



Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

25th May 2023

The past year in the life of the Executive Committee of the APHP has again proved to be challenging; at least for the first nine months or so. We have continued working with Dr Richard Hill on the professionalisation process and have made good progress, but with some reservations. More about this important process further on in this report. In addition to this demanding task, we have had to deal with all the usual tasks of the Executive Committee such as liaising with heritage authorities and related bodies, taking forward the transformation process, dealing with membership applications, and managing the finances of the institution. While all members of the Executive Committee have been involved in all the aspects of its agenda, in order to deal with these matters, we apportioned “portfolios” to the members of the Executive Committee as follows:

Chair – Gavin McLachlan

Professionalisation - Elwyn Harlech-Jones

Liaising with heritage authorities and related bodies – David Gibbs

Transformation – Dorelle Sapere

Membership – Jonathan Stone

Finances – William Martinson

We were also fortunate to be able to co-opt Yasmin Mayat on to the Executive Committee as a member without portfolio. We thank Yasmin and wish her well in her time on the committee.

I wish to record here my grateful thanks to my colleagues on the Executive Committee for their dedication and the many hours of hard work spent performing these tasks and attending meetings. During this period, we were also ably supported by our new secretary, Grace Martinson, who has been a great help in dealing with the affairs of the institution.



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The **professionalisation** process has received our particular attention. Grateful thanks to Dr Richard Hill, who has been more than an advisor in this role, and Elwyn Harlech-Jones who has taken on this demanding portfolio. Dr Hill and Elwyn report as follows:

“The APHP Executive Committee has been focusing on the professionalisation of the heritage sector.

In November 2021, the Executive Committee appointed Dr Richard Hill to assist with the application to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for the registration of the designation of Professional Heritage Practitioner (PHP). Dr Hill was contracted to manage the process and provide information requested by SAQA. Five Executive Committee members attended a SAQA Professional Body Information Session on 30 November 2021.

On 3 March 2022, APHP sent letters to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), all the Provincial Heritage Resource Agencies (PHRAs) and to University Departments that present heritage-based programmes advising them of our professionalisation initiative. We mentioned that the SAQA process requires us to consult widely with relevant bodies, and requested written response in the form of comments, queries and, hopefully, support for our initiative. We addressed all the comments received, in one instance engaging with a PHRA in a Zoom meeting.

The Executive Committee considered two options for the professionalisation process. One option was to apply to SAQA directly for recognition of APHP as a non-statutory professional body. The second option, recommended by the Executive Committee and adopted by the APHP membership at the AGM on 25 May 2022, is to collaborate with the Environmental Assessment Practitioners Association of South Africa (EAPASA), an established statutory professional body. The intention is for EAPASA to manage the PHP registration process with SAQA and, in future, act as the professional body responsible



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for the registration of practitioners against the PHP designation. The Executive Committee remains convinced that considering APHP's limited human and financial resources, EAPASA is the appropriate body for this role due to its established policies, systems and procedures for regulating Environmental Assessment Practitioners whose work is fundamentally similar to our own.

The application and associated documents for the PHP designation - Core Competencies, and policies for Recognition of Prior Learning and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) - were submitted to EAPASA on 1 July 2022, who then forwarded through them to SAQA. No response has been received from SAQA, but they have indicated we can expect to hear from them soon.

Since our last report to members, the following events have transpired which have affected the progress of APHP's application:

- EAPASA has subsequently joined the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) which is the umbrella body hosting several built environment professional bodies.
- EAPASA has recently drawn SAHRA into the professionalisation process.
- APHP are in the process of liaising with SAHRA, in our capacity as the strategic party that initiated the current professionalisation process.

We see the future of APHP as a voluntary association that will represent PHPs, organise seminars, exhibitions and conferences, and develop the heritage discourse in the interests of our membership.

I wish to thank Dr Hill, colleagues on the Executive Committee and the membership for their support and contributions over the past year and look forward to the professionalisation process being finalised in the ensuing year."



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Work on the difficult issue of **transformation** has received the particular attention of Dorelle Sapere, who has brought new thinking to this challenging portfolio. Dorelle reports as follows:

“Currently the issues of professionalisation, relationships and unlocking heritage-based legislation issues occupy the focus of business. It is suggested that there is an opportunity to consider business unusual when developing an up-to-date strategy for APHP within the context of the current South African Landscape. It is believed that a transformed APHP could play a significant role in unlocking the built, the environmental and the intangible heritages in an inclusive way which could bring about meaningful change in the social, environmental, political and economic landscape of our country.

The Heritage Resource Act of 1999 is 24 years old. There have been many changes since its introduction. The crippling impact of covid 19, climate change, wars, and increasing poverty necessitates the consideration of some of the following:

- The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals which focus on peace and prosperity for people and the planet provide some interesting opportunities for transforming some APHP work. The built heritage has a cross cutting role to play on all 17 goals but in particular on Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and communities. Adaptive reuse and cultural tourism are two key factors that could be considered. ICOMOS for example, has a dedicated working group dealing with all 17 goals.
- Decolonizing heritage across various levels of practice.
- Understanding what the barriers to increased membership across cultural, ethnic and racial divides are, and finding ways to enable the breaking down of such barriers; eg through mentorship.
- The high rate of unemployment especially within the unemployed graduate sector drives a need for the work of APHP to “make heritage young” and find ways of creating jobs, possibly through a youth development programme.



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- Embracing a drive to be SMART and focus on low input, low cost, high impact activities, given the current low membership base and limited resources.
- Embracing a green and digital approach that extends the reach of APHP to new and different membership.
- Ensuring diversity and representivity on the board and committees of the Board.
- Changing mindsets and the image of APHP through becoming more inclusive and relevant to a broader and more diversified membership base.
- Strengthening APHP's approach to environmental and intangible heritage considerations through.
- Establishing strong partnerships for growth.

Plans for the next year will be to commence with a broad dialogue with interested stakeholders and critics, to understand the strengths and challenges and collaborative recommendations of the role that APHP can play going forward, and in so doing, collaborate with a broader audience in developing a transformation framework for APHP.”

Our **membership** sub-committee has been run by Jonathan Stone. Jonathan reports as follows:

“The current Membership Committee consists of the following members; Nicolas Baumann, Brendan Hart, Antonia Malan, Cindy Postlethwayt, Trevor Thorold, Bryan Wintermeyer and Jonathan Stone who as portfolio holder, is Chairperson.

Membership Policy: The Committee acknowledges the need to balance membership diversity implicit in the multi-disciplinary nature of working in the field of heritage, as defined by the NHRA, with the appropriate qualifications and levels of experience. To this end membership categories cater for a broad range of applications. Those members/applicants who are intending to acquire or complete post-graduate qualifications are encouraged by the Membership Committee to do so. Unfortunately,



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due to non-payment of annual subscriptions some memberships have had to be withdrawn.

Membership Application Process: The membership application process consists of completion of a standard application form, provision of a CV and indication for which category of membership application is made. The application documents are circulated to all members of the Committee for consideration. Comments are submitted to the Chairperson and a consensus recommendation is made to the APHP Secretary who then communicates the outcome to the applicant. The process is intended to be streamlined and avoid delays.

Current APHP Membership: Presently the APHP has a total membership of 106. This includes: Accredited Members / Professional Heritage Practitioners (76), Candidate Members (24), Associate Members (6). Membership categories are further defined in Section 3 APHP Rules for Accreditation 2016. A detailed breakdown of disciplines and qualifications is currently being assembled from previous records.

On behalf of the APHP Executive Committee, sincere thanks is conveyed to the members of the Membership Committee for their diligence in expeditiously carrying out membership application evaluations.”

The **events programme** of the APHP fell under the duties of the Chair and as a result of all the energy and effort that went into the professionalisation process and all the other ongoing matters, there just wasn't time or energy to organise an event for this past year. We are, however, planning a virtual seminar for 25th October. This will be an afternoon long affair with possibly four presentations, hopefully at least one from an overseas speaker. A flyer has already been sent out and we encourage you to consider submitting a proposal for a presentation.

The professionalisation process, when it comes to fruition, is going to lead to an adjustment upwards of the expectations of professionalism from Heritage Professionals. Dr Stephen Townsend has made the point in a note to the Executive Committee, that the time is ripe for a



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proper, face to face congress where the implications of accredited professionalisation can be discussed by the profession both in formal presentations as well as in discussion. Dr Townsend is right, but organising such a congress is very substantial undertaking and it must wait for 2024 or even 2025.

The Executive Committee has continued to **engage with heritage authorities and related bodies** with various members of the Executive Committee sharing these duties. David Gibbs is the portfolio holder and David reports as follows:

“In response to COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions, committee meetings of the heritage authorities have been convened online, via remote meeting platforms. (This includes sessions of the Built Environment and Landscape Committee (BELCom) and Impact Assessment Committee (IACom) of Heritage Western Cape, amongst others, for which members of the public have been able to join electronically).

By eliminating the need to travel to the meeting venue for physical presence, public participation has been facilitated through the online platform; however, network instability and electricity load-shedding schedules have plagued and frustrated the committee meetings.

Whereas lockdown restrictions have subsequently been lifted, the on-line format has persisted as the new modus operandi. Following requests from APHP members for a return to in-person meetings, APHP has engaged with HWC in this regard. Following a strategy session with HWC and through the IACom Chair's report to council, the proposal for quarterly in-person meetings of the committees (interspersed by online meeting in the intervening months) has been endorsed by HWC.

HWC conducted a Council and Committees training workshop at the beginning of March, as part of the induction of the new term of office of the members. This was an extremely



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interesting and useful session which covered a range of topics, including the HWC Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan, Service Delivery Roadmap, Enterprise Risk Management, Internal Audit and Audit Committee, Financial Overview, Business Processes, Code of Conduct for Council and members of Council and its committees, Conflict of Interest, and rules for participation in meetings.

Engagement with SAHRA included the adoption of the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) by the province as a mechanism for the repository of information, rather than the creation of a separate system at provincial level, allowing for the integration of information and management of heritage resources.

Reflecting upon the cases which have come before the committees and the work undertaken by the committees, it is evident that conservation of built environment and landscape matters are reasonably well understood, however aspects of social history and intangible heritage are less-well understood and somewhat lacking in heritage applications.”

Finances have been very ably run by William Martinson, whose financial statements and proposed budget will be presented to you after this report.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Grace Martinson for her valued support and hard work which has contributed much to our efforts this year. I also particularly wish to thank my colleagues on the Executive Committee, Elwyn Harlech-Jones, William Martinson, Jonathan Stone, Dorelle Sapere, David Gibbs and Yasmin Mayat for their support and hard work over the past year. Finally, as I will be stepping down from the Executive Committee, I wish the incoming committee well and record that I have full confidence in their abilities as they take the Association forward.

Gavin McLachlan

Chair: APHP Executive Committee