by the often bedeviling bounds of party political preferences, lies at the heart of this loving response to her.

Long live Queen Elizabeth!
REV. HARRY WIGGETT
FISH HOEK

Intern disinterest

I HAVE been looking for a holiday internship to supplement my theoretical and academic experiences as a university student. I seem to have hit a wall. I believe an internship is vital to an understanding of any industry, and I am set on gaining some practical experience which UCT starves us of.

On my study abroad semester in Australia, I made a number of American friends and all of them supplemented their studies with an internship. One friend explained that you would not be considered for a graduate school unless you had three years worth of vac experience. What a fantastic incentive, one that has completely bypassed the SA tertiary education system.

While I acknowledge that my intern attempts have started rather late, I have been looking for a two-week intern position a month away. This does not strike me as a huge burden. Yet every marketing agency and organisation I have reached has responded with the

classic, "we'll phone you back in a couple days". I can sense in the tone of voice that these people consider me the lowest priority, an unqualified student.

An internship position is a bridge which connects the isolated and often non-communicative fields of tertiary education and industry. I am a competent student, studying towards my second degree, surely I have something to offer?

Why is nobody interested? And how does UCT fail to explicitly stress the importance of this type of experience?

DANIEL STASIN
CAPE TOWN

Downward spiral

SAA CHOOSING to quit the Cape Town to London direct route ought to raise a good few questions. In the Cape Times article, "SAA stops London to Cape Town flights", June 6, lower occupancy, taxes and rising costs were cited as (weak) reasons for the decision.

Industry rumour has it that another national carrier is considering boosting its fleet to service this route alone with two flights a day to cope with demand.

Other major national carriers and some private carriers are all at maximum occupancy on this route, yet SAA claims dwindling passenger numbers... Something doesn't add up.

With SAA being a national asset and our sovereign airline with government funding, is there no thought given to the overall resulting loss to the economy?

The move has already led one of the remaining carriers to increase fares by nearly R5 000 compared to the SAA fare that was offered. Try booking today and compare prices. The SA consumer loses again – unless Mr Branson's Virgin Airlines can come to our rescue.

ANTHONY ALLEN
HOOT BAY

It doesn't add up

SO SAA is stopping direct flights between Cape Town and London. I flew there and back last week, and the flight was almost full.

If SAA management can't make a profit on the route between London and South Africa's major tourist attraction, when EA is able to do so, we need new management at SAA. If they go ahead with this step, SAA should be renamed Gauteng Airlines and we should get a new national airline that genuinely looks after national interests.

I am a long-standing supporter of SAA, belonging to the SAA Voyager "loyalty club". What a reward for loyalty! Disloyalty is the name of the game.

We deserve better: Is this, maybe, a political ploy?

PROFESSOR GEORGE ELLIS
MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT, UCT

Agony aren't

Dear Auntie, I was just wondering about the Cape Times front page picture of the Royal family – I gather they are all looking up at the last departing SAA direct flight to Cape Town while Prince Harry applauds a new opportunity for British Airways?

PI LOT
NEWLANDS

Dear P, No, they're waiting for the British economy to take off.

AUNTIE

Any offers for my Cape Times page 8 picture of 'The Spear'?

PAGE 8 of the Cape Times, May 18, has become a collector's item.

It contains a three-column picture of Brett Murray's painting *The Spear*, aka President Zuma with his dingle-dangle not yet coyly covered up, as it was in later newspapers, and certainly before anyone daubed red crosses over the offending part and black smears over most of the rest of his respected person.

I'm glad I saved it. I had a funny feeling at the time that it would increase in value. In fact I am already open to offers by anyone so long as they bring their ID to prove they are over 16.

I would hate to run foul of the Film and Publication Board which has ruled the president's supposed nudity to be unfit for the eyes of anyone younger. But the rest of the population is still allowed

P.S.
john scott

to salivate, or fulminate, as the case may be. Maybe Kenny Kunene, the man who likes to eat sushi off the naked flesh of reclining ladies, would like to buy my copy, so that he can burn it.

He offered hundreds of thousands for the original, in the hope of burning it, but the German buyer knew he was on to a good thing, especially after it was defaced, and refused to sell. As much as I am loathe to part with page 8, I am prepared to make an exception in Kunene's case.

If anyone splashes paint over it, my price will naturally increase correspondingly. Meanwhile I shall mount and frame it, and put it in safe deposit. Such windfalls are not dropped in the letterbox every day.

My only competition is the internet. Fortunately the F&P Board's chief executive, Yolliswa Makhazi, is aware of this and has urged those youths who come across copies of the undorned *Spear* on the web to delete them. Youths under 16 years of age must of course avert their eyes while doing so.

The board's chief operations officer, Mmapula Fisha, said it wasn't only the nudity from which under-16s had to be protected. It was also the painful history which the painting forced society to revisit. For us oldies, the most painful

part of history we revisited was the time a previous government took offence at another painting, titled *Black Christ*.

The then Publications Board banned that one, too. It may have had something to do with the fact that Christ had the face of Albert Luthuli and the two Roman soldiers guarding him on the cross had the faces of Hendrik Verwoerd and John Vorster respectively.

The artist, Ronald Harrison, was arrested and, after the painting was smuggled to England and displayed in St Paul's Cathedral to raise funds for anti-apartheid activities, the police regularly tortured him for about five years.

Brett Murray must be thankful he has, so far, been spared such a fate.

But it does seem to show that some things in South African history don't

change. Artists who prick the dignity of our leaders, even if they don't have any dignity in the first place, do so at their peril.

Now the SABC has banned a Nando's ad that shows all the different races of South Africa disappearing in puffs of smoke until only the country's original inhabitant, a Khoisan, is left, and he says he's not going anywhere.

The SABC thinks it may offend those of us who arrived later. Well, I for one remain resolutely unoffended, though I cannot speak for thinner-skinned members of our society whom the ad may provoke into *donnering* Khoisan people, if they can find any.

That ad, too, deserves to become a collector's item.

johnscott@amweb.co.za

Zambia remains a country shackled by homophobic laws

Juliet Mphande

YESTERDAY marked the celebration of 49 years of Zambia's independence. Despite close to a century of independence from Britain, Zambia still holds fast to, and claims as its own, some draconian laws inherited from its colonial masters. One such law is the criminalisation of sodomy, still entrenched in the Zambian penal code.

Currently, the act of consensual sodomy is criminalised and carries with it a minimum sentence of 15 years to life. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (LGBTI) are classified as social deviants.

Despite the continued vilification and persecution of LGBTI persons in Zambia, open and respectful public debate on the matter is discouraged. Human rights defenders, who dare to speak out on the issue, are routinely harassed and persecuted for "promoting homosexuality" or

for "inciting" the public to take part in "immoral activities". This occurs despite the Zambian constitution's guarantee of freedom of expression, as enshrined in the country's bill of rights.

Zambia's second post-independence president, Frederick Chiluba, described homosexuality as the worst kind of depravity. The current president, Michael Chilufya Sata, has failed to confront the problem of homophobia despite several of his senior cabinet ministers lending support to the hateful invectives that characterise the debate on homosexuality.

Most law enforcement officers fall prey to their own prejudices when discharging their duties, thereby contributing to a context in which vulnerable communities are susceptible to rights violations such as extortion and torture.

The devastating consequences of this on Zambia as a country cannot be overstated. Most Zambians know an LGBTI person who has suffered hate crimes,

endured blackmail due to the actions of either state or non-state actors, or been driven to suicide.

These continued violations against productive members of Zambian society because of their perceived sexual orientation and gender identity continue with impunity in a country that claims to affirm the dignity of all people by its ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

While Zambia has made considerable strides since independence to reduce the gap between rich and poor, it has yet to uphold its commitment to the fundamental human rights of its citizens and ensure the equal protection of all Zambians under law.

In fact, in recent years the state has shifted even further away from its duties by enacting laws to curtail the efforts of civil society organisations and hamper their ability to organise freely, particularly if they hold views that dissent with those of government.

The celebrations to commemorate Zambia's Independence Day are a farce as they pander to the powerful and the privileged in society, at the expense of vulnerable and marginalised communities.

This is most offensively demonstrated by October also being the fifth month since two young Zambian men were charged with two counts of allegedly contravening section 155a of the Zambian penal code by "having carnal knowledge against the order of nature".

They are being denied the right to bail and a fair trial. James Mwape and Phil Mubiana of Kipiri Mposhi in central Zambia are prisoners of the state. They remain incarcerated in Mpima maximum-security prison together with convicted felons and cannot celebrate their national independence because their fundamental liberties have been taken away by the state's refusal to grant them bail and ensure a fair trial.

This makes clear that the state is failing in its duty to ensure that all persons are

guaranteed the enjoyment of their fundamental human rights.

This Independence Day it is incumbent upon every Zambian to reflect on what independence means, to call to mind the struggle of our forebears who fought for freedom, and to hold the state accountable for the protection of the rights of the marginalised. This includes the rights of LGBTI persons who are still shackled by the chains of hate, violence and fear, and who have to live with the burden of rejection by state and non-state actors, fuelled by the state's refusal to protect them.

The duty of a state is not to entrench prejudice and bigotry driven by intolerance and fear of diversity. It must affirm the self-fulfilment and personal happiness of each citizen. The recognition of the rights of LGBTI people in Zambia and the assurance of non-discrimination against minorities are critical to a tolerant society.

● Mphande is a human rights, media and peace activist in Zambia.

PRINCESS VLEI

The desecration of a temple

Bridget Pitt

IT WAS a remarkable gathering: A Catholic archbishop and a primary school jazz band, chiefs from Khoi and Xhosa tribes, a rabbi and a sheikh, a baptising Pentecostal elder and a Buddhist... a rare moment when our rainbow nation shone in all its colours.

But perhaps what was most remarkable about this gathering was that this group had come together on September 22 to defend one Cape Town's most contested natural features – the Princess Vlei.

What has motivated these moral custodians of our city to take this stand? Why has Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu bothered to weigh in to the debate with a message of support?

Superficially, the Princess Vlei issue might seem a small issue. But it is an issue in which the greater social, cultural, historical, economic and environmental connections are so starkly and eloquently expressed that it serves as a microcosm of critical choices facing our city, our country and indeed our planet. Perhaps this is why it has caught the attention even of those who have never had the pleasure of watching pelicans coming in to land on the water, or seeing the Constantiaberg mirrored in its still surface.

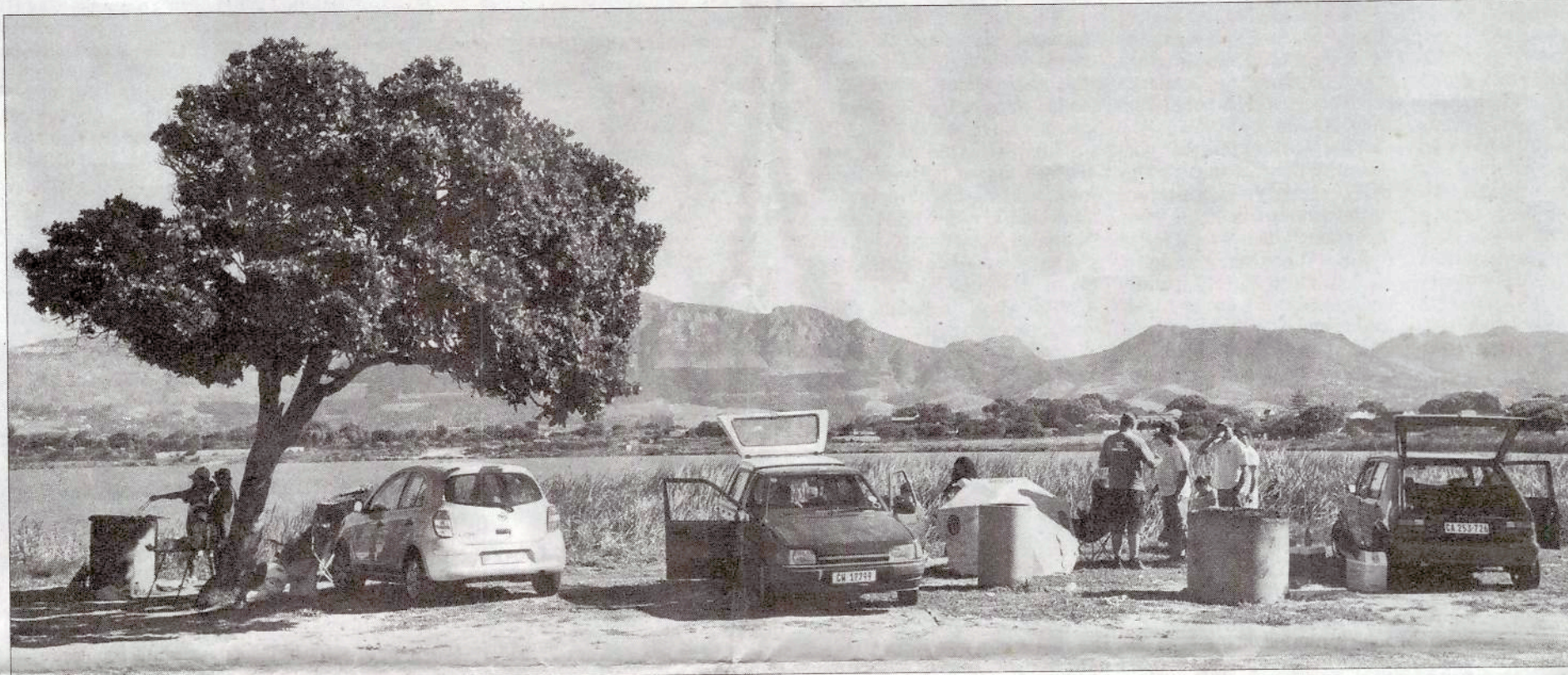
Princess Vlei holds an urgent lesson, the same lesson that is being ignored by global political and financial leaders as they continue to avoid taking the decisive action needed to avert the catastrophe of uncontained climate change. The lesson is so simple: If we continue to sacrifice social justice and environmental well-being for the short-term enrichment of a minority, we will soon find ourselves in a world that is uninhabitable.

It is self-evident that building a shopping mall on a wetland does not promote environmental sustainability. What may be less obvious is the damage this development could do to social sustainability, which is equally critical to the long-term health of our society.

A socially sustainable society is one that pays attention not only to people's physical needs, but also to their psychological and emotional needs. Critical to the psychological health of a community is access to recreational spaces where people can connect with nature, interact with each other in a relaxed way, or find solitude and peace. For those living in over-crowded homes with no gardens, such solace can only be found in natural public spaces. In this context, these spaces become the pressure valve that enables people to cope with the stresses of social and economic hardship in densely populated environments.

Princess Vlei has long served this purpose. People from the ages of eight to 80 have remarked that what they value most about the vlei is that it gives them a feeling of peace.

In the words of Makl, a graffiti artist who grew up in Caffra: "No matter what happened economy-wise or family-wise, Princess Vlei was one place people went and had a good time... the sun would set, and I remember the fires and the braais



COMMUNING WITH NATURE: Princess Vlei holds an urgent lesson, the same lesson that is being ignored by global political and financial leaders as they continue to avoid taking the decisive action needed to avert the catastrophe of uncontained climate change, says the writer.

going on, music playing, people were happy.

"You knew when you went home there'd be skelling about no money for this or that, or not enough to eat, but while we were here at the Vlei, people had a great time. Among all the negatives... the Vlei was the one memory that shone through, and you knew if you could focus on that, you could survive, you could make it through."

People in the community speak of Princess Vlei as a place given by God, a place that is free. There is a sense that God (or nature) has generously provided such beauty and tranquillity without expecting anything in return. This generosity helps people to feel wealthy in a more profound sense, to forget that they are deprived, or poor, or lacking. The water sparkles just as brightly for a single mother from Parkwood as it does for a wealthy Constantia resident. Probably a lot more – Constantia residents are treated daily to lush views in their garden, or at any of the holiday locations they can afford to visit. Most people living near Princess Vlei have no gardens and no car.

A shopping mall, on the other hand, can make all but the super-rich feel poor, with its display of goods that few can afford to buy. A shopping mall entices people to spend beyond their means. A shopping mall diverts money from small traders, breadwinners in this community, into the profits of big business. A shopping mall may create jobs, but it kills local enterprise.

The value of Princess Vlei to the community is clear and widely acknowledged, a value that would be greatly enhanced if the space was developed as a nature and heritage park.

Yet all indications now are that the city is set to go ahead with the sale of the land to

the developer. What is driving this intention?

In his keynote address at the Princess Vlei Forum prayer meeting on September 22, Bishop Geoff Davies quoted the story of Jesus chasing the money-lenders out of the temple. "Is not the whole world God's temple?" he asked. Has not God brought life to this planet? Hasn't Princess Vlei been a temple for generations of users?

"Yet we have made this wonderful planet of life, this temple of God, into a den of thieves. We do everything to make money... We rape the environment, so we have rhinos facing extinction, so that people can make money. We have open-cast mining, polluting air and water and destroying the soil, all to make money."

At the heart of the Princess Vlei story is the tale of two cities: An uncaring city driven by commercial development at the cost of social and environmental sustainability, versus a caring city that balances economic needs with long-term social and

environmental health. The DA claims to be running a caring city, and its policy frameworks do embrace this vision. But recently, city leadership seems to be ignoring its own policies. Latest, as in the case of the Wespace development, the Philippi Horticultural Area farmlands and Princess Vlei, Uitkamp at Durbanville, and the Two Rivers Urban Park at the confluence of the Black River and Liesbeek Rivers, the city's decisions seem to favour bids for private development over community interests, even those which contradict its own policies or advice by its own professionals. This trend threatens to push us towards the first city, a city driven by short-term gain rather than long-term vision, a dangerous, uncaring city where even the privileged cannot build walls high enough to keep out the misery and anger beyond them. Social and environmental sustainability are not luxuries. A city that is not socially and environmentally sustainable is a city sowing its own seeds of destruction.

Perhaps these developments fill the city's coffers, but they carry social and environmental costs that in the long term far outweigh whatever wealth they generate. No doubt our city's leadership make difficult choices every day. But the decision to save Princess Vlei is not a difficult choice. The gains of another shopping mall, particularly to the disadvantaged neighbouring communities, are negligible, if they are there at all. The loss of this iconic wetland and recreational space is irretrievable and incalculable.

We should be able to trust the city to conserve these precious natural resources and communal spaces, but increasingly it is

falling to civil society to defend them, sometimes at considerable cost. The struggle to save the Sea Point waterfront cost some R2.7 million, financed by generous individuals from the relatively wealthy Sea Point community. Princess Vlei, once affectionately named "Claremont Beach" is a "seaford" and traditional gathering place for the many local residents who cannot afford the transport and time to travel to the beach. Must the schoolchildren, the unemployed, the pensioners and other hard-pressed community members from around Princess Vlei struggle to raise funds for a similar court action to defend one of their few accessible recreational spaces?

In the words of Bishop Davies, "This is not just a moral issue. It is a deeply spiritual matter. How we live together – with God, one another and the rest of creation is a deeply spiritual matter. We have come because all religions call for justice and righteousness – for fairness. So we now call on the authorities to seek justice for the people and the planet. If they allow the development of a shopping mall at Princess Vlei, we know that they are bringing conflict and perpetuating injustice."

Let us call on the city leadership to revitalise their vision of a city that cares for all, that protects the interests of the marginalised and the vulnerable, and to pursue this vision honestly, and assiduously. We owe this to our citizens, and to our children.

● Pitt is the author of *Unbroken Wing and The Unseen Leopard*. She has written a book for Sanbi (South African National Biodiversity Institute) on urban nature conservation and is part of initiatives to build communities through nature conservation. She is a member of the Princess Vlei Forum.

A porn man's guide to spinning the blame on a third party

ANGRY UTTERANCES

Jonathan Ancer

WELCOME to Mac's Masterclass in UberSpinning. What's the best weapon in the spin doctor's arsenal? Anyone? Anyone? Yes, you in the blue shirt.

That's right. The "I was taken out of context" excuse. If we break up the word "context" we get "con" and "text" – that's some spin doctor's humour.

The "I was misquoted" defence was all the rage but it has become difficult to use now that everybody has a cellphone they can use to send clips to YouTube.

Did you see how I skilfully navigated the Prez's latest "We can't think like Africans" blaps? That's right. Pure genius. Remember when he said owning dogs was unAfrican? After my spintervention the SPCA wanted to give him the Dog Lover of the Year Award.

There's no sin I can't spin, no blunder I can't put under, no mistake I can't forsake and no skande I can't rent asunder.

Let's move on to an actual case study: Competition Commissioner Shan Ramburuth resigned because he was caught visiting a porn website and spent R120 000 of taxpayers' wonga on data roaming. What the hell was Ramburuth thinking? He shouldn't have resigned. If I'd been his spin doctor he would have had a promotion. You see, with a little bit of spin we can show how his porn surfing was taken completely... Anyone? Anyone? Yes, that's right: Out! Of! Context!

Mr Ramburuth was actually in his hotel room doing work. He decided to research the stiff competition among pawn shops and was conducting a study about how collusion in the industry has led to members of the public being screwed – no porn intended. Speaking of the public's members, Ramburuth's next move was to try to get his head around policy debates about the general welfare of society. So he typed "Show me what's in the public interest" into Google. Unfortunately, he left the "I" out of public. It could happen to anyone.

Ramburuth decided to do some work on the commission's tribunal into construction companies' collusion and typed "Hit me with some big erections" into the search engine. After seeing things that cannot be unseen he turned to religion for help. An innocent type-o had him on the "Porn-Again Christian" website. He decided to turn off his computer and eat food his chef had prepared for him. It was awful. So once again he turned to Google for help. "How do I get somebody to sack my cook?" he typed, but he wasn't seeing straight and some letters got jumbled.

Ramburuth decided to play chess on his computer to calm his nerves. It was going well until he typed "porn to mate queen". It was horrible.

Then he did an online search for places to stay in Hermanus. Should a man be crucified just because his keyboard is missing the letter M?

The stress of what he saw gave him chest pains. Yet again he thought he could rely on Google to get him out of this sticky situation. Unfortunately, when he typed in "what does a cute angina feel like?"... well, let's just say, damn auto correct. I mean correct. Damn auto correct.

As you can see these issues are not black or white – they are grey; many, many shades of grey, at least 50 shades of grey.

It's not Ramburuth's fault that Google's mind is in the gutter. He'll be suing the search engine giant for millions for causing him severe emotional distress.

In tomorrow's Mac Masterclass we look at Spinstraction – the art of spinning by distraction. Your homework is to solve this clue: It doesn't even like one miserable cent to outfox the public using this Spintervention (3, 2, 7).*

*OUT OF CONTEXT: an anagram of "cent to outfox" ("horrib") is the anagram indicator.

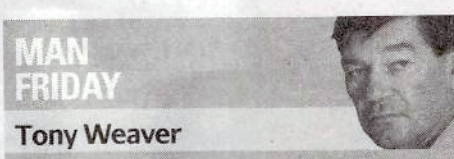
The fog of war descends over a few minor skirmishes in Mozambique

DEPENDING on your source, it was either US Senator Hiram W Johnson (why do Americans always have middle initials?) or Aeschylus who memorably said that "the first casualty when war comes is truth."

Whoever said it first, it holds as true today as it did then. The "fog of war" is as overused a cliché as any in the book.

There is something of the "fog of war" hanging over our neighbour, Mozambique, at the moment. On travel forums, panicky holidaymakers are talking about cancelling their Christmas plans of Dos M beer, sun and cheap prawns and rum.

There is again talk of reinstating the on-again off-again military convoys on the Estrada Nacional 1, the EN1, between Rio Save and Caia. This after Mozambican troops reportedly (and the reporting has



Tony Weaver

been very foggy and vague) finally overran the base used by Alfonso Dhlakama and his ragtag remnant bandit group at Sathunjira, at the foot of Monte Gorongosa, close to the eponymous national park of the same name, on Monday.

And earlier this week, Renamo bandits attacked the police station in Renamo's erstwhile wartime headquarters in the town of Maringué, about 30km north west of the EN1, far from Gorongosa. Dhlakama himself is reported as saying that the 1992 Peace Accord is dead,

and that he will go back to war.

Then, also earlier this week, there was a report from Nacala, way north of the Renamo area, and closer to the border with Tanzania than with South Africa, that a gang of 30 men armed with pangas had attacked the Hotel Veloso on the outskirts of the port town. It was initially feared that this could be an offshoot Renamo group, but yesterday I got word from Nacala that this was simply a bunch of robbers who held up the bar and that the pangas were purely used for "intimidation".

It's very hard, from this distance, to accurately assess just how serious the situation is, but my guess is, that while the Nacala incident was just a random piece of criminality, the incidents around Gorongosa are the dying kicks of a tiny remnant of a bandit army that

has long since passed its sell-by date.

For those who know the geography, according to one of the leading experts on Mozambique, Mike Slater (who runs the Mozguide website) "the stretch of road that now becomes 'dangerous' is Inchope-Vila da Gorongosa-Caia, rather than Save-Muxungue. This is based on my gut feel that the Muxungue Renamo base was abandoned a couple of months ago, and that certainly the majority of Renamo operators are in the Gorongosa-Maringué area, a traditional Renamo 'stronghold'".

Meanwhile, it is business as usual in the Parque Nacional do Gorongosa, and in all the normal tourist resorts from Inhassoro southwards, which is about as far north as the vast majority of South African tourists venture. North of Inhassoro seems to still be regarded as "Darkest Africa", despite it

being as beautiful a stretch of Africa as anywhere on the continent.

And with the massive surge in gas and oil exploration taking place north of Nacala up to the Tanzanian border, and the opening up of huge new coal fields, there is no way the Mozambican government is going to allow the situation to escalate to a point where investors start getting scared.

Renamo was established in 1975 by Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Organisation as a proxy force to destabilise the Frelimo government because of its support for Zanja guerrillas operating out of Mozambique (Zipra operated out of Zambia). It later became a proxy force of the apartheid South African Defence Force, hardly good credentials in a country that suffered years of destabilisation by South Africa.

Even so, in the 2004 elections, an anti-gov-

ernment alliance dominated by Renamo managed to capture 29.7 percent of the popular vote, while Dhlakama himself polled 31.9 percent of the presidential vote. But that was back when Mozambicans living in the central and northern provinces of Sofala, Zambezia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado saw themselves as the forgotten stepchildren of the relatively prosperous south.

Now those provinces are booming, with new tar highways, bridges, gas and oil exploration taking place – it is Mozambique's new Eldorado.

And I suspect that Renamo have finally woken from their slumber and realised that if they don't make a big noise now, they will miss the coming gray train and be forever doomed to being small time bandits in a tiny part of a very big country.

tonyweaver@iafrica.com

It's alive! Actually, it's half-dead – are you ready for the Zombie Apocalypse?

Tamara Lush
Sapa-AP

TAMPA, Florida: First came Miami: the case of a naked man eating most of another man's face. Then Maryland, a college student telling police he killed a man, then ate his heart and part of his brain.

It was different in New Jersey, where a man stabbed himself 50 times and threw bits of his own intestines at police. They pepper-sprayed him, but he was not easily subdued.

He was, people started saying, acting like a zombie. And the whole discussion just kept growing, becoming a topic that

'Vampires have a romantic appeal, zombies are doomed'

the internet couldn't seem to stop talking about.

The actual incidents are horrifying – and, if how people are talking about them is any indication, fascinating. In America, where zombie imagery is used to peddle everything from tools and weapons to garden

gnomes, they all but beg the comparison.

People are used to violence. Cannibalism and people who should fall down but don't? That's something else entirely.

So many strange things have made headlines in recent days that The Daily Beast assembled a Google map tracking "instances that may be the precursor to a zombie apocalypse".

And the federal agency that tracks diseases weighed in as well, insisting it had no evidence that any zombie-linked health crisis was unfolding.

The cases themselves are anything but funny. Each

involved real people either suspected of committing unspeakable acts or having those acts visited upon them for reasons that have yet to be figured out. Maybe it's nothing new, either; people do horrible things to each other on a daily basis.

But what made search terms like "zombie apocalypse" trend day after day last week on the internet, fuelled by discussions and postings that were often framed as humour?

"They've heard of these zombie movies, and they make a joke about it," says Lou Manza, a psychology professor at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania, who learned

about the whole thing at the breakfast table on Friday morning when his 18-year-old son quipped that a "zombie apocalypse" was imminent.

Symbolic of infection and evil, zombies are terrifying in a way that other horror-movie iconography isn't, says Elizabeth Bird, an anthropologist at the University of South Florida. Zombies look like us. But they aren't. They are some baser form of us – slowly rotting and shambling along, intent on "surviving" and creating more of their kind, but with no emotional core, no conscience, no limits.

"Vampires have kind of a

romantic appeal, but zombies are doomed," Bird says. "Zombies can never really become human again. There's no going back. That resonates in today's world, with people feeling like we're moving towards an ending. Ultimately they are much more of a depressing figure."

Speculation varies. It could be a virus that escapes from some secret government lab, or one that mutates on its own. It will, many believe, be something we've created – and therefore brought upon ourselves.

Zombies represent America's fears of bioterrorism, which strengthened after the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Economic anxiety doesn't help matters. Consider the terms that those fears produce: zombie banks, zombie economies, zombie governments.

Zombies have been around in US culture at least since Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was published in 1818, though they really took off after George Romero's nightmarish, black-and-white classic horror film *Night of the Living Dead* hit the screen in 1968.

In the past several years, they have become both wildly popular and big business.

It goes far beyond comic books, costumes and conventions. An Ace Hardware store

in Nebraska features a "Zombie Preparedness Centre" that includes bolts and fasteners for broken bones, glue and caulk for peeling skin, and deodorisers to freshen up decaying flesh. "Don't be scared," its website says. "Be prepared."

On uncrate.com you can find everything you need to survive the apocalypse – zombie-driven or otherwise – in a single "bug-out bag".

On Amazon, you can purchase a Gnomble, a gored-out zombie garden gnome.

Maybe it's that we joke about the things we fear.

Laughter makes them manageable.

Indonesia escalates fight to save rhino

Tony Carnie

INDONESIA has declared an international rhino "emergency" and urged SA and all rhino nations to join a global effort to prevent their extinction within our lifetime.

President Susilo Yudhoyono of Indonesia declared yesterday to be the start of International Year of the Rhino, mainly to ensure the survival of two critically threatened Asian rhino species. The number of Javan rhinos has sunk to fewer than 50 animals, while only about 200 Sumatran rhinos are still alive.

Yudhoyono said he hoped all rhino range states in Africa and Asia would take similar action to protect rhinos from poaching by crime syndicates.

"Strong and clear political messages from the highest possible levels are required to combat the illegal killing and trade in rhino and the message from President Yudhoyono is loud and clear," said John Scanlon, the secretary-general of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

"We hope that this bold initiative from Indonesia will serve as a catalyst for further high-level political support to protect rhino in the wild."

The declaration comes after another two white rhinos were killed in the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park in KwaZulu-Natal last week, bringing the death toll in South Africa to well over 230 rhinos in the first five months of this year.

Yolan Friedmann, the head of the Endangered Wildlife Trust, said the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products was now the third-largest form of illegal trade after drugs and human trafficking.

HIKING TRAILS, KHOISAN VILLAGE

Vlei residents offer an alternative

Staff Writer

THE communities opposed to the development of a 9 000m² shopping complex on the banks of Princess Vlei have developed their own alternative plan for the wetland which will include hiking trails and the development of a cultural Khoisan Village instead.

The "Save Princess Vlei" lobby group came up with the "People's Plan" because it believes the new mall will destroy local business.

It said instead of money going to local business and remaining in the Grassy Park area, "money will be sucked away to the pockets of big retailers".

"There are already many shopping centres nearby – we don't need another one. Princess Vlei is part of our memory, history and culture – from the Khoisan who were here first, to the people who have grown up and lived their lives here. The government can't erase our history and heritage," read a statement from the group.

Phillip Ram of the Greater Cape Town Civic Alliance, who has been one of the mall's biggest opponents, said they have a plan for Princess Vlei which is to "redevelop and rehabilitate" the natural ecosystem and to revitalise the public open space.

The interventions in the People's Plan include:

- Hiking trail to Macassar Dunes
- Hiking trail to Elephants Eye Cave
- Walkway around the Princess Vlei
- A cultural and socio-nature centre
- Khoisan village
- Sunset Concert Park
- Play park for children

"This is something the people want. People don't want a

mall there. There will be walkways around the vlei, braai areas and ... an eco-centre so kids can learn about sensitive fynbos and the history of the Khoisan and a craft market. We will not concrete 9 000m²."

He said they will be launching the People's Plan for

Princess Vlei on June 16. "Princess Vlei is almost like Table Mountain and people can't live without it."

In April the province gave the clearance needed for the shopping complex to be built on the shores of Princess Vlei. The development has been

met with strong opposition from environmental lobby groups and neighbouring communities who use the green area for recreation.

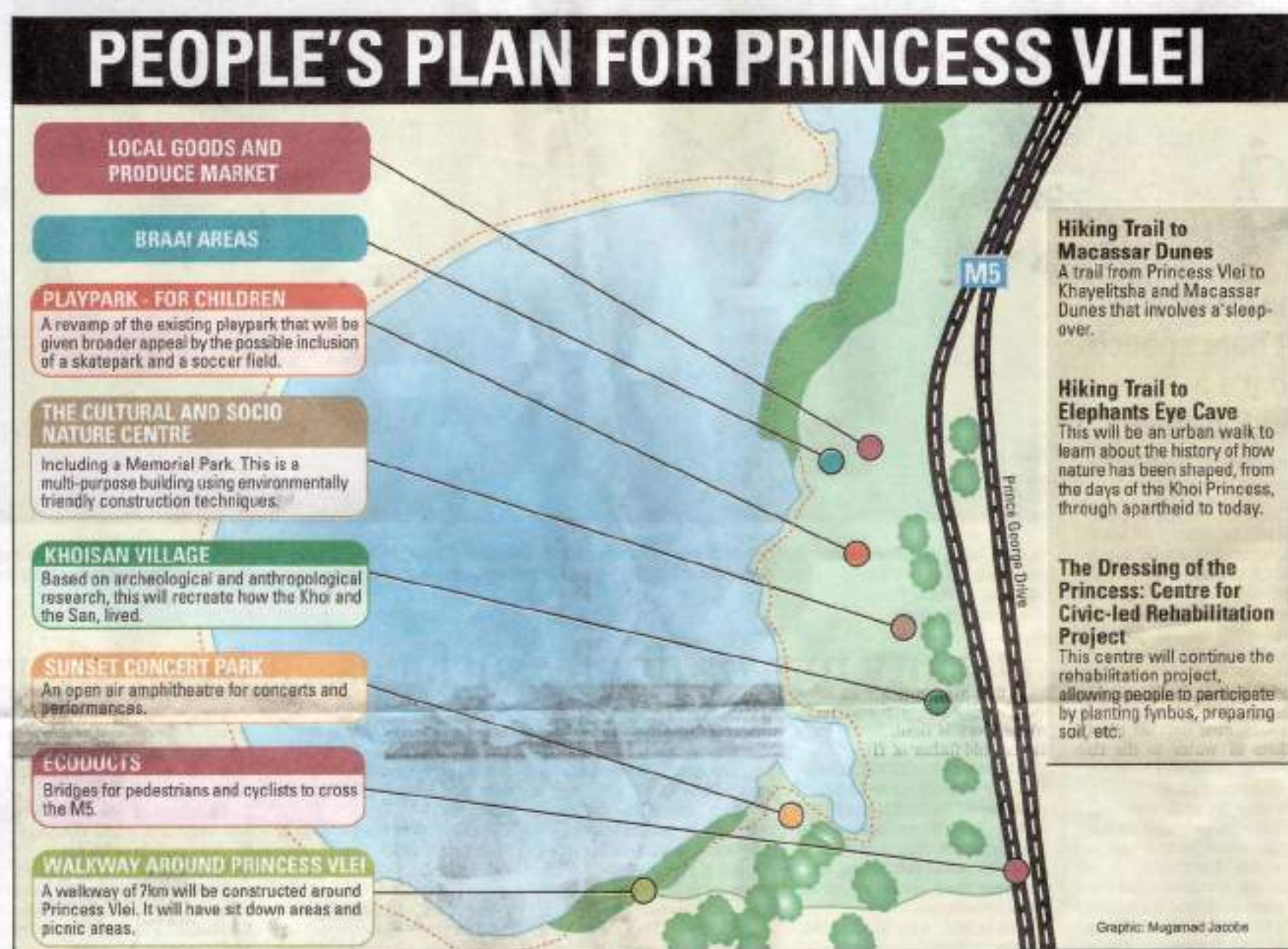
The lobby groups say the development of the land has been in the offing since Insight Property Developers initially

tried to buy it from the city in 1998.

In 2008 Princess Vlei became part of a community-led rehabilitation project of fynbos and wetland ecology named "The Dressing The Princess".

An ecologist working for

the SA National Biodiversity Institute, George Davis, said earlier that a big building on the shores of the Princess Vlei would impact negatively on the eco-system as contaminated run-off water would be generated which would flow into the vlei.



Premier promises to follow procedures

Babalo Ndenze
Political Writer

PREMIER Helen Zille says her administration has learnt its lessons in the wake of Public Protector Thuli Madonsela's probe into its R70 million communication tender – and will follow the correct procedures in the future.

Last week Madonsela found maladministration and fruitless and wasteful expenditure on the part of the premier's department, but found nothing unlawful.

In her final report, the public protector also took into account the report of the Provincial Treasury on the procurement process and its "transversal nature, which made a number of negative findings against the department".

"However, although it was concluded that TBWA would in any event have been awarded the contract, the supply chain management process revealed a lack of control measures and good governance principles," said Madonsela.

She said the premier's department had identified the need for a single brand identity and communication strategy for the Western Cape provincial government prior to 2010. The objective was to procure a transversal term contract applicable to all provincial departments.

Zille told the Cape Times that her administration has learnt that the correct officials in supply chain management must identify transversal tenders upfront, and implement the correct procedures for such tenders from the start so that there was no need to re-advertise.

"We also know that score sheets and a summarised meeting report from a bid evaluation committee are not believed to constitute minutes, as we previously believed, and we will have separate minutes of such meetings in future," said Zille.

The ANC, however, said it won't let the matter go easily and plans to take the Western Cape communication tender to the Public Service Commission and the auditor-general.

babalo.ndenze@iitl.co.za

Businesses force Home Affairs' Maitland refugee reception office to relocate

Barbara Maregele

PRESSURE by local businesses has forced the Department of Home Affairs to relocate its Maitland refugee reception office to Customs House on the Foreshore, department spokes-

woman Manusha Pillai says.

"In addition, the landlord of the premises currently housing the office in Maitland, earlier this year informed the department of his intention to bring the lease agreement to an end on June 30, 2012," she

said last night. Pillai said consultations were taking place between the relevant stakeholders.

The department would implement certain measures by the end of the month. "Refugees holding section

24 permits can submit their applications for refugee ID and Travel documents at Cape Town Regional office to facilitate faster processing of these documents.

"New applicants will be directed to other Refugee

Reception Offices to submit their applications," she said.

Anthony Muteti, of refugee rights group People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty, said refugees would be at risk of being robbed as the

Foreshore was an isolated area.

"The safety of the people would then be a big concern for us."

"However, this is a much better solution than moving it into a location. New arrivals

would be at risk and wouldn't know where to go," he said.

Muteti said the department still needed to review the classification of the section 24 permits as their status was still under review.

barbara.maregele@iitl.co.za

Removing window panes in robberies 'happens all the time'

From Page 1

to contact the police on 0860 01011 or SMS tip-offs to crime line at 32211.

Hein Koekemoer, Head of the Department of Intelligence and Investigations at Tactical Reaction Services, said removing a window pane was not a new modus operandi.

"This happens all the time and it would normally be when a new window had just been installed. If the window is old, the perpetrators would bring special tools to remove the window pane. While they get busy with the window, the people inside won't hear a thing."

Judge Khampepe's robbery comes just after Justice Mogoeng had made an application to the Minister of Justice for tighter security measures for judges.

SA first took notice of Justice Khampepe when former president Thabo Mbeki appointed her to head a commission of inquiry into whether the Scorpions should remain under the Justice ministry or be absorbed

by the police.

The Supreme Court of Appeal rejected one of Judge Khampepe's sentences imposed when she was in the high court. The case involved a gang of three convicted of breaking into two houses when the owners were out. On their return they were attacked; one elderly home owner was tortured and murdered. In the other case, a rape victim, 84, needed emergency surgery.

Judge Khampepe decided there were substantial reasons not to impose the mandatory sentence of life imprisonment. She sentenced them to 15 years for the murder and the rapist to an additional 18 years.

The Supreme Court of Appeal said she had over-emphasised the relative youthfulness of the accused and their prospects of rehabilitation. It found the rapist acted "like a sex savage".

The accused were between 20 and 25 at the time and demonstrated no sign of immaturity, said the appeal judges.

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**OSCAR'S
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Princess Vlei U-turn

City decides to shelve proposed mall, car park and taxi rank

KOWTHAR SOLOMONS

THE CITY of Cape Town has done an about-turn on its decision to sell part of Princess Vlei to mall developers, putting an end to a contentious issue that has dragged on for more than 15 years.

The city told Weekend Argus exclusively that it would today announce its decision to shelve the proposed mall, adjacent car park and taxi rank.

The plans were strongly opposed by environmental lobby groups and residents of neighbouring working-class suburbs who use the green area for ceremonies and recreation.

The development of the land, which is of historical significance to the Khoisan and lies in the endangered Cape Flats fynbos biome, had been in the offing since Insight Property Developers tried to buy it from the city in 1998.

Today's announcement is likely to be welcomed by environmental groups such as the Princess Vlei Forum, and will put an end to their stand-off with the city, which had the final say after the provincial government gave the deal the green light.

The forum opposed the development of the vlei due to its rich environmental, cultural and historical significance.

Deputy mayor Ian Neilson said yesterday the city had been searching for alternatives before announcing an official halt to the project.

"The city has been in discussion with the prospective developers of the land over the past year to investigate alternatives. We have come to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the zoning that has been achieved for the development, the only workable option would be for the city to cancel the proposed sale."

"Our own valuation of the social value of the land surrounding Princess Vlei, and its potential for enhanced social benefit, has led us to the conclusion that a different vision is required for the land, a vision that we look forward to developing with our residents."

Insight Property Developers would be compensated for cancellation of the project, although the city was unable to provide an exact figure as it said some legal issues remained outstanding.

Neilson said the city believed the amount would be acceptable to both parties.

The wetland is steeped in Khoisan legend. It is named after a Khoisan princess who, according



PARTY COLOURS: Revellers make the most of yesterday's Human Rights Day public holiday, partying long and hard at the We Are One Colour Festival, held on the Grand Parade. The vibrant extravaganza is inspired by the traditional Hindu Holi festival, which celebrates the coming of spring, and sees partygoers throwing around fistfuls of vibrantly coloured powder, while house, techno, progressive and more reverberate in the background.

PICTURE: ADRIAN DE KOCK



SAVED: The vlei has long been used for ceremonies and recreation.

PICTURE: DAVID RITCHIE

to legend, was abducted by Portuguese sailors while she bathed in the waters of the vlei. It was also one of the few natural areas coloured people could visit after the apartheid government relocated them to the Cape Flats.

The Cape Town Biodiversity

Network listed the vlei as part of its network in 2006 after a study found it contained unique Cape Flats dune strandveld and sand fynbos.

The proposed sale of the wetland was rejected by the city in 2009, but the provincial govern-

ment overturned the decision.

The city then agreed to sell off a portion of the land late last year, sparking fury from communities.

Allegations of fraud and corruption by the forum, which claimed there were "serious irregularities" about the sale and its approval, led to an investigation by the Hawks and the deal was put on hold.

The lobby to end the development plans was boosted in September when Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu threw his weight behind the preservation of Princess Vlei in a letter to the forum.

"I would like to express my support for the campaign to save the greater Princess Vlei area from the inappropriate development of a shopping mall, and for its protection in perpetuity as a nature and heritage park. Princess Vlei is a

valuable place for citizens to come to be close to God and nature, to find peace and to build family and community," he said.

"It is a much-loved gathering place for communities from surrounding areas. Before the Group Areas Act, landowners of all races lived in its banks. Let us stop destroying our beautiful world for the sake of short-term profit. Let us use our laws to safeguard our natural and cultural heritage."

Tutu's announcement paved the way for the forum to continue its own project to revitalise the land, Dressing the Princess.

The project aims to restore Princess Vlei after years of neglect by authorities, with plans that include setting up a Khoisan Village to teach people more about the indigenous culture, an outdoor market, an eco-friendly park for children, and hiking trails.

Tutu's unity plea to halt Cape violence

LINDIZ VAN ZILLA

CAPE Town is a ticking timebomb, with violent crime leading to a "grotesquely abnormal" situation which will only get worse if urgent action is not taken, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu has warned.

In a hard-hitting essay published in Weekend Argus today, Tutu and his daughter, the Reverend Mpho Tutu, the executive director of the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, lament the almost daily murder of children in Cape Town and call on Capetonians from all walks of life to work together to stop the violence.

"Wherever one is in the world, the avoidable death of a child is considered a disgrace; the rape of a child is considered an abomination. Yet in Cape Town, a world-class city voted by New York Times readers as among the top travel destinations on Earth, it's impossible to tell how many children have been brutally violated and/or killed over any given period because nobody appears to keep such records," they say, citing the death this week of nine-year-old Lihle Hlanjwa, who was raped, set alight and abandoned next to a freeway in January, and the many



SPEAKING OUT: Desmond Tutu

MORE

● Full article by Desmond and Mpho Tutu - Page 15

● Authorities fear explosion of violence as prison gangs target African townships - in tomorrow's Weekend Argus

To page 2

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Insults, stones fly on Human Rights Day

THABISO THAKALI
and SAMEER NAIK

A HUMAN Rights Day commemoration of the Sharpeville massacre, in which 69 people were killed 54 years ago in one of the most shocking incidents in South Africa's apartheid history, was marred by booing, insults and stone throwing.

At every turn there were police vehicles, water tankers and even barbed wire trailers, and as President Jacob Zuma laid wreaths at the memorial, a group of PAC and EFF members gathered outside the venue trying to disrupt proceedings and force their way in. Zuma, however, was received with a resounding roar by ANC

supporters at the George Thabane Cricket Pitch, where he made a campaign speech highlighting his government's achievements, and staked his claim for a second term as president.

"We will never forget that our compatriots were brutally killed for demanding equal citizenship. We must cherish the hard-won equal citizenship today," he declared.

"We live in a country that is better than before, and that is because of the struggle of the people of South Africa."

He listed among the government's achievements increased access to higher education and social grants, a decline in HIV

infections, 420 000 jobs created through infrastructure programmes and increased numbers of children enrolling for Grade R.

But he steered clear of addressing the Nkandla hot potato, saying nothing about opposition calls for him to be impeached.

He addressed the issue of corruption, saying that "we know that our people are troubled by corruption, and we want to see it eradicated in our country."

Earlier, DA deputy federal chairman Makashule Gana was booed off the stage when he addressed the crowd at the main event, prompting Arts and Culture Minister Paul



RCS: Police prevent PAC and EFF members from entering area.

PICTURE: PABALLO THEKISO

'MALL PROMISES SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS'

Department defends plan for vlei

Staff Writer

THOSE raising concerns about the proposal to build a shopping centre at Princess Vlei have good intentions, but they must understand the purpose of planning and sustainable development for all.

So says Aziel Gangerdine, spokesman for the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, in a letter to the Cape Times.

But the Princess Vlei Forum, set up earlier this month to oppose the proposed development, says residents have not been asked what development they would like on the land.

The MEC for Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Anton Bredell, has given the green light for the shopping complex to be built on the shores of the vlei.

The development has encountered strong opposition from environmental lobby groups and residents of the neighbouring working-class suburbs, who use the green area for picnics, baptisms and recreation. It has also been stalled by the city council's refusal to rezone the land.

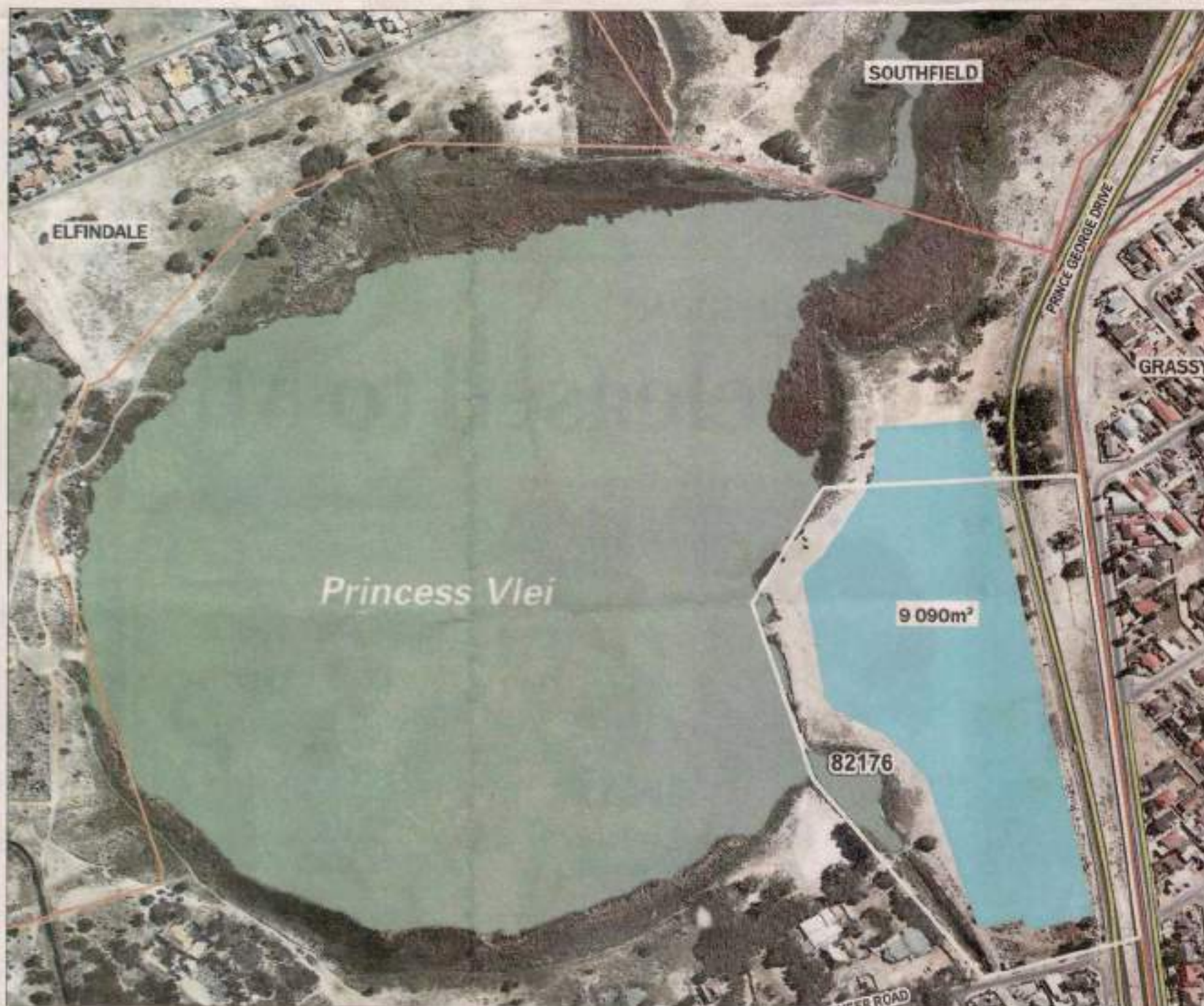
Gangerdine said that every proposed development, once constructed, came with the promise of socio-economic benefits that should define the principles of sustainable development.

He said it had been argued that there was no certain measure of the job opportunities and other benefits to the surrounding community.

"Responses to the concerns indicate that the shopping centre will occupy only an estimated 4 percent of the entire area of the Princess Vlei park.

"One can also not ignore the promise that the infrastructure, once complete, will improve surveillance, security and public facilities on the site, to encourage the community to make use of the property surroundings."

Gangerdine wrote that a biophysical study had shown much of the site was degraded and the wetlands on the properties were not of particular botanical importance, although they were of "high conservation-worthiness".



KEEP IT GREEN: This graphic shows where the proposed shopping complex at Princess Vlei would be built. The development has been opposed by residents who say the vlei should remain as it is.
Picture: DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Mea Lashbrooke, spokeswoman for the Princess Vlei Forum, said that residents were feeling desperate "in response to the threat of what is seen as inappropriate commercial development".

"People in the vicinity feel betrayed and angry. For long enough their needs have not been met and at no time have they

been surveyed to establish what form of development is needed."

Kelvin Cochrane, who has lived on the vlei for more than 35 years, has spearheaded for the past three years an alternative project called "Dressing the Princess", which aims to rehabilitate the Sand Plain Fynbos near the shores of the vlei.

"A double-volume mall, a car park for close on 600 cars, plus a taxi rank, all of which will cover 9 000 square metres close to the vlei, is unacceptable to a people who have been marginalised historically," Cochrane said.

"It is time to restore dignity to the Princess and to the people who enjoy what she offers."

Cochrane said a braai area, craft market and concert area were being planned for the vlei.

He said he had no doubt that these alternative plans would revitalise the area in a way that would be impossible if a mall was built.

Philip Bam, chairman of the Lotus River Ottery,

Grassy Park Ratepayers and Residents Association, said: "With our city becoming more congested, the people of Grassy Park, Retreat, Parkwood Estate and Lavender Hill find solace in this green lung where we can escape the noise and air pollution and renew our energy."

See Page 8

Locals float ideas for Vlei

ASTRID FEBRUARIE
@FebAstrid

The release of a draft concept development framework for the greater Princess Vlei area is an important victory for the Princess Vlei Forum campaign. They believe it shows that the City has listened to the community.

However, many questions were raised when residents had the opportunity to discuss it with the Forum again about two weeks ago.

The City's framework sets out the vision for the development of the greater Princess Vlei area into a natural recreation site.

Bridget Pitt, secretary of the Forum, explains that it includes the views of the local community, which were gathered by the Forum.

"This follows the successful campaign waged under the umbrella of the Princess Vlei Forum to prevent the building of a shopping mall on the banks," she says.

Pitt says the Forum has been motivated by two important objectives. First, to ensure that Princess Vlei is developed and protected as a site celebrating nature and heritage for all to enjoy and second, to ensure that this transformation occurs with meaningful community consultation.

Uniquely placed

Pitt explains the vlei is a complex site, with a complex history.

"Its natural features, location and social and cultural heritage come together to create a space that is uniquely placed to bridge many divides in our divided City."

Pitt says the Forum's vision for the vlei is that it needs to be accessible to a range of groups, and should offer spaces where people can meet and offer activities which build community and connection.

"It should reflect the cultural identity and history of its users, be safe and continue to engage the community," she says.

At the meeting residents, after viewing the City's draft framework, raised their concerns, including that there was no wheelchair access. They wanted the vlei to be fully accessible to the public, including for the blind and anyone with a disability.

Residents also shared the sentiment that there needed to be adequate parking and safe play equipment that was age-appropriate. They would like to see a skateboard park as well.

They further agreed that there needed to be a craft centre where locals could showcase and sell their work, as well as a memory centre with information about the history of the vlei. Residents also put forward the idea of a Khoisan museum and ongoing education provided to conserve and restore the vlei.

They also agreed that there needed to be a bridge connecting people from one side

of Prince George Drive to the vlei.

They further agreed that the City of Cape Town should be responsible for all the expenses. But they said that with a cafe and a facility where people could sell their artwork the Princess Vlei could become self-sustainable in future.

Pitt says the Forum will now put together a document with all the concerns raised as well as the suggestions the residents put forward. They will pass this information on to the City before a final draft document is put together.

For more information email imagine@princessvlei.org.



Two lifeguards watch over Princess Vlei as residents walk by.

PHOTO: ASTRID FEBRUARIE

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FROM PIPE DREAM TO FAIRY-TALE ENDING

Princess Vlei: maul to a victory

Bridget Pitt

MARCH 22 was a historic day for Princess Vlei – the day the city finally declared that it would not sell off this iconic public space. This was reported in the Saturday Argus on the morning of our planned Day of Action and Celebration, where deputy mayor Ian Neilson would later confirm this announcement.

We could not help feeling, as we hurried a howling north wind while trying to set up our stalls for the event, that the vlei could have shown a lot more gratitude – offered us some placid, sparkling water, a soft breeze and warm sunshine, instead of white horses scudding a grey surface and flapping banners and gazebos being whipped out of our hands.

But then again, the winds of change are inextricably tempestuous, and the Princess always seems to have a mind of her own.

As the day proceeded, it became something of a microcosm of the 10-year campaign to save the vlei. Huge passion, creativity and vision, some political opportunism, some no-nonsense and some unexpected guests, a marching band, some kids karate, an elderly resident insisting that a huge monster came out of the vlei when she was a child, some chaos and some perfect orchestration, some understating heroes and some overblown rhetoric, and lots and lots of people just quietly getting on with the event... in other words, all the creative, wry, warty but ultimately transformative forces that occasionally come together behind a common vision of our city and remind us that Cape Town is home to all of us.

Cape Town has a history of fighting for its natural and public spaces, but the Princess Vlei campaign had two points that distinguished it. First, the space has been compromised by years of abuse and neglect. Second, the diversity of those who threw their weight behind the campaign was extraordinary – street dwellers and millionaires, schoolchildren and octogenarians, environmentalists and shopkeepers, artists and activists, all political parties, Rastafarians, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and Jews... It is in these two aspects that the campaign has much to teach us about citizenship, social change and city governance.

The first striking lesson the campaign illustrated was the power of vision. It has been a campaign driven by imagination, by the capacity of those to see beyond the historical storyline, to recognise the natural life that still breathes in the soil and the waters, to recognise the value of the history and the tremendous potential of the site to build connections between nature and people.

The spark for the campaign was lit by the vision of local resident Kelvin Cochrane, who had transformed waste-lands around his home into fynbos sanctuaries. Cochrane recognised the power of fynbos restoration to not only breathe life back into urban wastelands, but to restore dignity and social cohesion to embattled communities. Cochrane's vision for Princess Vlei was compelling, but it would have remained a pipe dream had it not struck a chord in the local community.

Many people cared about Princess Vlei and remembered it positively. But what had to be overcome was a widespread apathy, a sense of helplessness, nurtured by centuries of being manipulated. People needed not only to want to save the vlei, but to believe that it was possible.

Cochrane's initial Bottom Rd Sanctuary project was an important demonstration of what could be done with slow, systematic intervention.

Thus the campaign to save Princess Vlei began not in the courtroom or municipal offices, but in the soil, beside the water, and it began not with placards but with planting. Planting was a moving experience for all who participated, particularly for the many teenagers and children. They handled the earth in a liberal and tactile way, and made a long-term investment – unusual experiences in our devalued world driven by the mantra of immediate gratification. Five years on, those seedlings have flourished into small enclosures of fynbos, offering a glimpse of what the vlei could become, just as the vision and passion for what the vlei could be has flourished in the minds of those who planted.

The campaign grew, people were mobilised and to their credit the city eventually



ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL: The sun sets favourably on Princess Vlei, after a 10-year battle to get the area recognised as a valuable space historically and for the well-being of the public and the physical environment.

One man's vision... and a 10-year campaign that snowballed, fortified by incremental gains and, ultimately, betrayal

cit listened and effectively declined the mail proposed by refusing to extend the rezoning in 2011. This was overruled by a provincial minister – only for the campaign to fold out again, both fortified by the first victory and rendered more militant by the betrayal.

By now the vision had grown, and imagination was driving the campaign. People were striving not just to stop a mall, but to beautify, restore and enhance both the physical space at Princess Vlei and the intangible site of memory and heritage that it represented. Expressed as the People's Plan, this vision became the basis of an ongoing conversation and engagement, as people occupied the space, used it widely and creatively and allowed themselves to dream of possibilities. Through this engagement, Princess Vlei became a metaphor for many things, a repository of memory, history, culture, holding out the possibility of healing for some of the schemes that have threatened our society. As such, it became a symbol of hope.

Awareness grew rapidly, as people all over the world became fascinated by this struggle. Thousands signed petitions and sent messages of support, although the numbers who actually came to the vlei at any one time to plant, to pray or create were relatively small. Yet those few had an impact, hugely disproportionate to their numbers. As if they'd been entrusted by others to be the guardians of an important impulse within our city, of the drive

towards a kinder society that is more environmentally and socially sustainable, that those who can't afford their own gardens have a particularly pressing need for access to free natural and beautiful spaces, that we all need these common spaces to find our common citizenship.

The experience of this campaign testifies to the power of those shared public spaces as markers of our common identity as citizens. It demonstrates the power of vision in igniting passion, but also the importance of this vision being shared, being negotiated and being collectively embraced. Those for the mall had a vision too, but it was not a vision that resonated with communities. And it tells us that social change is not only effected by demonstrations or powerful people; it can be brought about by people looking out their window, seeing something that needs improving, and getting on and doing it.

For our leaders, it is a lesson in the need to listen and to pay attention. The city speaks the language of "public participation", but often this is tokenism and rubber-stamping. The politicians get nervous about people having too much say because they will be quick to point out hypocrisy and opportunism. City officials get nervous because people can be demanding and complicated and not understanding the rules.

But lively civic participation is Cape Town's only defence against the scale of social and environmental challenges facing us. It is all too easy for those in power to sacrifice long-term social interests for short-term political gain, as we have seen with the Sea Point waterfront, with the Phillips Horizontal Areas, with Princess Vlei. It is the vigilance of the citizens that has drawn attention to the risk posed to these areas by short-sighted expedience and greed.

The city has changed its slogan from "This City works for you" to "Making progress possible. Together". This is a meaningful slogan if the city does not find ways of working transparently and accurately with all communities. To make it meaningful, the leadership needs

to meet people halfway, support those working for the long-term good of the city and put political expedience aside. They should be flexible enough to change course. If a proposal they have come up with is not what people want, they should not be patronising or suspicious, but willing to discuss difficult choices and complex problems openly and trust in the wisdom of collective solutions.

For much of the last year, we have felt that no one was listening – we were denied meetings with anyone in the city, including councillors, yet Neilson has told us that the decision to stop the mall was made a year ago. For some reason it was felt that speaking to us would compromise their discussions with the developer and yet their conversations with the developer were ongoing. Surely some way needs to be found to enable better channels of communication between the city and the citizens? And a final lesson to be learnt by all of us, in particular our political leaders, is about value. Commercial value is highly prized in our society. Often it is pursued as being of benefit to all, because it will bring jobs and wealth that will supposedly "trickle down" to the poor. But as the divisions between wealthy and poor grow steadily and as the trickle to the poor dries to a drip or nothing, while the flood to the wealthy expands, this argument is losing its currency.

A Princess Vlei let tumble, carved, restored and made accessible in appropriate ways to the community has a value that far exceeds the commercial profit generated by a shopping centre, a value that benefits and will continue to benefit thousands. The benefits of social cohesion, mental health and environmental sustainability are harder to quantify in monetary terms, but they are critical to the well-being of a city, and the more the social and environmental health of a city is compromised, the more it will cost us now and in the future. It is perhaps a testament to good leadership if this value has now been recognised, but it should never have been in question.

high premium on political preferences strictly tracking your deepest feelings about the current portico, then abstaining, or spoiling a ballot, makes sense.

I concede the coherence of the answer, but a coherent argument isn't necessarily a compelling argument.

Here's the problem. The brutal constitutional truth is that a government will be in place after May 7 with legal power to enact laws and policies, and John and Abdul will be forced to comply with those policies, such as the e-voting system, whether they like it or not.

You do not escape legal liability just because you abstained or spoil your ballot. The ideas – from John's and Abdul's perspective – who get into Parliament and into the Cabinet will have the legal right to affect your life. That is their job.

A considerable investment has been made by the schoolchildren and others who have planned at Princess Vlei, by those who have donated long hours of labour and resources, by those who have funded legal counsel, and yet the only investment mentioned by the city is the investment made by the developer. Had the mall gone ahead, the community investment would not have been recompensed, yet Neilson has made it clear that the developer will be compensated from the public purse.

So a lesson for our leaders is to recognise the value of public spaces, the value of natural resources and the massive and critical value of active, passionate and visionary citizenship.

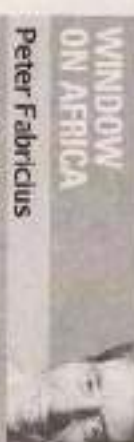
The decision by the city not to go ahead with the development may be political expedience or it may be that the city has indeed listened – and has accorded value to those intruders. Or perhaps, as with all human endeavour, it is a bit of both. But even if it is political expedience, it is our denocratic voice that has made it expedient for them to listen and that in itself is a reason to celebrate. Neilson has expressed the city's willingness to work with communities on the transformation of Princess Vlei. This is an excellent opportunity for the city to forge ways of working with citizens, without tokenism and expedience, and we look forward to being part of that engagement.

We would like to pay tribute to those civic leaders (and we know there are many) who were always in our corner, and to the thousands who rallied in different ways to our cause.

Let's savour this victory, and use it as a platform to transform not only Princess Vlei, but also our city, wherever it is needed.

● Pitt is the author of *Unbroken Wing* and *The Oryx Leap*. She has written a book for the South African National Biodiversity Institute on urban nature conservation and works with initiatives to build communities through nature conservation. This article was written on behalf of the Princess Vlei Forum.

Mrs Mugabe's effect on AU numbers at summit in Brussels



Peter Fabricius

JUST as the official themes of AU summits are invariably overshadowed by the conflict – or conflicts – de jour, so the agendas of Africa EU summits are now always upstaged by controversy over the invitation list.

And Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe is mostly at the centre of the row. The second summit between the two continents in Lisbon was postponed for four years because he was under EU travel sanctions but African leaders refused to attend if he wasn't there.

Eventually the EU waived its ban and so the Lisbon summit went ahead in 2007 instead of 2003. The third summit, in 2010, was held in Tripoli so the Mugabe issue didn't arise.

But it has reared its ugly head again before the fourth summit which is to be held in Brussels on Wednesday and Thursday. Mugabe is still under an EU travel ban, and so the EU didn't want him to attend. But after the AU objected, the EU relented and he was invited. But his wife Grace was denied a visa as she, with her husband, remains the last Zimbabwean under travel sanctions. "The EU didn't feel it could bend its rules just for a spouse. So now Robert Mugabe has pulled out of the summit and his government has called on all African leaders to do the same."

Yet other African governments should be careful not to be manipulated for it seems Zimbabwe has been trying to present a wider issue as though it is all about the Mugabes.

Last week the AU ambassadors in Addis Ababa recommended to their leaders that the summit be postponed while they considered the implications of the restrictions which the EU was placing on which Africans might attend.

The EU apparently insisted that it could only invite states recognised by the UN and the EU. Significantly the ambassadors' meeting was chaired by Zimbabwe's ambassador to the AU. It was much more about the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic – which the AU recognises as a state but which the EU and UN regard as part of Morocco – than about Grace Mugabe. The EU has instead invited Morocco which is not a member of the AU, having walked out in the 1980s when what was then the OAU recognised Sahrawi. But that is no longer an issue for the EU-Africa summit.

The EU has also invited Egypt which has been suspended from the AU because of the unconstitutional ousting of Mohamed Mursi last year. Brussels has not invited Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir because he is a fugitive from the International Criminal Court.

Like many other African governments, South Africa is irritated by the EU prescribing which African leaders should attend the summit. Such prescriptions contravert a resolution by the AU leaders in January that the African participants in each inter-regional summit should not be determined by the other side.

However the ambassadors' recommendation was not really about Grace Mugabe. Significantly, however, the ambassadors' meeting was chaired by Zimbabwe's ambassador to the AU and his government is now making its recommendation for all its worth by calling for a general boycott.

Portugal, at least, does not seem irritated enough by all of this to boycott the meeting and so it seems President Jacob Zuma remains set to go.

The EU behaves most often African leaders will feel the same.

However the issue has undoubtedly introduced an element of doubt into proceedings and so Brussels will probably have to wait rather anxiously until Wednesday to see who actually pitches up. It would be sad if a Mugabe – especially a Mrs Mugabe – were to spoil the party again. It's high time Africa bypassed them and moved on.

Sure, we would at least confirm what disaffected voters think (and in that regard, by the way, spoiling your ballot is more useful than not voting, but this will not stop a government from being formed. Only researchers will be confused, playing with the new data.

It seems to me that it is most sensible, therefore, for John and Abdul to ask themselves a different question: "If a gun is put against my head and I must choose one of the parties on the ballot paper, who would I give legal power to?" Vote for that party. Abstaining or spoiling your ballot won't stop the buggers from wielding huge power over you in terms of health, education, economic and other policies. You may as well decide who your governing party should be even if it's premised on choosing the lesser bad option.

If choices on ballot are too horrible, vote as if you have a gun to your head

ON THAT POINT

Eusebius McKaiser



about abstentions with a friend the week before. Call him Abdul. He, too, was thinking of abstaining. In the best-case scenario, he was thinking of voting but spoiling his ballot. He is not a liberal. He is a traditional ANC voter, but thinks this leadership does not deserve his vote, yet the other parties do not reflect his own Marxist approach.

Abdul, too, is politically homeless. Perhaps his situation is more disappointing: he's not so much homeless as disillusioned with his home's state, but isn't prepared to vote for any of the parties that are

Sports are Pain Free Once More



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mountain bike every weekend and paddle too with the Dusi being a highlight of my sporting calendar. I was frustrated to discover, as I got older, that pain in my knees forced me to slow down my active lifestyle. I stopped my squash altogether as the jarring effect of my knees whilst playing was becoming too painful. I also found myself waking up in the mornings feeling stiffness in my joints. Although I am a positive person, I was beginning to have visions of having to cut back on all my sports activities and feared advanced age issues setting in. Then I met Vincent Tones, the developer of Lifetones, and heard about the benefits of taking this product. Initially I thought only people with muscular ailments, arthritis or gout took the product, but after reading up on the product and seeing the wonderful testimonials on the website, I decided to give it a try. I can honestly say that Lifetones is a product that I would recommend to my friends and fellow sportsmen. I can certainly feel the difference when I wake up in the morning: with no more stiffness in my joints, it's lekker to get up! I am back to playing squash regularly with no painful knees and actively enjoying all my other sports. Old age will have to wait, thanks to Lifetones.

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Cape	Waterstone Health Shop	021 8500317
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Crawford	Kroonboom Pharmacy	021 6967880
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Durbanville	Durbell Pharmacy - Palmgrove Centre	021 9756570
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Parow	Parow Pharmacy	021 9399000
Parow	Panorama Pharmacy	021 9302916
Parow	Parow Pharmacy	021 9392170
Pentlyn	Vivacare Pharmacy	021 6913179
Piketberg	Piketberg Pharmacy	022 9131600
Pinecliffs	Mutual Park Pharmacy	021 5314858
Robertson	Robertson Pharmacy	023 6262031
Rondebosch	Health Highway - Silverwood Centre	021 6851795
Rondebosch	Vivacare Pharmacy - Silverwood	021 6853030
Rylands	Unken Pharmacy	021 6379037
Sea Point	Adelphi Pharmacy - Sea Point	021 4345568
Sea Point	The Healthy Tree - Adelphi Centre	021 4396142
Sea Point	Health Matters	021 4345490
Sea Point	Sunset Pharmacy - Kooft Rd	021 4343333
Somerset West	The Pharmacy - Somerset West	021 8923753
Somerset West	Circle Pharmacy - Circle Centre	021 8923753
Somerset West	Circle Pharmacy - Circle Centre	021 8923753
Southfield	Blackburns Pharmacy	021 690
Table View	Nature's Dail - 4 Fleming Square	
	Health Bureau	
	Witwatersrand Lifestyle Centre	

Western Cape Religious Leaders' Forum members and Khoisan and Amathembu Xhosa leaders, as well as people opposing the proposed building of a shopping mall at the Princess Vlei held a ceremony at the vlei on Sunday September 21, as part of their ongoing campaign to prevent the development.

The event included speeches in which the leaders encouraged communities to strengthen the anti-mall campaign and urged the authorities not to allow the mall to be built.

And as part of the ceremony, participants laid a mound of stones, over which water was poured and flower petals strewn, and prayers recited in a symbolic protection of the vlei. Hyde Park Primary School's brass band added to the atmosphere with vibrant music.

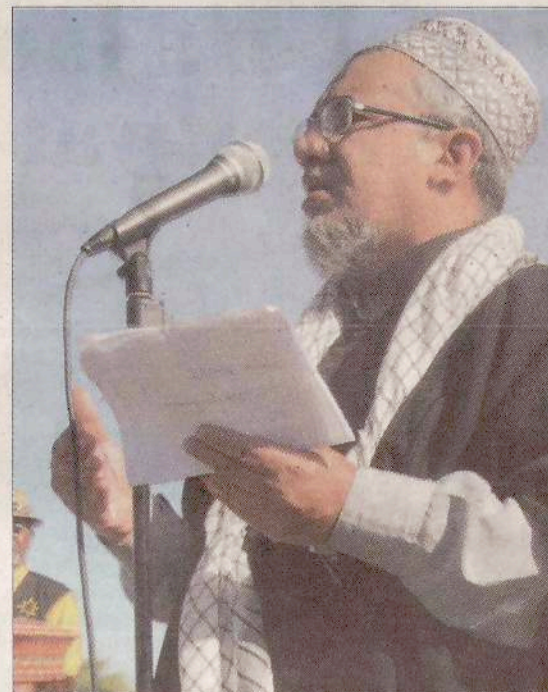


■ Religious and community leaders at the ceremony at the Princess Vlei include, from left, Reverend Andrew Williams and Bishop Geoff Davies, Chief Xhanti Sigcawu of the Xhosa Kingdom, Chief Mandla Ngonyama of the Abathembu Tribe, Chief !Kora Hennie van Wyk, Khoi Chief John Jansen, Philip Bam, Sister Pratiba Daya, Reverend Rachel Mash and royal Khoi guard Arthur Koeberg.



■ Also at the event, from left, are Godfrey Cleinwerck, Lotus High teacher Bennie Pietersen, Desiree Pietersen and André Curtis.

PICTURES: RAPHAEL WOLF



■ Sheikh Ridwaan Galant of the Muslim Judicial Council speaks against the construction of a shopping mall at the Princess Vlei.



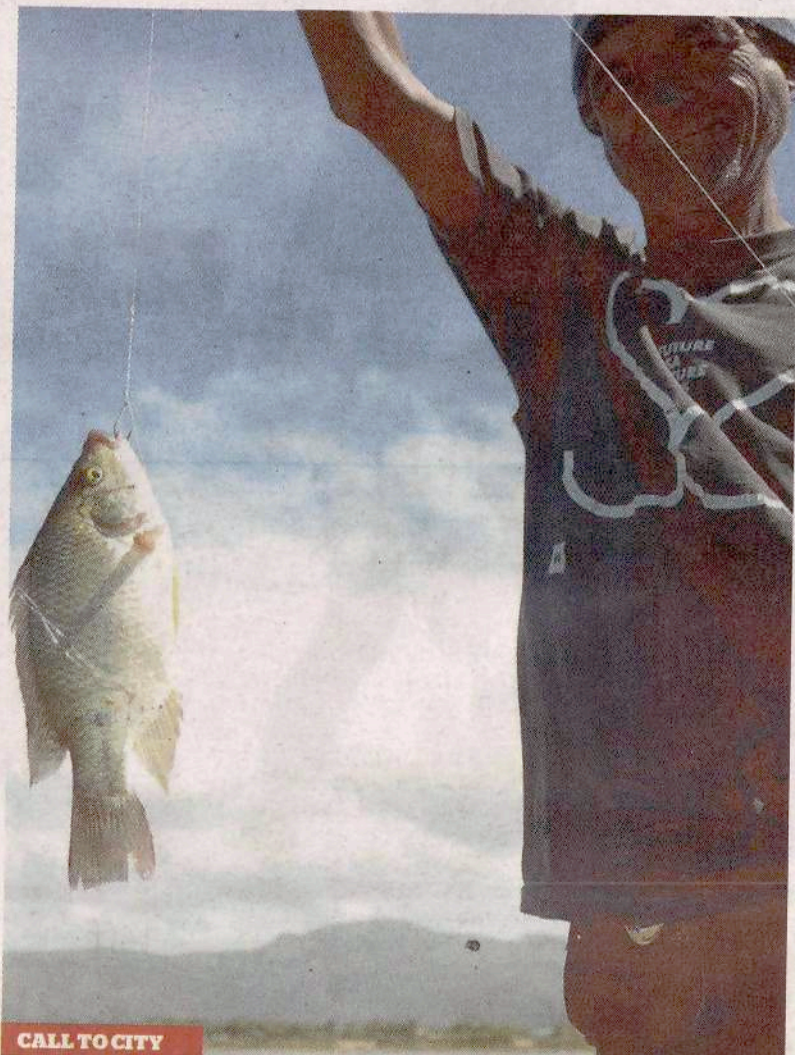
■ Western Cape religious leaders Forum Director Elizabeth Petersen pours water on stones which participants

STUDY TOWARDS:



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WETLANDSAGA



CALL TO CITY

The Princess Vlei lagoon has been saved from the construction of a shopping mall. The group that fought against it wants the city to make the cancellation of plans formal

PICTURES: ROSS JANSEN



City must act on decision, says Princess Vlei Forum

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Anél Lewis
METRO WRITER

FOR THE Princess Vlei Forum, who fought for more than 15 years against the proposed mall development, the City of Cape Town's actions must speak louder than words.

The forum has called on the council to pass a formal resolution at its next meeting at the end of this month to ensure that all plans for a commercial development have been cancelled and that the land will once again be zoned as a public open space.

In a statement, Bridget Pitt of the Princess Vlei Forum said: "We need more than verbal assurances. In 2011, it seemed as if the issue was won, but victory was snatched away from us when Local Government MEC Anton Bre-

dell overturned a decision by council on the rezoning."

Deputy mayor Ian Neilson announced last week that the controversial mall development would not go ahead and that the city would cancel the sale of a portion of the ecologically sensitive land for this purpose.

Neilson said then that the city had been in discussions with the developer about alternatives.

"We have come to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the zoning that has been achieved for the development, the only workable option would be for the city to cancel the proposed sale of the land to the developer and compensate him for the costs that he has incurred on the project."

The amount of compensation payable has

not been finalised yet.

In response to the forum's appeal, Neilson said they needed to formally complete the settlement with the developer before bringing a resolution to the council.

In the meantime the city would wait for the current zoning and subdivision approvals to lapse before moving ahead. The subdivision of the property, which would have enabled the shopping mall to be constructed, had not been implemented. This approval lapses in October, and the council would allow it to fall away.

Neilson said: "This is the simplest route to follow and has no cost (implications)." He said the current zoning would lapse in March 2017.

anel.lewis@inl.co.za

Relief that mall won't be replacing oasis

SOME go to Princess Vlei to braai with friends. Others might use it for fishing or even to restore their faith in their religion.

But they're all delighted that the natural oasis in the urban sprawl of Cape Town will not be developed.

The Cape Argus visited the area on Sunday to speak to some of its recreational users after the city cancelled the proposed shopping mall development

last week.

Henry Sirbon, 52, pictured left, of Grassy Park, sees the vlei as his livelihood. He is unemployed and fishes there for fish that he sells.

"I'm very happy that they are not going to build the mall here anymore. I'm not working - I get the fish here and sell them to the local people at a price they can afford. They keep on building malls in the poor

areas; we haven't got the money to spend at malls."

Looking over at the litter caught against the reeds, a single toilet block and a degraded playground, Sirbon said he hoped the vlei area would be developed to show it off: "We need walkways, and more trees and flowers. We need to make this environment look alive."

Marel Williams-Spencer, 55, pictured right, was

enjoying a braai at the vlei on Sunday. An accountant from Grassy Park, she said beautifying the area would uplift the visitors: "I

would like to see some jetties so that we can stand and look out at the water. There should also be better parking for visitors. The area is also dirty. I don't like to see the earth this way because it is part of my history. It belongs to the Khoisan."

WARREN FORTUNE

ZILLE AT EAST CAPE RALLIES

ANC must not 'use voters' as fodder

Babalo Ndenze

DA LEADER Helen Zille has warned the ANC against using the people of the Eastern Cape as voting fodder.

She appealed to voters who were "disillusioned by the ANC" to give the DA a chance at the polls next year.

The Western Cape premier was speaking from Cradock yesterday after one of her party's three rallies held in the province, considered to be an ANC stronghold.

Other rallies were held in Ngeleni village and Stutterheim where the party's leadership, including former ANC leader and Eastern Cape premier Nosimo Balindlela, met residents and canvassed voters.

Addressing a rally in Cradock, Zille said that up to now, the "ANC have treated the province as its natural electoral heartland".

"Give the DA a chance next year by lending us your vote," she said.

In her bid to woo voters, the DA leader invoked a statement previously made by Minister in the Presidency responsible for the National Planning Commission Trevor Manuel.

She said Manuel's utterance was "very important" in relation to the ANC's attitude towards Eastern Cape voters.

In a reaction to a DA statement in 2011 that it stood a chance of winning the Nelson Mandela Metro, Manuel at the time had said "are they mad, they'll never get close in Nelson Mandela Metro, it's the ANC

"The ANC liberated this country, why would we use people as voting fodder?" he asked.

"For the DA it's about privilege and preserving that white privilege. Ours is a historic task and mandate. They are entertaining an illusion. The ANC will win the Eastern Cape resoundingly."

Zille said Balindlela was "doing a fantastic" job.

Speaking in Ngeleni in the OR Tambo district, Zille said the Eastern Cape was proof of a political realignment in the country.

"Everyone knows that something profound is taking place in the Eastern Cape. This province is showing the depth and breadth of the political realignment that is unfolding in South Africa day by day," she said.

"While the ANC is losing its grip on the Eastern Cape, the DA is drawing people from different political parties and every walk of life. The DA is a party for all."

She told the DA's rank and file that they should not underestimate the importance of former ANC leaders and other black activists switching political allegiance in favour of the official opposition.

"This year, King Dalindyebo joined our cause. Who would have imagined these developments even five years ago?" asked Zille.

She reminded supporters that in a by-election result in Ward 8 in Matatiele last year, the DA increased its vote



Four ANC councillors named as candidates for elections next year

Zara Nicholson
Metro Writer

AT LEAST four ANC councillors have been named by branches as candidates in the general elections next year.

The party bars councillors from standing as provincial and national candidates.

However, the ANC said that councillors could be nominated by branches and formally selected as candidates in "exceptional" circumstances if the party saw more value in deploying a councillor to provincial or national level.

An ANC councillor in the Drakenstein Local Municipality, Sharon Davids, is on one of the lists.

Davids was not aware of the nomination, but said it did not mean she would remain a candidate.

"I will just wait for the ANC process to take its course," she said.

"Branches can nominate you, but it is up to the leadership and the list conference process to decide whether you stand."

"It is always about what the party wants. I am not going to comment on what I want. I will go wherever the ANC sends me and if they want to deploy me elsewhere I will go."

City councillor Jabu Mfusi is on the provincial candidates list.

Mfusi said: "If the branches and leadership choose me for provincial deployment, then I will go. I don't have a problem with it. I will go where the movement wants me to go."

"The ANC has many cadres and it is up to the internal structures to decide. I will abide by the democratic process."

Cape Town councillors Rhoda Bazier and Belinda Landingwe have also been named as candidates.

It is believed there is some unhappiness that councillors should not be included on provincial or national lists.

The selection process among political parties is gaining momentum before the fifth elections in democratic South Africa.

zara.nicholson@inl.co.za

Vavi was 'not reason' for call for special congress

DURBAN: Cosatu's embattled general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi was not one of the reasons given by member unions calling for a special congress, the federation's president said in Durban yesterday.

Congress of SA Trade Unions president S'dumo Dlamini said there had been eight or nine reasons that unions had given, behind their calls for a special congress.

"I can say to you without a doubt, that... there is no affiliate that has stated the reason for the congress to be about the general secretary of Cosatu."

He said Cosatu had not budgeted for a special congress.

The federation's central executive committee has asked Dlamini to report on the feasibility of convening the special congress.

Dlamini, who was attending an SA Communist Party rally on the outskirts of Durban in Folweni, said: "The constitution of Cosatu gives powers to the president to apply his mind on these matters. I will apply my mind."

While he told journalists that Vavi had never featured as a reason for affiliates to call for the special congress, he told the rally he had warned "comrades" to "avoid discussing matters by proxy".

He said they should not give one reason for the congress.

CAPE TIMES

FOUNDED IN 1876

A Princess for all

THE latest twist in the saga of the proposed development of a 9 090m² shopping mall, 600 parking bays and a taxi rank on the banks of Princess Vlei near Grassy Park indicates that there may have been severe irregularities in the process thus far.

The Princess Vlei Forum has laid a complaint of fraud against individuals involved in the development, saying they "misrepresented themselves" on two occasions. The first complaint relates to the legal standing of the individual who applied for a five year extension of the validity of the rezoning period; the second relates to an alleged conflict of interest between the developers and the environmental impact assessment compilers, alleging that the bid company and the compilers shared some directors.

The legal process will play itself out in the courts, or in chambers. The court of public opinion, however, seems to be firmly against the developers, who first proposed the mall back in 1998, 15 long years ago.

To many Capetonians, this may seem like a minor skirmish over a relatively degraded piece of land. But the history, and cultural, emotional and ecological significance of the vlei is anything but minor. According to Khoi and early slave oral history, the vlei was named after a Khoisan princess who was abducted and killed by Portuguese sailors 513 years ago, and it was her tears that are said to have created Princess Vlei.

Under apartheid, and the Group Areas Act, the princess's descendants were forcibly removed to the Cape Flats. For those removed to Lavender Hill, Grassy Park, Lotus River, Steenberg and Retreat, Princess Vlei proved to be a peaceful refuge from gangsterism and crime, a social gathering point, an escape from the oppression of apartheid and was nicknamed "Claremont Beach". More recently a project has been launched rehabilitating the area, removing alien vegetation, and planting indigenous fynbos and trees.

Surely this is not an occasion for the authorities to resort to bureaucratic processes and legal nitpicking - Princess Vlei is a key part of Cape Town's cultural history, and belongs to the people of the Western Cape. This is a prime case for allowing our imagination and creativity to triumph over rules and regulations and for the Princess to be restored as a place for all, and not a place for a mall.

CITY, RESIDENTS OPPOSE PLAN

Princess Vlei mall gets nod from province

Peter Luhanga
West Cape News

THE province has given the clearance needed for a 9 000m² shopping complex to be built on the shores of Princess Vlei, and all that appears to be preventing the development is the city's unwillingness to rezone the land.

The development has met with strong opposition from environmental lobby groups and residents of the neighbouring working-class suburbs who use the green area for picnics, baptisms and recreation.

The development of the land, which is of historical significance to the Khoisan and in the Cape Flats fynbos biome – one of the most critically endangered fynbos biomes – has been in the offing since Insight Property Developers initially tried to buy it from the city in 1998.

Fourteen years later, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning is "doing cross-checks and balances to see if what the developer is doing is within the terms of the Environmental Management Plan", according to Environmental Affairs and Development Planning MEC Anton Bredell's spokesperson Aziel Gangerdine.

"After checks and balances, the developer is free to start his development," said Gangerdine, who added that the process would take about three months.

But there has been resist-

'We should not be building on open spaces in high density areas'

ance from the city's side.

Chairman of the city's Spatial Planning, Environment and Land Use Management Committee, Christo Kannenberg, said the city had in fact made a recommendation that the rezoning application put through by the developer should not be approved.

However, he said the provincial government sent the application back to the city in order for conditions to be proposed for its approval. He said the conditions were set and the matter was sent back to the province three weeks ago.

Kannenberg said the committee turned down the application because city officials dealing with the issue came out with negative comments regarding the rezoning. Gangerdine confirmed that his department had received the city's conditions of approval and was checking to see if what the developer planned was in line with their Environmental Management Plan. If people were not happy with Bredell's Record of Decision they could apply to the Western Cape High Court to halt the development.

Litigation may be the route

taken by the Cape Flats Wetland Forum, with chairman Kelvin Cochrane saying they will fight the approval of the shopping centre "with all means".

"We definitely feel that the vlei needs to be rehabilitated, we don't want the mall," said Cochrane. It was "unwise" to rezone the land to build a shopping centre, said Philip Bam, the deputy chairman of the Greater Cape Town Civic Alliance. "It (the Princess Vlei) has very important cultural heritage value for the Khoisan people. You can't do anything on that land without making sure that the culture of the first nation is respected," said Bam.

An ecologist working for the SA National Biodiversity Institute, George Davis, said a big building on the shores of the Princess Vlei would impact negatively on the eco-system as contaminated run-off water would be generated which would flow into the vlei.

Davis said: "The green spaces are important for mental well-being. We should not be building on open spaces, especially in high density areas, without very special consideration."

To preserve Princess Vlei, the institute, together with the Cape Flats Wetland Forum, implemented a programme four years ago where a lot of indigenous plants were planted. He said the question should be about what could be done to restore the ecological system.



STREETS

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... comments were clear for
all to hear," Mazibuko said.
"This echoes a number of concern-
ing comments he has made on our
constitution, including that "[The
ANC is] more important than the
constitution... [the constitution is
only there] to regulate matters."

DEVELOPMENT BATTLE

Week-long protest to be held at vlei

17/09/12

Yolisa Tswanya
STAFF REPORTER

THE PRINCESS Vlei forum is stag-
ing daily protests this week against
proposals to establish a commercial
development on the banks of the vlei.

The planned protest will see resi-
dents, community leaders and all
those opposed to the project congre-
gate with posters and banners at three
intersections in the area.

"We will be standing during peak
hour in the morning and afternoon
and we have planned it a week before
Heritage Day - it just made the most
sense," forum member Mea Lash-
brooke said.

Bridget Pitt, a member of the
forum, said she hoped their protest
would raise public awareness.

"The land still needs to be sold,
because it needs to be rezoned, but
(MEC for Environmental Affairs and
Development Planning Anton) Bre-
dell said the development will go
ahead."

Pitt is confident the "standing"

protest would draw a lot of support.
The campaigners are to stage their
pickets in the Princess Vlei car park
and at the M5's intersections with
Fifth Avenue and with Victoria Road
at 6.30am to 8.30am and at 4.30pm
to 6.30pm from today until the end of
this week.

Last month, Cape Town mayor
Patricia de Lille was challenged to
publicly state her stance on whether
a shopping mall should be built on the
banks of the vlei.

In a letter to De Lille, Philip Bam,
deputy chairman of the Greater Cape
Town Civic Alliance, referred to a
meeting on July 26 at which the mayor
was asked for clarity on Princess Vlei.

At the time, De Lille's spokesman,
Solly Malatsi, said the matter had
been referred to Bredell for finalisa-
tion. Bredell had earlier this year
upheld an appeal by developers to
have the land rezoned.

Insight Property Developers had
initially tried to buy the land in 1998.
The city has opposed rezoning.

yolisa.tswanya@i24.co.za

Vlei view

WHAT a refreshing statement by the mayor in her speech to council on August 28. She announces that the city will maintain the Sea Point Pavilion as a public open space for the people.

She goes on to say: "As part of our commitment to being a caring city that considers the views and wishes of all of our residents, I strongly advise the council to keep the space open for the enjoyment of present and future Capetonians. I hope that we will be able to set an example for creating combined spaces in the future by preserving those that we have in the here and now."

The Princess Vlei Forum, representing a wide range of community organisations and communities in Cape Town expresses the wish that Princess Vlei be preserved as a cultural and recreational open space for all the people of Cape Town. Every day you will find people on the banks of the vlei enjoying the nature and the lovely water view.

If you pass there at sunset, the people who cannot go to other places to enjoy the romantic sunset will be seen at the vlei. On Saturday and Sunday mornings people are baptised in the vlei.

It is just as much a place where citizens of Cape Town enjoy themselves as the Sea Point Pavilion. Why take it away from the people? The land belongs to the city and the city does not have to sell it to anybody. Together we can make it a space of which the city can be truly proud.

How we long to hear at the next council meeting that the mayor proposes that the council accept the views of the people of this part of the city and advises the council to keep the vlei as an open public space for the enjoyment of the people.

Philip M Bam
Chairman: Logra Civic
Grassy Park

Obscene inequality

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Choice: a fine balance
of too much

Save the Vlei prayer meeting to save our public space

BRIDGET PITT

WITH so many religious leaders present, we could not but have good weather at the prayer meeting held at Princess Vlei on Sunday, September 22.

After a week of violent storms, we were treated to a perfect spring day as people gathered to celebrate the spiritual power of Princess Vlei, and to pledge their commitment to fighting for the threatened public space.

The gathering was welcomed by Princess Vlei Forum Chairperson Philip Bam who spoke about how the god of greed was the driving force leading to the destruction of sacred spaces such as Princess Vlei.

He thanked people for coming and helping to open the hearts and eyes of our city leaders so that this space could be preserved.

The opening prayer was performed by Geoffrey Dayawana, an elder from the Gospel Church of God, which is one of the many churches that baptise people at Princess Vlei.

Every year, thousands of people are baptised in the waters of the vlei, coming from all over the country for this important ritual. The church choir was also present, as were many members of the congregation of this and other churches who do baptisms at the vlei.

The spiritual origins of the vlei were reinvoked, with a strong presence from the Khoi groups of the House of Xoraxouhoe and the House of Cochoqua.

Bradley Van Sitters performed a prayer in Nama, and there was a cleansing ritual involving senior leaders from both groups. Chief



Princess Vlei Forum's 'Flight of Dreams' art and culture event: THE magic of Princess Vlei was very much alive on Monday evening, September 23, as a crowd of school children, parents and supporters engaged in a moonlight parade to celebrate the birds and other natural life at Princess Vlei. About 80 people, led by a giant puppet of a grey heron, walked from the Jolly Carp to the Princess Vlei car park and back. They carried puppets and masks created by children over the last few weeks. The event was a collaboration between the Princess Vlei Forum, the Frank Joubert Art Centre, the Children's Art Centre and Battswood Arts Centre, and also involved local schools such as Wynberg High and Hyde Park Primary. Its intention was to celebrate and agitate to conserve the beautiful space around Princess Vlei; the birds and other natural fauna and flora from the vlei; and, at the same time, showcase the imaginative creativity of our talented local school children. The parade encapsulated the vision of the Princess Vlei Forum to use this space as a community canvas to express the spiritual, social and cultural identities of all of Cape Town's communities. How sad that the developers and politicians were not there to feel the magic.

Photo MATILDA SMITH

Hennie van Wyk called for the Khoi tribes to be recognised by the government.

The elders retold the legend of the Khoi princess who was abducted and raped or killed by

Portuguese sailors, and her tears flowed down to form Princess Vlei.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9