

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 1890

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"1830. Dr P. J. Rabie (DA) to ask Minister of Science and Technology:

- 1. Whether her department keeps register of archaeological middens which date back to the Middle and late Stone Age; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;**
- 2. Whether she will make a copy of the register available to Dr P. J. Rabie; if not, why not; if so what are the relevant details;**
- 3. Whether any archaeological middens are currently being threatened by (a) industrial and (b) human settlement developments; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details in each case?**

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REPLY

- 1. No, the Department of Science and Technology does not have a register. This is because it is the responsibility of the Department of Arts and Culture through the South African Heritage Agency which is legislated by the National Heritage Resources Act, No 25 of 1999.**
- 2. No, information can be obtained through SAHRA or the provincial heritage agencies.**
- 3. (a) Yes, (b) Yes**
Currently, an important industrial case is the possible establishment of the nuclear power station at Thyspunt. This is a very pristine area where an archaeologist identified over 300 sites/archaeological middens. If the

construction of the nuclear power station goes ahead, many of the sites will be impacted. There are quite a few cases in the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape where shell middens have been damaged or are at risk from development. In the Eastern Cape, issues have arisen in Jeffrey's Bay and surrounding areas. For instance, during the establishment of the St Francis Bay Golf Course many archaeological sites, mostly shell middens, were identified and eventually mitigated.

SAHRA seeks to preserve archaeological sites as much as possible. Most shell middens are identified during the impact assessment phase. SAHRA is developing the South African Heritage Information System (SAHRIS). Once SAHRIS is in place, it will integrate the proposed development applications with the sites discovered, allowing a first level of assessment at a very early stage. The archaeologist assessing the project is required to grade the significance of the archaeological sites according to the system laid out in section 7 of the National Heritage Resources Act, no 25 of 1999.