

15 Dec 2025

To: [admin@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:admin@ecoroute.co.za)

From: Dr David Laing, Erf 53 of 205, Ruygtevally

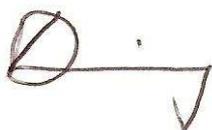
Re: **Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape**

As the owner of portion 53, a property in the same area and just east of portion 79, I submit the following comments on the BAR:

- i. A zonation of any part of the erf to tourism is not supported. This coastal strip functions as a wildlife and vegetation corridor in the region of the Goukamma Nature Reserve, and within a biosphere reserve, world heritage site and greater Garden Route National Park. It is one of the last remaining untransformed strips of coast in the region, and tourism activity compromises this function. Other landowners in this region purchased land and live here (without the benefit of municipal services) because of the largely natural state of the land and have a reasonable expectation for it to remain so.
- ii. I note that in your first BAR (June 2025) you clearly mention tourism as a use for additional cottages. Your second BAR then denies this. I am unconvinced by this and wish to point out that it is not the intentions of the owners of the property that is the issue, it is the zoning of the land. Future owners can exploit this, as can the current owners once any rezonation to tourism is obtained.
- iii. Obtaining a tourism zonation on this property sets precedent and places the dwindling coastal corridor in the Garden Route under even more pressure than it already faces. Anyone with a coastal property will use this erf as precedent, claiming that they have the same rights. This is a very dangerous precedent that should not be set outside the urban edge, especially not in a very sensitive site. It is not in line with the new MSDF for the region which recognises the environmental sensitivity of this buffer area between the urban edge and the Goukamma Nature and Marine Reserve.
- iv. I support the right of the owners to erect a single residential dwelling required under agricultural zonation.

Thank you for the opportunity comment

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line and a checkmark-like flourish.

Dr David Laing

[davidlaing.sedgefield@gmail.com](mailto:davidlaing.sedgefield@gmail.com); Cell: 083 635 2686

15 Dec 2025

To: [admin@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:admin@ecoroute.co.za)

From: Dr David Laing, Erf 53 of 205, Ruygtevally

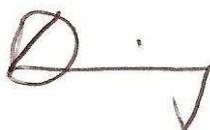
Re: **Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape**

As the owner of portion 53, a property in the same area and just east of portion 79, I submit the following comments on the BAR:

- i. A zonation of any part of the erf to tourism is not supported. This coastal strip functions as a wildlife and vegetation corridor in the region of the Goukamma Nature Reserve, and within a biosphere reserve, world heritage site and greater Garden Route National Park. It is one of the last remaining untransformed strips of coast in the region, and tourism activity compromises this function. Other landowners in this region purchased land and live here (without the benefit of municipal services) because of the largely natural state of the land and have a reasonable expectation for it to remain so.
- ii. I note that in your first BAR (June 2025) you clearly mention tourism as a use for additional cottages. Your second BAR then denies this. I am unconvinced by this and wish to point out that it is not the intentions of the owners of the property that is the issue, it is the zoning of the land. Future owners can exploit this, as can the current owners once any rezonation to tourism is obtained.
- iii. Obtaining a tourism zonation on this property sets precedent and places the dwindling coastal corridor in the Garden Route under even more pressure than it already faces. Anyone with a coastal property will use this erf as precedent, claiming that they have the same rights. This is a very dangerous precedent that should not be set outside the urban edge, especially not in a very sensitive site. It is not in line with the new MSDF for the region which recognises the environmental sensitivity of this buffer area between the urban edge and the Goukamma Nature and Marine Reserve.
- iv. I support the right of the owners to erect a single residential dwelling required under agricultural zonation.

Thank you for the opportunity comment

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line and a checkmark-like flourish.

Dr David Laing

[davidlaing.sedgefield@gmail.com](mailto:davidlaing.sedgefield@gmail.com); Cell: 083 635 2686

## Fw: Comment on the Assessment Report for the Proposed Development on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield

**To:** Umbali Phineas Sebola <mm@knysna.gov.za>; Knysna Municipality <knysna@knysna.gov.za>; admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Subject:** Comment on the Assessment Report for the Proposed Development on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield

### Comment on the Assessment Report for the Proposed Development on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield

I object to the proposed development on Portion 79 of Farm 205 on the grounds that it is unsustainable when assessed against cumulative climate, water-security, ecological and heritage risk.

The site constitutes sensitive agricultural land with high conservation biodiversity and historical value, forming part of a coastal buffer landscape that provides essential ecosystem services to Sedgefield, including climate regulation, flood attenuation, wind protection and ecological connectivity. These services are delivered free of charge to the public and represent a long-term asset that should be conserved rather than converted for short-term private gain.

The Assessment Report fails to adequately recognise that the area falls within the protective intent of the National Forests Act 84 of 1998, which safeguards indigenous forest systems and associated ecological processes, nor does it sufficiently address the role of this landscape as ecological infrastructure critical to climate-change adaptation and sea-level-rise resilience.

A further critical limitation ignored by the Assessment Report is water security. The Department of Water and Sanitation already warned in 2004 that water security in the Eden District had not been achieved and that further development should not proceed until sustainable supply was secured. This did not occur. The municipality now faces a cumulative water-shortage crisis, worsened by climate change and incremental densification. Any additional development exacerbates an existing systemic risk and constitutes **maladaptation**.

In terms of the Climate Change Bill, decision-making must consider cumulative risk over the lifespan of a development. In this case, escalating climate impacts, unresolved water scarcity and loss of ecological buffers clearly demonstrate that the cumulative climate and resource risk outweighs any social or economic benefit.

The proposal is also inconsistent with the World Heritage Convention Act No. 49 of 1999, which recognises cultural and natural heritage as priceless and irreplaceable, and acknowledges that their loss through inappropriate development constitutes an impoverishment of the heritage of South Africa and humankind as a whole.

I do not accept the explanation that this proposed development aligns with national objectives or the Western Cape Spatial Development Frameworks, as it directly contradicts climate-resilience principles, water-security constraints, biodiversity protection priorities, and the precautionary approach required in high-risk coastal and dune-buffer landscapes.

#### Conclusion

The proposed development fails the sustainability test. Portion 79 of Farm 205 is an ecological, hydrological and heritage asset, not a development opportunity. Approval would undermine climate resilience, water security and heritage obligations, and is therefore not supported.

Tessa Joubert, MSc  
Ecological Restoration Practitioner  
Sedgefield Resident

15 December 2025

**Re: [Public participation] Oppose destruction (Portion 79 of 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield)**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Date** Mon 01/12/2025 10:44

**To** utawerth@gmail.com <utawerth@gmail.com>

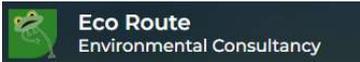
**Cc** Bianca <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Dear Uta,

Thank you for your email and objection received. You have been registered as an I &AP.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
www.ecoroute.co.za



---

**From:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za> on behalf of Eco Route <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Sent:** Sunday, 30 November 2025 07:06

**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Subject:** [Public participation] Oppose destruction

Uta Werth (not verified) (utawerth@gmail.com) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.ecoroute.co.za/node/116>.

The sender's name  
Uta Werth

The sender's email  
utawerth@gmail.com

Subject  
Oppose destruction

Message  
Please leave nature alone  
It is so vital for us and the rich animal world that needs to stay hidden in that thick undergrowth.

**Re: [Public participation] Development ridge line**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Date** Wed 26/11/2025 12:17

**To** bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Hi Bianca,

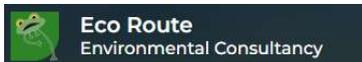
It is for Portion 79.

I usually check their email - it will show you which project.

Mentz (not verified) (4thatmatter@gmail.com) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.ecoroute.co.za/node/116>.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
[www.ecoroute.co.za](http://www.ecoroute.co.za)



---

**From:** bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 26 November 2025 11:06

**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Subject:** Re: [Public participation] Development ridge line

Hi Carina

Thank you. Which project is this?

Best regards

Ms. Bianca Gilfillan  
Reg. EAP (EAPASA): 2023/7929  
EcoRoute



\*Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.\*

The information transmitted is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission, dissemination, or other use of, or taking of any action in reliance upon, this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and delete the material from any computer.

---

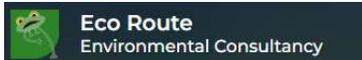
**From:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 26, 2025 8:51 AM  
**To:** 4thatmatter@gmail.com <4thatmatter@gmail.com>  
**Cc:** Bianca <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Subject:** Re: [Public participation] Development ridge line

Good day,

Thank you for your email and comments received, you have been registered as an I&AP.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
www.ecoroute.co.za



---

**From:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za> on behalf of Eco Route <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 25 November 2025 15:26  
**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Subject:** [Public participation] Development ridge line

Mentz (not verified) (4thatmatter@gmail.com) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.ecoroute.co.za/node/116>.

The sender's name  
Mentz

The sender's email  
4thatmatter@gmail.com

Subject  
Development ridge line

Message  
Developments on the ridge line of a pristine natural horizon should be avoided.  
- precedent  
- dangerous near tidal collapsing sandstone cliffs, burn belts.  
- disturbing the natural aesthetics of the coastal forest landscape



---

**Fw: Comments for the Draft Basic Assessment for Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 179 of Farm Ruygte Valley 205, Knysna RD**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

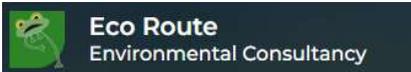
**Date** Wed 07/01/2026 10:49

**To** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

 2 attachments (466 KB)

Outlook-Logo, comp; PORTION 79 OF FARM RUYGTE VALLEY 205 COMMENTS.pdf;

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
[www.ecoroute.co.za](http://www.ecoroute.co.za)



---

**From:** Sbonelo Ndlovu <sndlovu@bocma.co.za>

**Sent:** Friday, 19 December 2025 13:16

**To:** Admin <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Cc:** Andiswa Sam <ASam@bocma.co.za>

**Subject:** Comments for the Draft Basic Assessment for Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 179 of Farm Ruygte Valley 205, Knysna RD

Good day Bianca

I trust that you are well.

Herewith please find attached comments for the Draft Basic Assessment for proposed development of a primary dwelling and access road on Portion 179 of Farm Ruygte Valley 205, Knysna RD.

Kindly note that these comments are advisory, and they are based on the information that was reviewed.

Apologies for the late submission of comments, it was due to unforeseen circumstances.

Should you have any urgent queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Kind Regards,**

**SBONELO NDLOVU**

WATER USE OFFICER

**BREEDE-OLIFANTS CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY: GEORGE**

---

**DIV:** Water Resource Management **SUB-CO:** Water Use Regulation

---

**CONTACT:** Tel: 023 346 8031 | Cell: 083 667 8083 | Email: [sndlovu@bcma.co.za](mailto:sndlovu@bcma.co.za)

---

**PHYSICAL ADDRESS:** 101 York Street | Unit 302 | George | 6530

---

**POSTAL ADDRESS:** PO Box 1205 | George | 6530

---

**WEBSITE:** [www.bgcma.co.za](http://www.bgcma.co.za)



**BREEDE-OLIFANTS**  
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Lord give me endless knowledge and wisdom - AKA

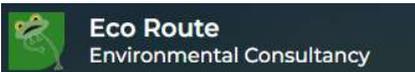
---

**Fw: Objection to Proposed Rezoning to Tourism - Portion 79 of Farm 205**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Date** Wed 07/01/2026 10:53  
**To** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
www.ecoroute.co.za



---

**From:** Brendan Powell <bPowell@glenwoodhouse.co.za>  
**Sent:** Monday, 15 December 2025 16:16  
**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Cc:** Brendan Powell <brendanleithpowell@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Objection to Proposed Rezoning to Tourism - Portion 79 of Farm 205

**To:** The Municipal Manager / Planning Department  
Knysna Municipality  
**Re: Objection to Proposed Rezoning to Tourism**  
**Property:** Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgfield  
**Objector:** Landowner – **Plot 56**

I am the owner of **Plot 56**, which is near Portion 79 of Farm 205. I hereby submit a **formal objection** to the proposed **rezoning (or part-rezoning) of this property to allow tourism use**.

I object for the following reasons:

**1. This area is not suitable for tourism**

The land forms part of a quiet, sensitive coastal forest area. Tourism use will bring more people, vehicles, noise, lighting, and general activity. Even if described as "low impact", this is very different from a single family home and will permanently change the character of the area.

**2. The application is unclear and contradictory**

Earlier versions of the Basic Assessment Report clearly refer to tourism, including self-catering units, tourist activity, and income from

accommodation. Later documents now say the units are for “private use only”, yet tourism is still repeatedly mentioned. As a neighbour, I find this confusing and concerning.

**3. Rezoning creates long-term rights, not promises**

If the land is rezoned to tourism, those rights stay with the property forever — not just with the current owner. Future owners will be able to use the property for tourism, regardless of what is said now. This creates ongoing risk and uncertainty for neighbouring landowners like myself.

**4. Unfair precedent for the area**

Allowing tourism zoning on this property will make it difficult to refuse similar applications nearby. This will slowly change the entire coastal forest area into a tourism zone, which is not what this area was intended for, especially as it lies outside the urban edge.

**5. Direct impact on my property (Plot 56)**

Tourism use will negatively affect my property through:

- Increased traffic and access,
- Noise and loss of privacy,
- Light pollution,
- Loss of the peaceful, natural environment that currently exists.

**Conclusion**

For these reasons, I **object to any rezoning or part-rezoning to tourism use** on Portion 79 of Farm 205. I believe the property should be limited to a **single residential dwelling only**, with no tourism rights attached.

I request that this objection be formally recorded and fully considered as part of the decision-making process.

Yours sincerely,

**Brendan Powell**

Owner – **Plot 56**

0834151613

Kind regards,

Brendan Powell

Teacher - Business & Life Orientation

Tel: +27 87 354 8315

Glenwood Avenue, Glenwood



**#CourageToGrow**  
**#GraceToThrive**

**APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN**  
ENROL TODAY!

THE *Jewel* OF EDUCATION ON THE GARDEN ROUTE

2 X BEST PRIVATE SCHOOL WINNER | PRE-PREPARATORY | PREPARATORY | COLLEGE | WEEKLY AND TERMLY BOARDING

Grade 0000-12 Tel: 087 354 8315 Glenwood Avenue, George : [glenwoodhouse.co.za](http://glenwoodhouse.co.za)



GLENWOOD  
HOUSE  
SCHOOL

## Disclaimer

This email and the information contained herein are ADVTECH Ltd confidential and are protected by law. Please navigate to our website for more information [www.advtech.co.za](http://www.advtech.co.za) Use of this information or this email by any person for any purposes other than that for which it is intended is prohibited and may result in civil and/or criminal liability. This email is not to be shared with any 3rd parties not included within this email, without the written consent of its Author. If you have received this message in error, please notify ADVTECH immediately, telephone number +27 11 676 8000



Outlook

---

**Re: Beswaar - Voorgestelde Ontwikkeling: Portion 79 van Plaas 205, Ruygtevallei**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Date** Wed 14/01/2026 10:16  
**To** Wallace Dewaal <wallacedewaal58@gmail.com>  
**Cc** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Goeiemore Mnr De Waal,

Baie dankie vir u epos ontvang. Ons het u geregistreer as 'n B&GP.

Vriendelike groete,

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
[www.ecoroute.co.za](http://www.ecoroute.co.za)

---

**From:** Wallace Dewaal <wallacedewaal58@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, 15 December 2025 11:06  
**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Subject:** Beswaar - Voorgestelde Ontwikkeling: Portion 79 van Plaas 205, Ruygtevallei

## **Beswaar namens die Vissergemeenskap van Sedgefield**

Voorgestelde Ontwikkeling: Portion 79 van Plaas 205, Ruygtevallei

Ek, Wallace de Waal en lid van 'n visserfamilie van Sedgefield, teken hiermee beswaar aan teen die voorgestelde ontwikkeling.

Die kusgebied en duinstelsel is vir geslagte lank 'n lewensmiddele- en voorsieningsgebied vir ons gemeenskap. Dit is nie net 'n werkplek nie, maar deel van ons identiteit, kultuur en voortbestaan. Die ekoselsel lewer belangrike dienste aan alle inwoners van Sedgefield, soos beskerming teen storms, oorstromings en seevlakstyging, asook gesonde visbronne.

Die primêre voor- en sandduine is lewendige stelsels wat oor eeue beweeg en verander. Met klimaatsverandering en stygende seevlakke is hierdie stelsels uiters sensitief en onseker. Ontwikkeling in of naby hierdie gebiede verhoog die risiko van onherstelbare skade.

Geen sosiaal-historiese verslag is ingedien om die impak van die ontwikkeling op die inheemse en tradisionele vissersgemeenskappe te beoordeel of om te bepaal wat die permanente verlies vir toekomstige geslagte sal wees nie.

Waar daar sulke onsekerheid en risiko bestaan, is die voorsorgbeginsel die enigste verantwoordelike benadering. Daarom versoek ons dat hierdie ontwikkeling nie goedgekeur word nie.

Wallace de Waal

Verteenwoordiger: Vissergemeenskap van Sedgefield  
The Green Connection (TGC)



Outlook

---

**Re: Draft Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Date** Wed 17/12/2025 11:35

**To** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Hi Bianca,

Just checking if you managed to assist?

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie

Personal Assistant/Admin

Office: 064 691 4394

[www.ecoroute.co.za](http://www.ecoroute.co.za)



**Eco Route**  
Environmental Consultancy

---

**From:** janet@ecoroute.co.za <janet@ecoroute.co.za>

**Sent:** Monday, 15 December 2025 12:46

**To:** nieldeவில்லியர்1@gmail.com <nieldeவில்லியர்1@gmail.com>;

colleen@ecoroute.co.za <colleen@ecoroute.co.za>

**Cc:** bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>;

Admin@ecoroute.co.za <Admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Subject:** RE: Draft Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Dear Bianca& Carina

Please assist

Should you require any information please do not hesitate to contact me.



Kind Regards

Janet Ebersohn

Bsc.Hon Environmental Management

EAPASA Registration Number: 2019/1286

082 5577122

---

**From:** nieldewilliers1@gmail.com <nieldewilliers1@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, 15 December 2025 12:31

**To:** janet@ecoroute.co.za; colleen@ecoroute.co.za

**Cc:** bianca@ecoroute.co.za

**Subject:** RE: Draft Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Dear Janet

Here it is.

Please provide me the original BAR(?) that was used to obtain the first round of comments.

Niel de Villiers

**Contact Details**

Telephone number: +27 (0)82-385-7096

E-mail address: [devilliers@law.co.za](mailto:devilliers@law.co.za)

---

**From:** [janet@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:janet@ecoroute.co.za) <[janet@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:janet@ecoroute.co.za)>  
**Sent:** 15 December 2025 11:55  
**To:** 'Neil de Villiers' <[devilliers@law.co.za](mailto:devilliers@law.co.za)>; [colleen@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:colleen@ecoroute.co.za)  
**Cc:** [nieldevilliers1@gmail.com](mailto:nieldevilliers1@gmail.com); [bianca@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:bianca@ecoroute.co.za)  
**Subject:** RE: Draft Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Dear Neil

Please send your comments to all email addresses cc in this mail, you can just attach the PDF

Should you require any information please do not hesitate to contact me.



Kind Regards  
Janet Ebersohn  
Bsc.Hon Environmental Management  
EAPASA Registration Number: 2019/1286  
082 5577122

---

**From:** Neil de Villiers <[devilliers@law.co.za](mailto:devilliers@law.co.za)>  
**Sent:** Friday, 12 December 2025 14:03  
**To:** [janet@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:janet@ecoroute.co.za); [colleen@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:colleen@ecoroute.co.za)  
**Cc:** [nieldevilliers1@gmail.com](mailto:nieldevilliers1@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Draft Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Dear Madam

I want to submit an objection to the above.

Please advise me as to the process to do so.

I have responded on your website earlier this morning, but have not had a response.

My objection will be in the form of a PDF document.

I did not know of the application, and has heard about the matter a few days ago. I really would appreciate an extension to object until 15 January 2026.

I wait to hear from you.

Niel de Villiers

**Contact Details**

Telephone number: +27 (0)82-385-7096

E-mail address: [devilliers@law.co.za](mailto:devilliers@law.co.za)



Outlook

---

**Fw: Comment on the Assessment Report for the Proposed Development on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgfield**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Date** Wed 17/12/2025 11:49

**To** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Dear Bianca,

Please see below.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
www.ecoroute.co.za



**Eco Route**  
Environmental Consultancy

---

**From:** Tessa Joubert <tessa.joubert@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, 15 December 2025 11:32

**To:** Ombali Phineas Sebola <mm@knysna.gov.za>; Knysna Municipality <knysna@knysna.gov.za>; admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Subject:** Comment on the Assessment Report for the Proposed Development on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgfield

## **Comment on the Assessment Report for the Proposed Development on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield**

I object to the proposed development on Portion 79 of Farm 205 on the grounds that it is unsustainable when assessed against cumulative climate, water-security, ecological and heritage risk.

The site constitutes sensitive agricultural land with high conservation biodiversity and historical value, forming part of a coastal buffer landscape that provides essential ecosystem services to Sedgefield, including climate regulation, flood attenuation, wind protection and ecological connectivity. These services are delivered free of charge to the public and represent a long-term asset that should be conserved rather than converted for short-term private gain.

The Assessment Report fails to adequately recognise that the area falls within the protective intent of the National Forests Act 84 of 1998, which safeguards indigenous forest systems and associated ecological processes, nor does it sufficiently address the role of this landscape as ecological infrastructure critical to climate-change adaptation and sea-level-rise resilience.

A further critical limitation ignored by the Assessment Report is water security. The Department of Water and Sanitation already warned in 2004 that water security in the Eden District had not been achieved and that further development should not proceed until sustainable supply was secured. This did not occur. The municipality now faces a cumulative water-shortage crisis, worsened by climate change and incremental densification. Any additional development exacerbates an existing systemic risk and constitutes **maladaptation**.

In terms of the Climate Change Bill, decision-making must consider cumulative risk over the lifespan of a development. In this case, escalating climate impacts, unresolved water scarcity and loss of ecological buffers clearly demonstrate that the cumulative climate and resource risk outweighs any social or economic benefit.

The proposal is also inconsistent with the World Heritage Convention Act No. 49 of 1999, which recognises cultural and

natural heritage as priceless and irreplaceable, and acknowledges that their loss through inappropriate development constitutes an impoverishment of the heritage of South Africa and humankind as a whole.

I do not accept the explanation that this proposed development aligns with national objectives or the Western Cape Spatial Development Frameworks, as it directly contradicts climate-resilience principles, water-security constraints, biodiversity protection priorities, and the precautionary approach required in high-risk coastal and dune-buffer landscapes.

#### Conclusion

The proposed development fails the sustainability test. Portion 79 of Farm 205 is an ecological, hydrological and heritage asset, not a development opportunity. Approval would undermine climate resilience, water security and heritage obligations, and is therefore not supported.

Tessa Joubert, MSc  
Ecological Restoration Practitioner  
Sedgefield Resident

15 December 2025



Outlook

---

**Fw: Application for the submission of a property environmental study for comment - App No: 2025-12-0100**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Date** Wed 07/01/2026 10:46

**To** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Hi Bianca,

All the best for 2026!

Please see below.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
www.ecoroute.co.za



**Eco Route**  
Environmental Consultancy

---

**From:** Application Manager  
<applications@westerncaperoadsinfrastructure.org.za>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 31 December 2025 09:17

**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Subject:** Application for the submission of a property environmental study for comment - App No: 2025-12-0100

Dear Eco Route Environmental Consultancy  
The message below refers to your application for the submission of a property environmental study for comment (Application No - 2025-12-0100) submitted to the Western Cape Government on 2025/11/12:

**Properties related to the application :**

- Portion 79 of Farm RUYGTE VALLY 205 KNYSNA

The matter is receiving attention, and further communication will be addressed to you as soon as circumstances permit.

Best Regards,  
Western Cape Government



**Note:**

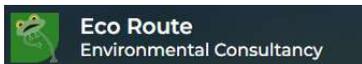
*Please ensure that you reply to this email when corresponding with us and that the application number is correctly contained in the subject line in the format App No: xxxx-xx-xxxx Emails without this number correctly added to the subject line will not be monitored or received.*

**Fw: [Public participation] Draft Basic Assessment Report - Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Date** Wed 07/01/2026 10:55  
**To** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
www.ecoroute.co.za



---

**From:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za> on behalf of Eco Route <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Sent:** Friday, 12 December 2025 10:42  
**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Subject:** [Public participation] Draft Basic Assessment Report - Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Niel De Villiers (not verified) (devilliers@law.co.za) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.ecoroute.co.za/node/116>.

The sender's name  
Niel De Villiers

The sender's email  
devilliers@law.co.za

Subject  
Draft Basic Assessment Report - Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Message  
I wan to participate and deliver a document setting out my views.

Date: 15 Dec 2025

Carina Leslie  
[admin@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:admin@ecoroute.co.za)

**Re: NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape**

Thank you for this opportunity to continue to engage in the PP process. Further to my comments submitted on 23 June 2025, I re-iterate that the area cannot support tourism and oppose any rezonation to tourism. My rationale is as follows:

1. Your Draft BAR (see Table 1 below) speaks very specifically to tourism (see bold text), with details on prices per night, and reference to Town Planning Reports.
2. Your subsequent BAR (see Table 2 below) acknowledges all the PP comments in which tourism was opposed, and pivots to an argument that there was a “misunderstanding ...from the terminology used”, and claims that the three self-contained chalets are intended for private use. There was no misunderstanding, the original purpose for tourism was very clearly articulated, and Table 2 shows inconsistencies in this argument with many pages still referring to tourism activity in the updated BAR.
3. Whether or not this change of argument reflects a true change-of-mind, or not, is immaterial. A part-zonation to tourism outlives the owner of the property and sets precedent. In the future, new owners of the property can invoke their right to use tourism if they have a tourism zonation in place, and three self-contained chalets ready for rental.
4. In addition, by allowing a part-rezonation to tourism here, it sets precedent for the owners of adjacent coastal properties, both here and elsewhere in the Western Cape, to argue for the same rights. The few remaining coastal forest/thicket strips still remaining in the Province will gradually transform to coastal developments, something that all land-use planning efforts are aiming to avoid, particularly outside the urban edge (as is the case for Erf 79) and particularly given the location of this property within or in relation to a provincial nature reserve, a biosphere reserve, a national park, and CBAs etc.

5. Given the mostly closed canopy, negative edge effects, and all the other environmental concerns raised previously by me and the other comments from conservation and private entities, this coastal strip of land cannot support tourism and the additional disturbance created by tourists and support staff (i.e. additional noise, light, habitat damage, vehicle and foot traffic, etc.) Limiting human disturbance to a single dwelling is thus important (and respects the rights of the owner to a single residential dwelling on agricultural land).

I welcome further engagement on any of my comments listed here.

Sincerely



Prof. Amanda T. (Mandy) Lombard  
DST/NRF Research Chair: Marine Spatial Planning  
Institute for Coastal and Marine Research  
Nelson Mandela University  
South Africa  
Cell: 27 (0)83 454 2284  
Email 1: [mandylombard2@gmail.com](mailto:mandylombard2@gmail.com)  
Email 2: [mandy.lombard@mandela.ac.za](mailto:mandy.lombard@mandela.ac.za)

Table 1. Draft Basic Assessment Report - Consultation Phase, June 2025 (quoted from the document provided).

Page	Specific mention of “tourist/tourism” related specifically to the property
34	The proposed development on Portion 79 of Farm Ruygte Valley No. 205, Sedgefield, is needed to meet the growing economic demand for eco-tourism along the Garden Route, where Sedgefield is a key destination, as outlined in the Town Planning Report (Appendix D5, Page 8). <b>The three self-catering cottages cater to low-impact tourists,</b>
46	The project will <b>enable tourists to access and enjoy this magnificent private property,</b> which would otherwise be reserved exclusively for the owners' enjoyment.
48	<b>The three self-catering cottages cater to low-impact tourists,</b> complementing scenic assets like Gericke’s Point and Groenvlei Beach (Visual Compliance Statement, Appendix D1, Page 6), and are projected to generate R500,000–R1 million annually ( <b>estimated at R2,000/night per cottage, 50% occupancy</b> ), boosting local revenue.
	<b>Environmental impact Tables:</b>
139	Community Engagement: Educate residents and <b>tourists</b> on biodiversity protection via annual updates (Town Planning Report, Page 8).
141	Low to Moderate: Noise from vehicles, <b>tourists</b> , and maintenance is likely but reduced by low traffic volumes (e.g., residents, <b>occasional tourists</b> ) and the site’s isolation (250 m to nearest residence).
142	Very Low: Mitigation reduces noise impacts to negligible levels, ensuring minimal disturbance to residents, <b>tourists</b> , and wildlife, and maintaining Sedgefield’s tranquil character.
157	High: Noise control measures, such as limiting construction hours, using low-noise equipment, and installing barriers, can significantly reduce impacts on residents, <b>tourists</b> , and wildlife.
158	Very Low: Mitigation reduces noise impacts to negligible levels, ensuring minimal disturbance to residents, <b>tourists</b> , and wildlife, and maintaining Sedgefield’s tranquil character
171	Community Engagement: Educate residents and <b>tourists</b> on biodiversity protection via annual updates (Town Planning Report, Page 8).
173	Low to Moderate: Noise from vehicles, <b>tourists</b> , and maintenance is likely but reduced by low traffic volumes (e.g., residents, <b>occasional tourists</b> ) and the site’s isolation (250 m to nearest residence).
174	Very Low: Mitigation reduces noise impacts to negligible levels, ensuring minimal disturbance to residents, <b>tourists</b> , and wildlife, and maintaining Sedgefield’s tranquil character.

Table 2. Appendix E2 - Comments and Response Report (quoted from the document provided).

Page	Specific mention of “tourist/tourism” related specifically to the property
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No tourist or commercial accommodation is proposed.</li> <li>The three small units reflected in the Site Development Plan are intended solely for private use by the landowner and family, not for rental or visitor accommodation.</li> </ul>
29	<p>Importantly, the three additional chalet structures included in the Site Development Plan will not be used for commercial tourism purposes. These units are intended solely for private use by the landowner and immediate family members, with no intention to operate short-term rentals or tourism accommodation. As such, the development will not introduce external visitor traffic or tourism-related activity and should not be viewed as an income generating tourism initiative.</p> <p>The applicant recognises that <b>misunderstandings</b> may have arisen from the terminology used and will ensure that the revised Basic Assessment Report (BAR) clearly states that no commercial tourism or guest accommodation is proposed.</p>
44	<p>In response to your concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development application includes a proposal to rezone only the developed portion of the site to <b>permit tourism accommodation</b> (up to three chalets), while simultaneously rezoning the undeveloped majority of the property to Open Space Zone III to reflect its environmental sensitivity and conservation intent.</li> </ul>
56	<p>The applicant acknowledges the need to preserve the tranquillity and ecological integrity of the forest zone and confirms that <b>tourism activity will be extremely low impact</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only three small, off-grid cottages are proposed,</li> </ul>
56	No tourism or guest accommodation is proposed as part of this application.
57	<p>To clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No tourism or external guest accommodation is proposed.</li> <li>The three cottage structures included in the development layout will be used exclusively by the landowner and their immediate family, not by the general public or tourists.</li> </ul>
57	The three cottage structures reflected in the Site Development Plan are intended exclusively for private use by the landowner and family members. These will not be rented out,

Page	Specific mention of “tourist/tourism” related specifically to the property
13	<p>Proposed Development</p> <p>The landowners intend to reside permanently on the property and propose the construction of a main dwelling (<math>\pm 200 \text{ m}^2</math>), together with three small self-contained units (<math>\pm 65 \text{ m}^2</math> each) for private family use. These additional units are not for commercial or tourist accommodation.</p>
22	<p>Plant location</p> <p>It is advisable to consider the installation of a roof-mounted solar power system on the roofs of both the main residence and the <b>three small self-catering tourist accommodation units</b>, should there be a requirement for increased energy generation capacity.</p>
39	(d) A <b>consent use may be applied</b> for to provide tourist facilities or accommodation, but no such use is proposed in this case.
178	High: Positive impacts (e.g., job creation, <b>tourism revenue</b> ) are highly likely due to the development’s <b>design for tourist accommodation</b> and alignment with Sedgfield’s tourism market.
179	Negative: Operational activities (e.g., vehicle use on gravel roads, <b>tourist activities</b> in cottages, landscaping maintenance) within the $1375 \text{ m}^2$ footprint generate lowlevel noise

---

**Re: [Public participation] Objection to proposed development of Portion 79 of farm 205**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Date** Thu 27/11/2025 08:54

**To** zelda@hillwoods.co.za <zelda@hillwoods.co.za>

**Cc** Bianca <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Good morning Zelda,

Thank you for your email and objections received, you have been registered as an I&AP.

All comments/objections received will be addressed in the next round of Public Participation.

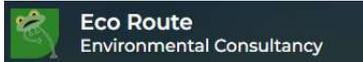
Kind regards,

Carina Leslie

Personal Assistant/Admin

Office: 064 691 4394

[www.ecoroute.co.za](http://www.ecoroute.co.za)



---

**From:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za> on behalf of Eco Route <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 26 November 2025 18:12

**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

**Subject:** [Public participation] Objection to proposed development of Portion 79 of farm 205

Zelda Eastwood (not verified) (zelda@hillwoods.co.za) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.ecoroute.co.za/node/>

The sender's name

Zelda Eastwood

The sender's email

zelda@hillwoods.co.za

Subject

Objection to proposed development of Portion 79 of farm 205

Message

I live on portion 35 of farm 205 and object to the proposed development on portion 79 for the following reasons: 1. The road can't c additional traffic. 2. The portions of farm 205 were sold with title deeds which explicitly say that only one extra dwelling is allowed. 3 last natural eco systems left in Sedgfield and should be maintained as such. 4. Should this go through, it will set a precedent for a over developed which goes against the original premise of farm 205 portion sales. 5. Not only will the road traffic increase which wi wildlife like tortoises, mongoose, bush buck, roikat, and badgers, but it will encroach on their last remaining habitat.



REFERENCE: 4/10/2/K40D/RUYGTE VALLEY 205/79, SEDGEFIELD

DATE: 15 DECEMBER 2025

ECOROUTE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY  
PO BOX 9187  
GEORGE  
6530

Attention: Ms B. Gilfillan

**RE: DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY DWELLING AND ACCESS ROAD ON PORTION 79 OF FARM 205, RUYGTE VALLEY, SEDGEFIELD, WESTERN CAPE**

Reference is made to the above mentioned Draft Basic Assessment Report made available to Breed-Olifants Catchment Management Agency (BOCMA) for comments.

The following are BOCMA comments relating to Draft Basic Assessment for proposed development of a primary dwelling and access road on Portion 179 of Farm Ruygte Valley 205, which should be adhered to:

1. The Breed-Olifants Catchment Management Agency has reviewed the pre-application Draft Basic Assessment Report and has no objections to the proposed development.
2. Please note that the comments issued by BOCMA on the 20 June 2025 for the Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report are still valid and must be adhered to.
3. Any disposal or discharge of wastewater to the environment is not allowed unless authorised, where necessary, in terms of the water uses triggered, as contemplated in section 21 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998).
4. Pollution: the Municipality is referred to Section 19(1) of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) to report any pollution incidents that may occur/originate from any land use change or development to the BOCMA Office within 24 hours.
5. As required by section 22 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), a Water Use Authorisation is required prior to commencement with any water use activity contemplated in section 21 of National Water Act. Moreover, commencement with any water use activity without an authorisation as required by section 22 of National Water Act constitutes an offence in terms of section 151(1) (a) of the National Water Act. In terms of section 151(2) of the National Water Act, any person who contravenes is guilty of an offence and liable, on first conviction to a fine or an imprisonment of a period not exceeding five years or both such a fine and imprisonment.



6. In light of the above, you are advised that the onus remains with the property owner to adhere to the National Water Act, prior to commencement with any water use contemplated in section 21 of National Water Act that is associated with the proposed development.
7. Kindly note that this office reserves the right to amend and revise its comments as well as to request any further information.
8. The BOCMA office can be contacted for further information related to the requirement for, or the application for a Water Use Authorisation.
9. Should you wish to apply for a water use authorisation for unregistered water uses triggered by the proposed activities, you may apply electronically by logging onto the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) website at <http://www.dws.gov.za/e-WULAAS>
10. Should you have further enquiries, the office can be contacted or alternatively contact Mr. SI Ndlovu at the above-mentioned contact number or on [sndlovu@bocma.co.za](mailto:sndlovu@bocma.co.za)

Yours faithfully,

pp Si Ndl.

**MR. JAN VAN STADEN**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (ACTING)**

Enquiries: Dr Vanessa Weyer

Tel: 044-302 5613

Cell: 074 707 8199

E-mail: [vanessa.weyer@sanparks.org](mailto:vanessa.weyer@sanparks.org)

addo elephant

agulhas

augrabies

bontebok

camdeboo

golden gate highlands

karoo

kglagadi transfrontier

knysna lake area

kruger

mapungubwe

marakele

mokala

mountain zebra

namaqua

table mountain

tankwa karoo

tsitsikamma

richtersveld

west coast

wilderness

Bianca Gilfillan  
Eco Route Environmental Consultancy  
46 President Steyn  
The Island, Sedgefield  
Western Cape

Per email:

[bianca@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:bianca@ecoroute.co.za)

[janet@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:janet@ecoroute.co.za)

[admin@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:admin@ecoroute.co.za)

Dear Madam

### **SANPARKS COMMENTS, DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT, RUYGTE VALLEY 205, PORTION 79, SEDGEFIELD, WESTERN CAPE**

**DFFE Ref No.** Not provided (second round of scoping)

Ruygte Valley 205 Portion 79 is in the Buffer Zone of the Garden Route National Park (GRNP), and the Wilderness Protected Environment (WPE). It directly borders state Coastal Public Property (CPP) on its seaward southern boundary (**Fig. 1**). The property falls within the Coastal Protection Zone (CPZ), as designated in terms of the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act (Act No. 24 of 2008) (NEM: ICMA). The CPZ is established to manage, regulate, and restrict the use of land that is adjacent to coastal public property, or that plays a significant role in the coastal ecosystem.

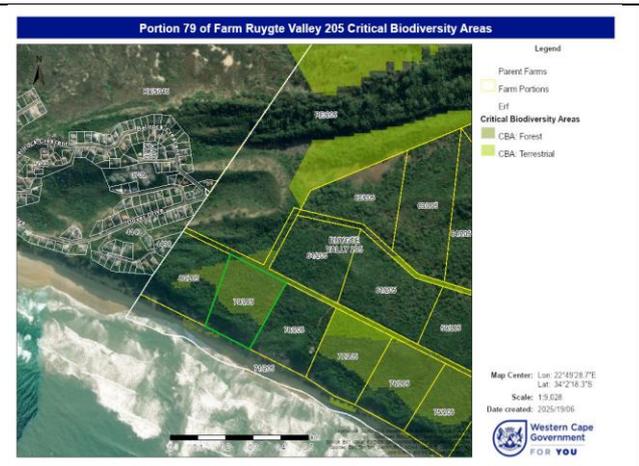
Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) Category 1 (Terrestrial) and Category 2 (Forest) occur on the northern sector of the property, as mapped in terms of the 2023 Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WCBSP) (**Fig. 2**). These are areas in a natural condition that are required to meet biodiversity targets, for species, ecosystems or ecological processes and infrastructure. They should be maintained in a natural or near-natural state, with no further loss of natural habitat. Degraded areas should be rehabilitated. Only low-impact, biodiversity-sensitive land uses are appropriate. Vegetation is mapped as Goukamma Dune Thicket (Least Concern) (Fig. 3).

Erosion risk lines (Fig. 4) and the high-water-mark (HWM) are situated outside but near to the southern boundary of the property (Fig. 5), whilst the Coastal Management Line (CML) is shown within the property near its southern boundary (Fig. 6). Topography is gently sloping in the northern sector, but becomes steeper on the southern foredune, with slopes between >25% to <80% in places (Fig. 8).

Portion 79 of Ruygte Valley 205 is 5.21ha in extent and is zoned, Agriculture Zone I, Knysna Municipality GIS Viewer (**Fig. 7**). The landowner is Daniel Sevenster and Partners Inc. The property falls outside the Urban Edge.



**Fig. 1:** Location of Ruygte Valley 205 Portion 79 (CapeFarmMapper3).



**Fig. 2:** Critical Biodiversity Areas 1 (Terrestrial) & 2 (Forest) (CapeFarmMapper3; CapeNature (2024). 2023 Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan and Guidelines).



**Fig. 3:** Goukamma Dune Thicket (Least Concern) is mapped on Ruygte Valley 205 Portion 79 (CapeFarmMapper3).



**Fig. 4:** Erosion risk lines (20, 50 & 100 year) as situated on the southern boundary of Ruygte Valley 205 Portion 79 (DEADP Coastal Management Map viewer).



**Fig. 5:** Ruygte Valley 205 Portion 79 falls adjacent to the HWM (depicted blue). The 100m buffer from the HWM is depicted green (DEADP Coastal Management Map viewer).



**Fig. 6:** The Coastal Management Line straddles the lower southern section of Portion 79 Ruygte Valley 205 (DEADP Coastal Management Map viewer).



SANParks sought clarity on the following key issues. Eco Route have responded in their Comments & Responses Report – Pre-Consultation as follows:

1. SANParks Query (Disturbance Area): The application states that the ‘building footprint’ will be 1175m<sup>2</sup> then later refers to this as a ‘disturbance footprint’. Clarity is required on whether this is a ‘building footprint’ or a ‘disturbance footprint’ which differ substantially. SANParks wishes to know the total ‘disturbance’ footprint which must be inclusive of all buildings (main dwelling, tourist chalets x 3, staff housing x 1, and an equipment shed x 1), building platforms, parking, access roads, boardwalks, infrastructure, services, embankments, vegetable gardens etc. A Site Development Plan is requested to depict these areas more clearly.

It is further stated in the Eco Route Pre-consultation Basic Assessment report, March 2025, pg.23 that >10 000m<sup>2</sup>/1ha indigenous vegetation will be cleared, which differs from the 1175m<sup>2</sup> noted above:

<p>GN R.327 activity 27: The clearance of an area of 1 hectares or more, but less than 20 hectares, of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for—</p>	<p>Construction of both the primary dwelling and an access road may require the removal of indigenous Goukamma Dune Thicket more than 1 Ha.</p>
---	---

PO Box 1252 Sedgfield, 6573

www.ecoroute.co.za

### Eco Route Response:

#### To clarify:

- The building footprint refers to the physical base area of all proposed structures, including the main dwelling (200 m<sup>2</sup>), three chalets (3 × 65 m<sup>2</sup>), staff housing (50 m<sup>2</sup>), and an equipment shed (80 m<sup>2</sup>), which together total approximately 525 m<sup>2</sup>.
- The total disturbance footprint includes all areas that will be cleared, excavated, or otherwise impacted by construction activities and infrastructure. This includes the building footprints, gravel access road (approximately 200 m in length × <3 m wide), designated parking area, boardwalks, platforms, vegetable gardens (if any), service lines, embankment works, and construction margins.

Based on the Environmental Impact Report prepared by Eco Route Environmental Consultancy and the Site Development Plan extracted from the Visual Compliance Statement (Fig. 9), the total disturbance footprint has been calculated at approximately 1,175 m<sup>2</sup> (0.1175 hectares). This value includes the areas for the buildings and essential service infrastructure and was verified spatially in coordination with the appointed landscape architect and GIS mapping consultants.

The Site Development Plan (Fig. 9) has been included to visually illustrate the layout and spatial extent of the proposed infrastructure. This figure was sourced directly from the Visual Compliance Statement report (Outline Landscape Architects, March 2025).

We confirm that the statement referring to the potential clearance of more than 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> (1 hectare) of indigenous vegetation was included as a precautionary estimate during the early planning phase, prior to the finalisation of the site layout and design. However, with the completion of the detailed Site Development Plan and footprint verification, it is now confirmed that the actual total disturbance area, including all infrastructure such as the main dwelling, chalets, staff housing, equipment shed, access road, parking, and boardwalks will amount to approximately 1,175 m<sup>2</sup>.

As such, while the reference to >10,000 m<sup>2</sup> was not an error, it is no longer reflective of the current or proposed extent of the development.

2. SANParks Query (Sewerage): It is noted that municipal bulk services are not available in the area and that a conservancy tank is proposed for sewage treatment. Clarity on the type and capacity of the sewerage conservancy tank is sought.

Eco Route Response:

It is confirmed that municipal bulk services are not available in the area, and as such, the proposed development will be entirely off-grid, including with respect to sewage management.

To address this, a sealed conservancy tank system is proposed for the collection and storage of all domestic wastewater generated by the main dwelling, three chalets, staff accommodation, and any supporting facilities.

The conservancy tank will be:

- A closed, watertight system, designed to prevent any leakage or infiltration into the surrounding environment.
- Constructed from high-density polyethylene (HDPE) or precast concrete, compliant with SANS 10400: P and local health standards.
- Sized based on anticipated occupancy rates and usage patterns, with an estimated minimum capacity of 10,000 litres (10 kL), subject to final engineering design.
- Equipped with an alarm system to alert when pumping is required.
- Regularly emptied by a licensed waste removal contractor and disposed of at an authorised municipal wastewater treatment facility.

3. SANParks Query (Stewardship): Whilst it is desirable that the landowner proposes to rezone the property from Agricultural I to Open Space III, SANParks seeks clarity on whether any discussions on stewardship options have been held with CapeNature, who have a presence in the area (Goukamma Nature Reserve), and considering that several other Private Nature Reserves exist on neighbouring properties (Lake Pleasant No. 2.). Open Space III when combined with a formal stewardship mechanisms may afford stronger long-term conservation outcomes for the property. The property unfortunately does not fall within SANParks' current Land Inclusion Plan, therefore a SANParks stewardship agreement is not possible at this time.

Eco Route Response:

While formal rezoning is currently being pursued through the municipal land use planning process, discussions around biodiversity stewardship options with CapeNature have not yet been initiated. However, the applicant is open and supportive of exploring a formal stewardship agreement in parallel with the rezoning process. This is particularly relevant given:

- The presence of Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) Category 1 (Forest) and Category 2 (Terrestrial) on the northern sector of the property as mapped in the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (2023).
- The proximity to the Garden Route National Park buffer zone and the broader Garden Route Biosphere Reserve network.
- The fact that surrounding properties have successfully entered into stewardship agreements, offering a viable precedent and partnership pathway.

The applicant acknowledges that Open Space III zoning alone provides limited statutory protection, whereas when combined with a formal biodiversity stewardship agreement under the CapeNature Stewardship Programme, the site could achieve stronger, long-term conservation security, including potential designation as a Contract Nature Reserve or Biodiversity Agreement Area, depending on site suitability and CapeNature's criteria.

Accordingly, the intention is to initiate dialogue with CapeNature during the next phase of the application to evaluate the most appropriate stewardship mechanism for the remaining natural areas of the property, aligning with SANParks' recommendation and the strategic objectives of the National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy (NPAES).

4. SANParks Query (Climate Change): Climate Change resilience and adaptation do not appear to have been adequately considered in the application and specialist report (Rock Hounds (Pty) Ltd.). Although 100-year risk and flood projections have been investigated, and it is noted in reports that the coastal zone could advance by 30m over the next century, the effects of severe unpredictable events do not appear to have been considered. Recent storm surges, including that of September 2023, in many areas along the coastline have caused undercutting and dune slumps. A pre-cautionary approach should be included for such scenarios.

Eco Route Response:

The Preliminary Geotechnical and Geomatic Report prepared by Rock Hounds (Pty) Ltd. (May 2024) assessed slope conditions, erosion susceptibility, soil erodibility, dune morphology, and included climate and sea-level rise risk factors. The report noted that coastal erosion could advance inland by approximately 30 metres over the next century and identified steep slope gradients exceeding 25% in the southern sector of the property. It also cautioned that the sandy soils are highly erodible and loosely packed, with poor structural stability near the coastal edge.

The recently submitted Civil and Structural Engineering Confirmation Report (Appendix D5) reinforces these findings and confirms that, while development on stable northern and central portions of the property is feasible, all foundations must be designed specifically to accommodate long-term climate variability, increased storm intensities, and potential erosion effects. The engineering report emphasises the need for elevated, lightweight construction, deepened foundations in certain zones, and

---

Furthermore, the Letter from Dr. E. Spicer (Rockhounds Pty Ltd, 10 September 2025) clarifies that the earlier geotechnical report (RH160524) is preliminary and not a final construction basis. Dr. Spicer expressly cautions that the coastal dune system remains highly sensitive, that slope instability is expected under extreme climate events, and that a detailed, site-specific geotechnical investigation must be undertaken prior to final engineering design due to the risk posed by short-duration, high-intensity coastal storm surges similar to the September 2023 event.

In response, the following precautionary and climate-resilient design principles will be incorporated into the development and reflected in the updated Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) and Environmental Management Programme (EMPr):

- All infrastructure is positioned over 100 m inland from the High-Water Mark (HWM), outside the erosion-risk zone and Coastal Management Line (CML), as confirmed by the Site Constraints Map (Appendix B2), the Civil & Structural Engineering Confirmation Report (Appendix D5), and the updated geotechnical findings (Appendix D6).
  - The southern foredune and steep slopes (>25%) are entirely avoided. No cut-and-fill is proposed on erosion-prone terrain, and building platforms remain within the stable northern and central topographic zones.
  - Structures will be elevated, lightweight, and removable, enabling relocation or adaptation if erosion rates accelerate or coastal retreat is observed.
-

5. SANParks Query (Setbacks): Adequate setbacks should be applied to safeguard the landowner from potential future climate change risks and to protect the coastal zone; this should be in line with CPZ setback requirements for the property.

Eco Route response:

- The development footprint is located more than 100 metres inland from the High-Water Mark (HWM) and outside the mapped Coastal Management Line (CML), as confirmed in the Preliminary Geotechnical and Geomatic Report (Rock Hounds (Pty) Ltd., 2024) and the Visual Compliance Statement (Outline Landscape Architects, 2025).
  - The layout avoids the steep, erosion-prone foredune area along the southern boundary, with all infrastructure positioned on stable terrain in the central-northern portion of the site where slopes are gentle and soils are stronger.
  - This positioning ensures compliance with precautionary coastal development principles and aligns with the intent of CPZ setback requirements, even in the absence of a formally adopted site-specific setback line.
- **All structures must remain outside the steep southern slopes and dynamic coastal processes.**
  - **A 100 m+ setback provides the highest safety margin against climate-driven erosion and storm surge scenarios.**
  - **Foundations and stormwater systems must be designed specifically to accommodate long-term climate variability and extreme events.**

6. SANParks Query (Coastal Erosion): The Applicants attention is drawn to: Section 15 of NEM: ICMA, which states:

(1) No person, owner or occupier of land adjacent to the seashore or other coastal public property capable of erosion or accretion may require any organ of state or any other person to take measures to prevent the erosion or accretion of the seashore or such other coastal public property, or of land adjacent to coastal public property, unless the erosion is caused by an intentional act or omission of that organ of state or other person.

(2) No person may construct, maintain, or extend any structure, or take other measures on coastal public property to prevent or promote erosion or accretion of the seashore except as provided for in this Act, the National Environmental Management Act, or any other specific environmental management Act.

Eco Route Response:

In full compliance with these provisions, the applicant confirms the following:

- No erosion control measures or physical works are proposed or planned within or on Coastal Public Property (Portion 71 or otherwise).
- The proposed development has been located and designed to avoid areas at risk of active coastal erosion, and no interventions will be made to alter natural coastal dynamics or stabilise dune systems through artificial means.
- The landowner acknowledges and accepts that natural coastal processes, including erosion or accretion, may occur without state intervention, as prescribed in Section 15 of NEM: ICMA.

7. SANParks Query (Precedent Setting): The development application will set a precedent for development along this environmentally sensitive coastline. It is noted that only the adjacent Portion 78 of Ruygte Valley 205, which has one dwelling present has been developed, i.e., one property out of nine along the foredune have been developed. Aerial photographs show the road and a dwelling present in 2004.

It may well be that construction on Portion 78 took place prior to when EIA Regulations were first promulgated in 1997. Confirmation of this is requested from the EAP.

Eco Route Response:

Acknowledged. It is noted that Portion 78 is the only currently developed property out of nine coastal properties along the foredune of Ruygte Valley

205, and that this property had an existing dwelling and road visible as early as 2004. The applicant recognises the sensitivity of this largely undeveloped stretch of coastline and the risk of precedent-setting development pressure.

In response:

- The proposed development has been scaled and positioned to avoid environmentally sensitive features, is off-grid, and designed with a low-impact footprint ( $\pm 1,175 \text{ m}^2$ ).
- It is located well inland from the coastal edge, outside the Coastal Management Line, and avoids all Critical Biodiversity Area 1 and natural forest features.
- The landowner supports long-term conservation through rezoning to Open Space III and is open to pursuing a CapeNature stewardship agreement to secure the ecological value of undeveloped areas.

These safeguards reflect a deliberate intention to avoid cumulative degradation, protect the coastal zone, and ensure that this development does not serve as an unrestricted precedent for inappropriate intensification along this sensitive stretch of coastline.

The current application is a Draft Basic Assessment, DFFE Ref No. Not provided, Eco Route, November 2025.

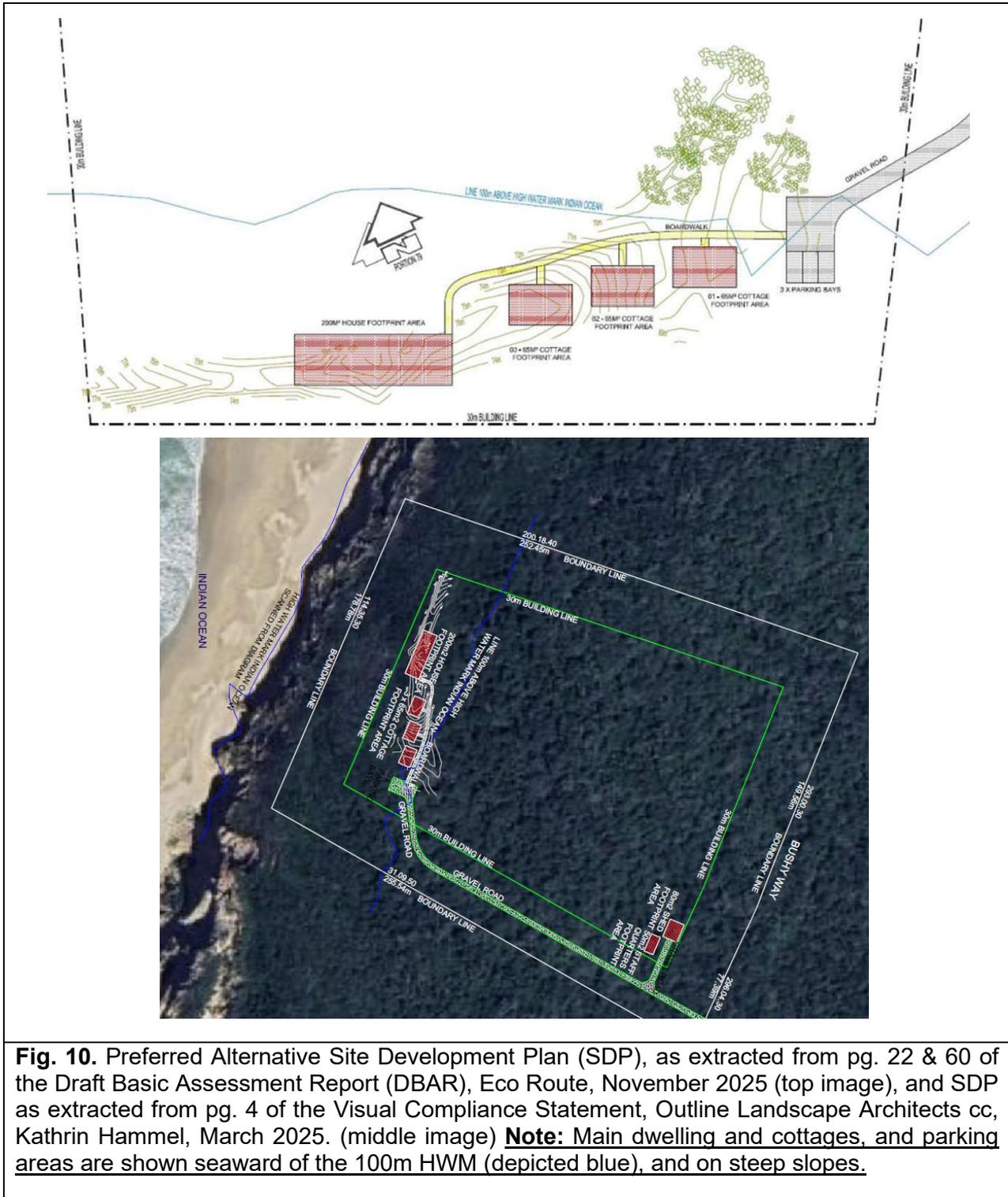
Key aspects of the application are as extracted below.

The proposed development entails a main dwelling ( $\pm 200 \text{ m}^2$ ), three small self-contained units ( $\pm 65 \text{ m}^2$  each) for private family use, staff housing ( $\pm 50 \text{ m}^2$ ), an equipment shed ( $\pm 80 \text{ m}^2$ ), and associated parking and access infrastructure.

A 3 m-wide gravel access road ( $\pm 200 \text{ m}$  long) will lead to a parking area of  $\pm 660 \text{ m}^2$ . Pedestrian access to all units will be via timber boardwalks, reducing soil compaction. The total disturbed area is estimated at  $\pm 1,175 \text{ m}^2$  (0.1175 ha)—less than 0.02 % of the property—ensuring that 99.98 % remains in its natural state.

Service infrastructure will be off-grid, including rainwater harvesting and storage, solar power, conservancy tanks for wastewater, and off-site waste disposal via municipal collection. The architectural design employs lightweight, eco-sensitive materials such as timber, steel, glass, and natural stone to integrate visually with the surrounding dune landscape.

- Register a **conservation easement (± 4.25 ha)** with the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board by Q4 2025.
- Apply for **rezoning to Open Space III (Nature Conservation Area)** by Q3 2025, formalising long-term **stewardship** and limited private residential rights.



The Town Planning Report, Planning Space Town and Regional Planners, 31 March 2025 refers to rezoning from Agricultural I to Open Space II, and a consent use for 'Tourist Accommodation'.

## **Point 1: Specialist Studies**

### **Visual**

A visual specialist report by Paul Buchholz (registered Professional Geographical Information Science Practitioner (PGP 1323)) was included, however closer perusal revealed the document appended to be a quotation and not a specialist study/ statement. Therefore, its inclusion is confusing/ not relevant.

## 8. Cost estimate

The total cost is anticipated to be ZAR 20,260.00 (no VAT applicable - not VAT registered). The cost breakdown is as follows:

Table 3: Cost breakdown

Task	Total (no VAT applicable)
Visual impact statement for portion 79 of 205, Sedgefield	ZAR 20,260.00

## 10. Closing remarks

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit this proposal.

Should you require any further information or have any queries, please contact me.

Yours faithfully



**Paul Buchholz**

C +27 79 881 4447  
E p.buchholz@outlook.com

A second Visual Compliance Statement is included, by Outline Landscape Architects cc, Kathrin Hammel (Registered Professional Landscape Architect, South African Council of Landscape Architects (SACLAP), registration No. 20162), March 2025. The methodology applied is not specified.

A third Visual Impact Assessment (VIA): Site Sensitivity Report was included by VRM Africa, Stephen Stead (registered with the Association of Professional Heritage Practitioners), 24 October 2024, however the DBAR notes that the incorrect site was assessed. The methodology followed by VRM Africa is based on the United States Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Visual Resource Management method (USDI., 2004). The VRM Africa report raises significant visual impact concerns that warrant a deeper investigation.

A peer review of the three VIAs/ Statements is recommended and may be useful. Specialist Protocols for VIAs and registration requirements for VIA specialists are not clearly defined/ not developed as part of the EIA process, and requirements differ between national and from province to province. Guidance on requirements from DFFE, the Competent Authority should be sought.

As the site borders the GRNP and the Goukamma Nature Reserve and its Marine Protected Area are situated 1km to the east, visual impacts and changes in landscape character are a significant concern. No detailed architectural plans are provided to show building heights and exact positioning relative to contours. No 3D visualisations have been undertaken.

### **Geology/ Geotechnical**

A Preliminary report by Dr. Esmé Spicer, 21 May 2024 was undertaken. No detailed slope analysis has been undertaken. Extracts likely from CapeFarmMapper showing slopes and contours are provided.

### **Civil and Engineering**

The report by Sham Consultants, Marius C van Coller Pr.Eng, Registration No. 20060275, 22 October 2025 is provided, however no maps/ SDPs are included in the report, in reference to text comments. It is difficult to understand which areas are referred to. The report is unsigned.

### **Point 2: Alternatives**

The Preferred Alternative includes one primary dwelling situated in the south of Portion 79, three cottages, a vehicle parking area, a garage/storeroom, and a 200m long x 3m wide new access road leading to the dwelling area (1175m<sup>2</sup> disturbance area).

Alternative 2 includes one primary dwelling (400m<sup>2</sup>), three cottages each 80m<sup>2</sup>, a boardwalk, six parking bays, an 80m<sup>2</sup> shed and a 50m<sup>2</sup> cottage. Refer to Extract below, pg. 62 of DBAR.

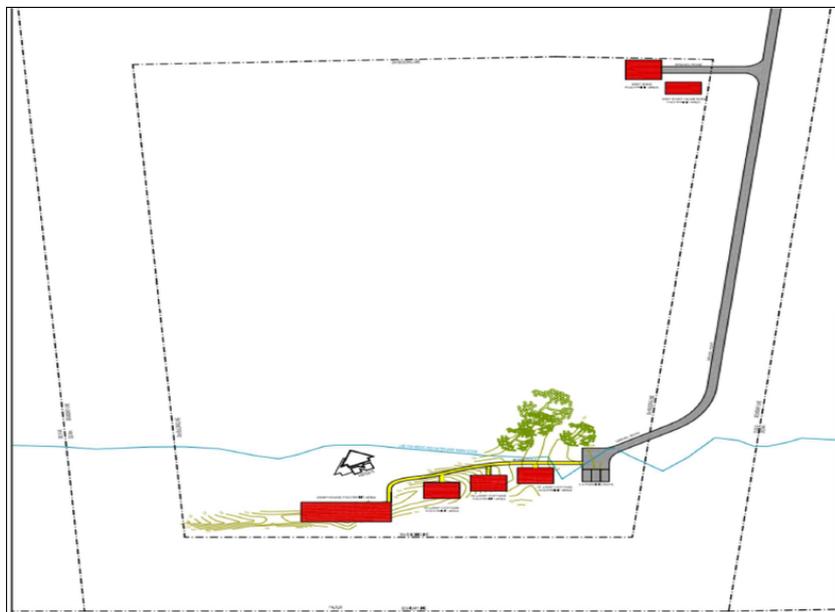


FIGURE 19: ALTERNATIVE 2 SDP

A No-go Alternative was included.

The application has not included a further viable Alternative of clustering all buildings further to the north-east of the property, adjacent to the entrance to the property off the main access road. This option would provide a more desirable clustered approach which would minimise landscape fragmentation. There is already some disturbance in this area. This siting is further situated away from the sensitive foredune. The landowner could perhaps offer hiking trails through the property leading to a small viewing deck on the foredune. However, it is recommended that no permanent structures should be constructed in this sensitive foredune area.

### **Point 3: Coastal Erosion and Setbacks**

In 2017 erosion coinciding with a spring tide occurred in the nearby Myoli Beach area, which removed a significant portion of the dune placing houses behind at risk<sup>2</sup> – refer to extract on pg.12.

<sup>2</sup>Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning 2018. Eden District Coastal Management Lines, Situational Analysis, Western Cape Government Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Cape Town.



*Figure 10.7. Emergency sand bags placed at Sedgfield (Myoli Beach) after a period of dune cliff storm erosion*

Portion 79 is located approx. 1km east of Myoli Beach, it is likely that the active foredune on Portion 79 may too be at risk to coastal erosion, particularly exacerbated by climate change impacts, and unpredictable storm events/ surges.

SANParks has concerns regarding development on the active foredune. Coastal erosion and dune slumping are major concerns, which are expected to increase with climate change. The foredune is regarded as valuable ecological infrastructure, a buffer which will become crucial as a climate change mitigation strategy.

In terms of Section 62(2) of NEM: ICMA, an organ of state may not authorise any activity that may have an adverse effect on the coastal environment. SANParks is concerned that Section 62(2) has not been adequately addressed in the DBAR, no specialist coastal erosion specific study has been undertaken.

The Preferred and Alternative layouts show buildings seaward of the 100m line from the HWM, and on steep slopes. This positioning is not supported by SANParks.

The Applicants attention is drawn to Section 15 of NEM: ICMA which states:

(1) No person, owner or occupier of land adjacent to the seashore or other coastal public property capable of erosion or accretion may require any organ of state or any other person to take measures to prevent the erosion or accretion of the seashore or such other coastal public property, or of land adjacent to coastal public property, unless the erosion is caused by an intentional act or omission of that organ of state or other person.

(2) No person may construct, maintain, or extend any structure, or take other measures on coastal public property to prevent or promote erosion or accretion of the seashore except as provided for in this Act, the National Environmental Management Act, or any other specific environmental management Act.

Given the steepness of the foredune, should dune slumping/ coastal erosion occur, protection structures would likely be required on SANParks state land, as it would be impossible to implement erosion protection within Portion 79. SANParks may not authorise such structures on state land as per Section 15.

#### **Point 4: Precedent Setting and Cumulative Impacts**

Prior to the EIA Regulation of 1997, when climate change risks were unknown, land use rights were inadvertently granted for the construction of dwellings in areas such as Myoli Beach, and the Wilderness Beach foredune, in what we now know are high-risk marginal areas. Wilderness Beach, like Myoli Beach has experienced significant coastal erosion, more recently in September 2023, after a storm surge, which placed many foredune dwellings at risk. In response, property owners constructed retaining structures on state land (George Municipality and SANParks land). Several landowners were issued DFFE non-compliance notices and requested to remove unlawful structures and to rehabilitate the dune. Encroachment into state land, via building structures, gardens, decking, pools and walkways is a further issue. Rectification of this situation is extremely challenging. It is anticipated that coastal erosion risks to poorly placed foredune dwellings will intensify. Placing property and lives at risk. There is further limited space for a 'retreat' climate change adaption strategy. SANParks is concerned that authorisation of structures on the Ruygte Valley foredune will set a similar dangerous precedent, resulting in cumulative impacts, with risks known, and remediation difficult.

#### **Point 5: Stewardship**

SANParks is supportive of a NEM: PAA compliant biodiversity stewardship agreement through CapeNature, preferably where the property is declared a Nature Reserve, i.e., as a CapeNature Level 3 Nature Reserve. Dependent on discussions with and approvals from CapeNature. The stewardship process should be concluded through the signing of required documents.

It is not a guarantee that the MEC or the Minister will declare a property, and it is therefore recommended that the landowner is required as a condition to register a conservation servitude over the property in favour of CapeNature should the property not be declared as a nature reserve. It is further recommended that a voluntary title deed restriction is registered against the property (i.e., via a Notarial Deed). Stewardship actions should occur prior to any construction activities being permitted to take place.

#### **Points 6: Summary and Way Forward**

SANParks does not support the Preferred Alternative, which includes one primary dwelling situated south of Portion 79, three cottages, a vehicle parking area, a garage/storeroom, and a 200m long x 3m wide new access road leading to the dwelling area. Alternative 2 is further not supported.

SANParks will however support an Alternative of clustering all buildings further to the north-east of the property, adjacent to the entrance to the property off the main access road. This option would provide a more desirable clustered approach which would minimise landscape fragmentation, and disturbance to the foredune.

Information provided in the DBAR is adequate. It is recommended that a peer review of the VIAs presented be considered. As the site borders the GRNP and the Goukamma Nature Reserve and its Marine Protected Area are situated 1km to the east, visual impacts and changes in landscape character are a significant concern. Detailed architectural plans, and a detailed SDP must be provided to show building heights, positioning relative to contours, and disturbance areas. 3D visualisations should be presented. A more detailed geotechnical study, slope analysis, and coastal erosion study should be undertaken.

This information must be provided prior to decision-making, to inform layouts, alternatives etc., and should not be undertaken after an Environmental Authorisation (EA) is granted. The information is pertinent to decision-making, and would form a record in the EA.

Notwithstanding this, SANParks will not support any form of development on the sensitive foredune.

SANParks is concerned that authorisation of structures on the Ruygte Valley foredune will set a dangerous precedent, resulting in cumulative impacts, with risks known, and remediation difficult. Gains in sea views do not warrant risks that will be borne by future generations.

It is possible to honour the landowner's rights, by permitting dwellings in an alternative location in the north-east corner of Portion 79.

SANParks is supportive of a NEM: PAA compliant biodiversity stewardship agreement through CapeNature, preferably where the property is declared a Nature Reserve.

It is recommended that the following conditions are considered, in conjunction with the main dwelling, and other proposed structures/ infrastructure being positioned in the far north-east corner of Portion 79, next to the main access road (an alternative that must be considered):

1. The landowner should commit the remaining portion of the property to a biodiversity conservation stewardship mechanism, which should comprise of:
  - 1.1. A CapeNature NEM: PAA Level 3 Nature Reserve. The stewardship process should be concluded through the signing of the required documents.
  - 1.2. It is recommended that a conservation servitude and a voluntary title deed restriction are registered against the property (i.e., via a Notarial Deed). This will ensure that the conservation status of the property is transferred to any new owner on the sale of a property.
  - 1.3. These actions should occur prior to any construction activities being permitted to take place on the properties.
2. The property should be rezoned to Open Space III or IV.
3. Fencing must not inhibit wildlife movement.
4. An Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) must be implemented and monitored by an Environmental Control Officer (ECO). The EMPr must be finalised based on any Environmental Authorisation (EA) outcomes/ conditions.
5. The landowner's attention is drawn to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act 10 of 2004) (NEM:BA) Alien and Invasive Species Regulations, 25 September 2020, where a landowner is legally responsible for the removal of alien vegetation on their property. The owner should formalise an Invasive Alien Vegetation Control Plan as required by the NEM:BA.
6. Compliance with the National Veld and Forest Fire Act (Act 101 of 1998) is required. The owner should join the local Fire Protection Association, if not already a member. The owner should consider using non-flammable building materials, including external fittings such as aluminum gutters, and should consider an irrigation system to mitigate fire risk. A comment from the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association (SCFPA) should be included.
7. A permit from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment (DFFE) must be attained should any protected tree species be disturbed on the property, as per the National Forests Act (Act84 of 1998), as amended.

8. Should any resources of suspected heritage value be uncovered during clearing, Heritage Western Cape (HWC) must be contacted immediately for instructions.
9. The disturbance footprint/ no-go areas should be fenced off during the construction phase with a barrier material, such as shade cloth to prevent workers from encroaching into adjacent vegetation, and to ensure that animals are not injured on the building site.
10. An indigenous plant rescue operation should be conducted prior to site clearance.
11. Topsoil should be set-aside for reuse.
12. Confirmation is required from the relevant Competent Authorities (BOCMA) on the need for a WUL. Due to the property being situated within 500m of the HWM of the ocean.

SANParks' full comment letter must be included in the body of the FBAR, and not only in a Comments and Responses report/ table. SANParks wishes to be copied in and have sight of the FBAR, as submitted to DFFE, the Competent Authority.

SANParks reserves the right to revise comments if additional information becomes available.

Yours sincerely



**DR VANESSA WEYER**  
PRINCIPAL PLANNER  
GARDEN ROUTE NATIONAL PARK

**DATE:** 15 December 2025

CC:	Victor Mokoena	SANParks
	Pheladi Chuene	SANParks
	Chamell Pluim	SANParks
	Jessica Hayes	SANParks
	Arnelle Collison	SANParks
	Marthan Theart	SANParks
	Jeff Manual	SANParks
	Megan Simons	CapeNature
	Mashudu Mudau	DFFE
	Nyiko Nkosi	DFFE
	Danie Swanepoel	WC DEADP
	Caren George	WC DEADP
	Lauren Josias	George Municipality
	Mulalo Musekene	Knysna Municipality
	Hennie Smit	Knysna Municipality
	Shaun Madumbo	Knysna Municipality

# **VRMA I&AP Response to the Draft Basic Assessment Report for the of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield.**

Date: 15 December 2025

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>MAIN ISSUES OF CONCERN WITH THE DRAFT BAR 13NOV25 .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>BACKGROUND MOTIVATION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	DUNE CREST LOCATION .....	5
2.2	STEEPS SLOPES RISK .....	6
2.3	LACK OF ALTERNATIVES .....	7
<b>3</b>	<b>ANNEXURE 1 .....</b>	<b>9</b>

Visual Resource Management Africa cc  
P O Box 7233, George, 6531  
Cell: +27 (83) 560 9911  
E-Mail: [steve@vrma.co.za](mailto:steve@vrma.co.za)  
Web: [www.vrma.co.za](http://www.vrma.co.za)



# 1 MAIN ISSUES OF CONCERN WITH THE DRAFT BAR 13Nov25

The following issues of concern are raised with regards to the Draft BAR undertaken by Bianca Gilfillan of Ecoroute:

1. The omission of the **Draft Visual Baseline Report**. This detailed report was submitted to Ms Janet Ebersohn on the 18Nov2024 (with email confirmation that the report was received on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024). **This email correspondence is contained in the communication table in Annexure 1. Instead, the preliminary Visual SSVR was submitted and referenced as “Wrong Site’ on the Ecoroute Website as well as in the Draft BAR.** As per the email thread in the Annexure, while the SSVR mapping was found to be 4m to the south for the main house, this was amended and the more detailed Draft Visual Baseline Report was submitted. **The more recent, and amended Visual Baseline report was excluded from the DBAR PPP.**
2. The Ecoroute Draft BAR 13 Nov 2025 report maintains, supported by two other Visual Statements (Kathrin Hammel & Paul Buchholz), that the proposed development will not be visible from the Groenvlei Beach. This is inconclusive as it would depend on the height of the structures and the earthworks. Neither of these two issues are addressed in the Draft BAR. The Draft Visual Baseline Report, includes a preliminary viewshed analysis which indicates that while the ground level (where the photographs were taken) would be topographically screened, pole structure foundations proposed for the architecture (as indicated as an option in the Architectural Report), would raise the structure located on a crest of the dune. Without mitigations (proven by detail design of the architecture and the earthworks), the pole foundations, and the height of the dwelling, are highly likely to break the skyline as seen from the Groenvlei Beach. As this would set a precedent for skyline development along these fossil dune cliffs where there is no current precedent for skyline intrusion, this was flagged as risk. **To address the risk, the Draft Visual Baseline requested that further detail in the earthworks and the architecture is required to provide confidence that low levels of visual intrusion will take place.**
3. The Draft BAR maintains that steep slopes have been excluded from the development footprint. No slopes analysis is provided in the DBAR. In the Draft Visual Baseline that was withheld, a preliminary steep slopes analysis was generated from the survey contours, supplemented with 5m contours for the surrounding areas. This analysis indicated that much of the proposed development area does consist of slopes steeper than 1 in 4m. This was confirmed by the site visit. **A detailed slopes analysis should be undertaken and supported by full survey of the impact area (including the extended earthworks area).**
4. The report by Paul Buchholz, (Appendix D1 – Initial Visual Statement) is actually the quotation for Mr Buchholz to undertake the work. As such, no comment can thus be made of the report. The following statement is made in the Draft BAR with regards to the findings of the other two visual reports:

Subsequent visual specialists – Outline Landscape Architects (2025) and Paul Buchholz (2025) – both confirmed that:

- The site has High Visual Absorption Capacity (VAC) due to dense vegetation and complex terrain;
- No visual exposure exists from the beach, Groenvlei Lake, or public roads;
- The project’s architectural scale, materials, and siting are consistent with low visual sensitivity; and
- The expected residual visual impact significance is Low with standard mitigation.

In reply, the following is noted.

- The site is located on a narrow, fore-dune crest with steep slopes on either side of the dune. On Page 111 the Engineering Report recommendation for design and construction controls are that “piled footings anchored in semi-consolidated sand with a compacted 1.5m perimeter zone”. Once the site has been accessed by the heavy machinery to make the compaction platform, with vegetation cleared and compacted to 1.5m around each of the proposed dwellings, the current/ limited screening vegetation will be removed between the cottages. This will leave the proposed 3 x cottages and main dwelling exposed on a dune crest, with limited remaining vegetation between them. There is also no indication of the construction road that is required to access the sites, and how this road combined with the compaction platforms, would influence the existing vegetation that is used as motivation in the visual screening reports. This once again, emphasises the need for detailed design for the earthworks, as well as the architecture. Once the construction access road along the crest of the dune is created, and the site cleared of vegetation with a 1.5m buffer compaction zone around each of the dwellings, **much of the existing vegetation will have been removed. Why has this issue not been raised by the other visual specialists?**
- Without mitigation, informed by detail design of the architecture and earthworks, the viewshed analysis generated in the Visual Baseline Report suggests that visual incidence is likely. **Without this detailed design information, the findings of both visual specialists are based on an assumption.** The DEA&DP Visual & Aesthetic Guidelines indicate that “Informed decision-making needs to be based on a consideration of possible impacts under a range of scenarios, including the worst-case scenario” (Guideline for Involving Visual and Aesthetic Specialists in EIA Process). **Neither of the other visual specialists have taken a worst-case scenario into account.**
- Professionally, I disagree with the **Low residual Visual Impact Significance, as this cannot be confirmed without detail design.** As this could set a negative precedent for skyline development along this section of the Groenvlei Beach/ Fossil Dunes, the landscape significance of this area would need to be taken into account, and a full Level 4 Visual Impact Assessment should be undertaken by a specialist that is recognised by a landscape/ heritage related Registration Authority as having the suitable expertise to address this potential risk.
- Regarding Paul Buchholz specialisation, he is registered as a Geographical Information Science Practitioners with the South Africa Geomatics Council. **This registration is not congruent with Landscape Heritage issues.**
- A specific example of the landscape risks embedded in the current layout design is the proposed “straight-line” cutting through indigenous thicket vegetation for the main access road, which poses a risk to the predominantly private-nature-reserve character of the surrounding area. The access should be re-designed as a curving road that follows the natural terrain, avoiding a wide clear-cut visual corridor. Given that most of the surrounding land uses are Private Nature Reserve related, the straight, clear-cut could set a negative precedent with the creation of a geometric/ grid based access road layout for this area that does have landscape significance. **Why has this not been flagged as an issue by the other Visual Specialists as a potential cumulative risk?**

The Draft Baseline VIA that was submitted on the 18 November 2024, does not preclude development on the site. Rather, the report motivates to ensure that, given the sensitivity of this fossil dune landscape where there is no existing, intrusive skyline development precedent, **an appropriate development precedent is required**. As such, **the comments submitted during the Pre-BAR, as well as in the withheld Draft Visual Baseline Report, remain applicable**.

For this reason, the information contained in the withheld Draft Visual Baseline Report are submitted to the Nov2025 Draft BAR PPP **but updated to address the comments made by Ecoroute regarding the incorrect labelling of Groenvlei Beach as Cola Beach**. As this report was excluded from the Draft BAR PPP, and it does have information that could inform the Relevant Authority decision making, the Visual Baseline Report should have been submitted to the Authorities. The OneDrive link to the report is located below:

[Ruygtevlei Farm Portion 205 79 LVIA Baseline DraftV2.docx](#)

As previously requested by VRMA (in the Ecoroute Pre BAR), detail design should be provided. The following list of information from the DEA&DP Visual & Aesthetic Guidelines has relevance:

- Siting and orientation of all proposed structures.
- Footprint, height, form and massing of the structures.
- Architectural elevations, finishes, colours and material specifications.
- Length, width, treatment and finishes of access roads, internal roads and parking areas.
- Cut-and-fill slopes and all associated earthworks.
- Anticipated construction-phase facilities including camps, storage areas, haul roads, stockpiles and batching areas.
- Clear presentation of alternatives, including layout, architectural and earthworks design options.

To allow the Relevant Authority to make an informed, defensible decision, the withholding of the Draft Visual Baseline report does not add to the EIA process. Had the risks identified in the visual reports been openly discussed during the process, this situation could have been avoided. Meaningful engagement, supported by adequate information, remains essential to address the risk to the receiving fossil dune landscape.

## 2 BACKGROUND MOTIVATION

### 2.1 Dune Crest Location

On Page 110, in reply to the VRMA I&AP comment, the following is highlighted:

The correct project site:

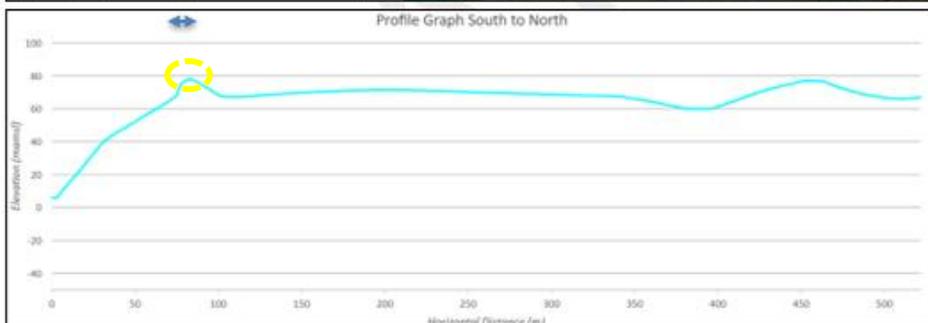
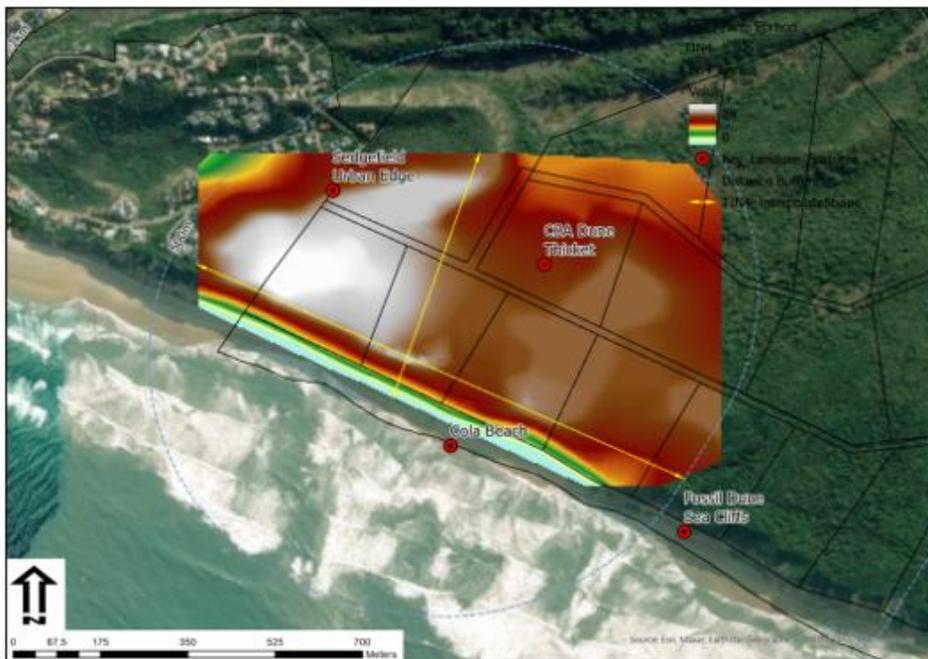
- Lies inland from the coastal cliff, approximately 700 m east of Cola Beach,
- Occupies stabilised consolidated dunes at elevations of 65–75 m above sea level,
- Is covered by dense Goukamma Strandveld and coastal thicket vegetation,
- Has no direct visual exposure to Groenvlei Beach or the N2, and
- Lies behind the dune ridge, not on an active cliff edge.

The actual development footprint, covering  $\pm 1\,175\text{ m}^2$  (0.02% of the property), will be screened by vegetation and topography, and will not result in skyline intrusion or beach visibility.

Revised Visual Findings

Subsequent visual specialists – Outline Landscape Architects (2025) and Paul Buchholz (2025) – both confirmed that:

- The site has High Visual Absorption Capacity (VAC) due to dense vegetation and complex terrain;
- No visual exposure exists from the beach, Groenvlei Lake, or public roads;
- The project’s architectural scale, materials, and siting are consistent with low visual sensitivity; and
- The expected residual visual impact significance is Low with standard mitigation.



In the Baseline Assessment that was withheld from the Pre BAR and the DBAR public participation processes, a DEM was generated using the survey contours and supplemented with 5m contours for the surrounding areas to better understand the terrain without vegetation which is likely to be removed for the development compaction platform. The DEM above depicts the profile of the topography and the prominence of the crest through the main dwelling location. This supports the statement that the site is located on the crest of the dune and re-confirms that single storey structure would be visible from the beach. ***It also clearly identifies that the statement in the DBAR 'lies behind the dune ridge' is incorrect.***

## 2.2 Steeps Slopes Risk

Within Appendix E2 – Comments & Response Report, the following has relevance within regards to slopes.

### Page 5

A detailed Site Constraints Map has been compiled and attached as part of the Draft Basic Assessment Report (Appendix B2). This map illustrates the delineated High-Water Mark (HWM) setback, forest edge, slope constraints, and CBA2 boundaries, clearly demonstrating that the selected development footprint occupies a disturbed and previously degraded portion of the site, while avoiding intact forest and steep slopes exceeding 25°.

### Page 6

The Site Constraints Map (Appendix B2) clearly delineates the HWM buffer, CML, erosion-risk zones, and steep (>25%) slopes. The selected development footprint lies entirely outside these high-risk areas, providing a defensible and long-term climate-resilient setback.

***Page 19 (Appendix E2 – Comments & Response Report) in response the VRMA query on Steep slopes, the following statement is made.***

- In response, the proposed development location has been relocated away from the dune crest and away from all slopes steeper than 1:4, as shown on the updated Site Constraints Map and slope gradient overlays.
- Although a final SDP has not yet been produced (as it is only required after environmental authorisation), the BAR now includes:
  - A slope analysis map illustrating gradients across the property;
  - A development envelope overlaid onto the topography, verifying that:
- No infrastructure is located on unstable or steep slopes;
- The previous northwestern portion of the dwelling extending onto a steep slope has been removed;

In reply to SANParks query on slopes, the comment section of the pre-BAR states that the constraints mapping excludes 1 in 4m slopes. **There are no slopes analysis in any of the reports listed, as well as not in the Appendix B2. The Visual Baseline Report, preliminary finding, is that other than the narrow section on top of the dune crest, the slopes to the north and south are predominantly greater than 1 in 4m. To confirm this, a detailed slopes analyses should be undertaken.**

### 2.3 Lack of Alternatives

In the Baseline Assessment, the recommendation is that development alternatives are put forward. In the DBAR, on Page 59 (Section 3. Layout and Design Alternatives) takes to the Preferred SDP, as well as the Alternative 2 SDP.

#### In response to these findings:

- The development footprint has been realigned to avoid all steep or erosion-prone slopes identified on the Constraints Map.
- A buffer zone is being applied along the top of the coastal cliff to preserve slope stability and avoid geotechnically unsafe areas.

This appears to be incorrect as a review of the layout (following page) finds that they are essentially the same but the Alternative Layout manipulated (reduced vertically) to appear different. The preferred layout still depicts intrusion into the northwest steep slopes area that were not included in the survey. There is also no depiction of a deck (sea facing) on the layout plan.

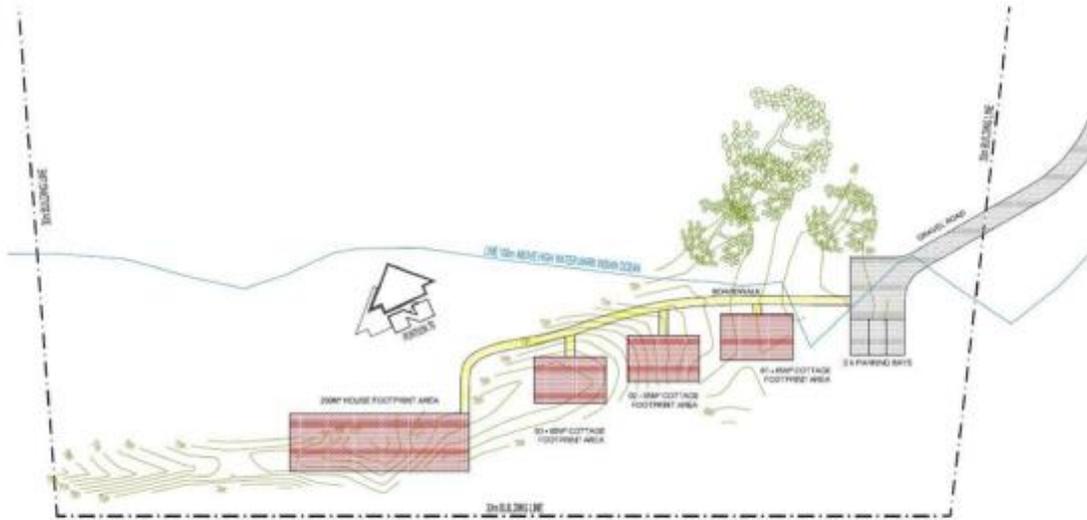


FIGURE 17: PREFERRED SDP

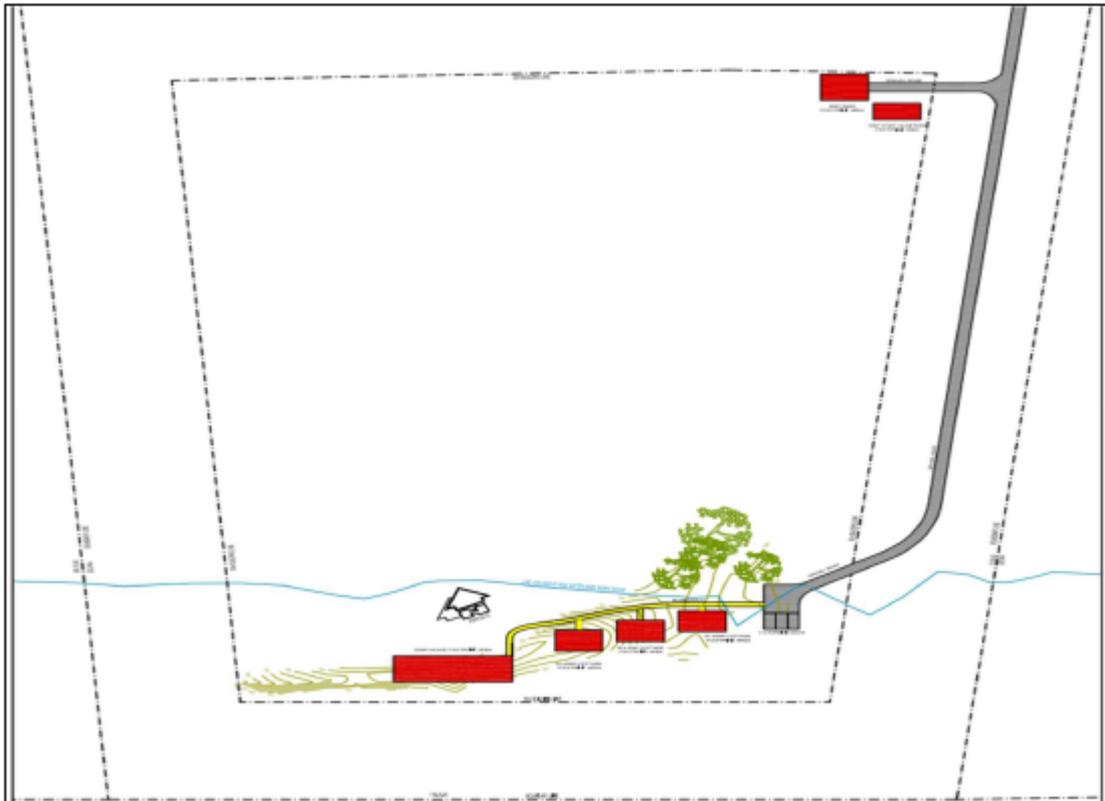


FIGURE 19: ALTERNATIVE 2 SDP

### 3 ANNEXURE 1

01Oct 2024	Visual Resource Management Africa CC (VRMA) was appointed by the property owner (Daniel Sevenster) on to undertake a Level 4 Visual Impact Assessment.
01Nov20 24	<p>VRMA submits the SSVR for the site.</p> <p>I have concluded the landscape and visual site sensitivity verification report. Please note that concerns are raised. While the current sites proposed for development present significant landscape and visual impact concerns, there exists a less visually intrusive opportunity located in the southeastern section of the property near the proposed vehicle parking area. This site is set back further from the geotechnical risks areas and there is a local precedent for residential development on the adjacent property. It is strongly recommended that if the current layout is pursued, then the three cottages should be excluded. Subject to geotechnical review, the main building would need to be set into the dune so as not to create a negative precedent for skyline intrusive development along the dune cliffs.</p> <p>I am happy to discuss the findings and suggest that we set up a teams meeting to discuss the issues raised and how to proceed further.</p>
3Nov202 4	Diana Cezar email indicating that the incorrect site was surveyed.
18Nov24	<p>VRMA reply to Ecoroute VRMA acknowledging that there was a 4m shift in the survey footprint.</p> <p>Hi Janet,</p> <p>Further to the comments made regarding the errors in the Site Sensitivity Report, the following refers.</p> <p>As the DWG plan had not been received prior to the site visit, I georeferenced a digital copy of the site development plan. This resulted in the image being stretched 10m to the south. As a result of this shift, 4 of the survey points relating to the proposed additional units were out by an average of 6m to the east, and 4m to the south. While the photograph locations have now been corrected for these 4 points, the issued raised in the SSVR are still relevant.</p> <p>The nature of the SSVR is to provide a general risk appraisal of the site, to inform the client of potential risks that could jeopardise the development. As verified by the more detailed Baseline Assessment that has now been concluded, the general risks identified within the SSVR were correct. The more detailed review of planning and guidelines related to fossil dunes, ridgelines, skyline intrusion and steep slope development, Critical Biodiversity Area of dune thicket related areas, as well as coastal recreational landscapes found that the proposed plan is unlikely to meet the National (Garden Route Environmental Management Framework) and Povincial (DEA&amp;DP Visual and Aesthetic/ Mountain, Hills and Ridgelines) guidelines. I will send the DrfatV1 Baseline LVIA shortly in another email.</p>

	<p>I have attached below a screen capture of the map showing the previous survey points with an overlay to the DWG provided. Should you have any further queries with regards to the SSVR and the minor errors in the initial site survey photographs, please let me know.</p>
<p>18Nov20 24</p>	<p>VRMA submits the Draft Baseline Assessment.</p> <p>Hi Janet, Please find the Erf 205/79 DraftV1 Baseline LVIA for your review. Ruygtevlei Farm Portion 205_79 LVIA Baseline_DraftV1.docx</p> <p>To delineate the steep slopes, ridgeline and dune crest related skyline intrusion, I have used the survey contours for the site, supplemented with 5m SG contours to generate a detailed digital elevation model. I have also concluded the literature review for landscape planning. As the fossil dune/ridgeline and coastal landscape does trigger as a significant landscape in the Garden Route EMF, the WC Mountains, Hills and Ridgelines Guideline, and the DEA&amp;DP Visual &amp; Aesthetic Guideline, detailed information of the nature of the proposed landscape change is a requirement. The following information is specified in the DEA&amp;DP Visual &amp; Aesthetic Guideline as necessary.</p> <p><b>Essential information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The precise location and elevation of the project, and the boundaries of the project site, or the proposed route in the case of roads, pipelines, powerlines, etc.;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The siting and orientation of the structures within the project site;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The footprint, massing and height of the various structures;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elevations of the structures, including finishes and colours;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Length, area and finishes of access roads to the site, internal roads and parking areas;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Type and height of all ancillary structures, such as masts, antennas, security fencing, gatehouses, substations, electrical kiosks, reservoirs, overhead power-lines and other cables (both on and off the site);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cut and fill slopes and other major earthworks or excavations associated with the project;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Traffic within the site, or to and from the site, which may constitute a visual impact;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Construction phase facilities, such as construction camps, labourers' housing, haul roads, material storage, stockpiles, batch mixing areas, etc. where applicable;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alternative scenarios, layouts or designs for the project that have been proposed.</li> </ul> <p>I am more than happy to discuss the findings of the baseline assessment should you have any queries.</p>

<p>19Nov20 24</p>	<p>Reply from Janet Ebersohn indicated that the report was received.</p> <p>.</p> <p>RE: Erf 205/79 DraftV1 Baseline LVIA</p> <p> janet@ecoroute.co.za To: 'Steve Stead' Cc: 'Diana Studio D'Arte'; 'daniel sevenster'; nick@olivierarchitects.co.za</p> <p> You replied to this message on 2025/01/13 12:51.</p> <p>Thank you working through it now and will revert back shortly</p> <p>Should you require any information please do not hesitate to contact me.</p> <p></p> <p>Kind Regards Janet Ebersohn Bsc.Hon Environmental Management EAPASA Registration Number: 2019/1286 082 5577122</p>
<p>03Mar20 25</p>	<p>Janet indicates that a second visual impact assessor has been appointed.</p>
<p>30mar25</p>	<p>Based on the concern raised by VRMA regarding the second VIA, JE agrees that both reports are submitted, and that VRM Africa is added as an I&amp;AP.</p> <p>RE: Erf 205/79 DraftV1 Baseline LVIA</p> <p> janet@ecoroute.co.za To: 'Steve Stead'; bianca@ecoroute.co.za Cc: admin@ecoroute.co.za</p> <p>Hi Steve</p> <p>Yes I agree,</p> <p><a href="mailto:bianca@ecoroute.co.za">@bianca@ecoroute.co.za</a> please add Steve as a I&amp;A P</p> <p>Should you require any information please do not hesitate to contact me.</p> <p></p> <p>Kind Regards Janet Ebersohn Bsc.Hon Environmental Management EAPASA Registration Number: 2019/1286 082 5577122</p> <hr/> <p><b>From:</b> Steve Stead &lt;<a href="mailto:steve@vrma.co.za">steve@vrma.co.za</a>&gt; <b>Sent:</b> Monday, 03 March 2025 12:13 <b>To:</b> <a href="mailto:janet@ecoroute.co.za">janet@ecoroute.co.za</a> <b>Cc:</b> <a href="mailto:bianca@ecoroute.co.za">bianca@ecoroute.co.za</a> <b>Subject:</b> RE: Erf 205/79 DraftV1 Baseline LVIA</p> <p>Hi Janet,</p> <p>This is a problem. To ensure that 'cherry picking' of reports does not take place, please note that <b>both assessment reports need to be included in the EIA pro</b></p> <p>Please let me know who the DEA&amp;DP representative is. I will also need to be included as an I&amp;AP.</p> <p>Please confirm receipt of this email, and that I have been added as an I&amp;AP.</p> <p>Kind regards, Steve</p> <p>Stephen Stead Visual Resource Management Africa Call: 079821560 0011</p> <p></p>
<p>25Mar25</p>	<p>Ecoroute commence with a <b>Basic Assessment Report: Pre-consultation</b> without notifying VRM Africa that the PPP has commenced. By chance, VRM Africa checks the Ecoroute website and finds that the PPP has commenced.. The following comments were made to the process as an I&amp;AP.</p> <p>An alternative site near the proposed parking area in the southeast portion of the property was proposed as an alternative development for alternative assessment. This area has moderate slopes and is partially screened by dune thicket vegetation, limiting skyline intrusion. The following requirements</p>

	<p>were requested in the baseline assessment submitted 18Nov2025 to Janet Ebersohn to confirm this suitability/ risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptual architectural design and the need for 3D visualisations, in line with DEA&amp;DP Visual &amp; Aesthetic Guidelines.</li> <li>• A consolidated Site Development Plan (SDP) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All access routes and cut/fill areas (especially the access route along the dune ridgeline to construct the proposed main dwelling).</li> <li>○ Earthworks/ Vegetation clearance buffers.</li> <li>○ Deck specifications.</li> <li>○ Adequate spacing between units to allow for vegetation screening.</li> <li>○ Review of the main access driveway linear design.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>As VRMA was excluded from the DBAR, we reserve the right to make comments as an I&amp;AP.</p>
13Nov25	VRMA is notified of a Draft BAR public participation process.

**physical** 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, York Park Building,  
York Street, George, 6530

**website** [www.capenature.co.za](http://www.capenature.co.za)

**enquiries** Megan Simons

**telephone** 087 087 3060

**email** [msimons@capenature.co.za](mailto:msimons@capenature.co.za)

**Reference** LE14/2/6/1/6/4/205-79\_Residential\_Sedgefield

**date** 26 June 2025

Eco Route Environmental Consultancy,  
P.O. Box 1252,  
Sedgefield,  
6573

Attention: Ms Bianca Gilfillan  
By email: [admin@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:admin@ecoroute.co.za)

Dear Ms Bianca Gilfillan

**THE BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT: PRE-CONSULTATION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY DWELLING AND ACCESS ROAD ON PORTION 79 OF FARM 205, RUYGTE VALLEY, SEDGEFIELD, KNYSNA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, WESTERN CAPE.**

CapeNature would like to thank you for the opportunity to review the above report. Please note that our comments only pertain to the biodiversity related impacts and not to the overall desirability of the application. CapeNature wishes to make the following comments:

The property is within the Wilderness Lakes Protected Environment. According to the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (CapeNature 2024)<sup>1</sup> the property has Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA 1: Terrestrial and Forest to the north and CBA 2: Terrestrial and Forest to the south) and Ecological Support Areas (ESA 1: Terrestrial to the north west). The fine-scale vegetation map describes the vegetation as Wilderness Forest-Thicket and Hartenbos Primary Dune (the latter along the southern section) (Vlok *et al.*, 2008)<sup>2</sup>. The National Biodiversity Assessment (Skowno *et al.*, 2018)<sup>3</sup> mapped the vegetation unit as Goukamma Dune Thicket which is Least Concerned (SANBI 2022)<sup>4</sup>. The 2024 update of the Vegetation of South Africa (Beta VegMap, 2024)<sup>5</sup> mapped the vegetation of the property as Goukamma Strandveld. Following a review of the application, CapeNature wishes to make the following comments:

The property does not have any freshwater features but falls within the Coastal Protection Zone and the Coastal Management Line is towards the southern end of the property. Following a review of the application, CapeNature has the following comments:

<sup>1</sup> CapeNature. 2024. 2023 Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan and Guidelines. Unpublished Report

<sup>2</sup> Vlok JHJ, Euston-Brown DIW, Wolf T. 2008. A vegetation map for the Garden Route Initiative. Unpublished I: 50 000 maps and report for C.A.P.E. FSP Task Team, Oudtshoorn.

<sup>3</sup> Skowno, A. L., Poole, C. J., Raimondo, D. C., Sink, K. J., Van Deventer, H., Van Niekerk, L., Harris, L. R., Smith-Adao, L. B., Tolley, K. A., Zengeya, T. A., Foden, W. B., Midgley, G. F. and Driver, A. 2019. National Biodiversity Assessment 2018: The status of South Africa's ecosystems and biodiversity. Synthesis Report. Pretoria, South Africa. 214 pp.

<sup>4</sup> Government of South Africa (2022) South African Red List of Terrestrial Ecosystems: assessment details and ecosystem descriptions. Technical Report #7664, SANBI Pretoria, South Africa.

<sup>5</sup> South African National Biodiversity Institute (2006-2024). The Vegetation Map of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland, Mucina, L., Rutherford, M.C. and Powrie, L.W. (Editors), Online, <https://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/2258>, Version 2024.

1. The property is largely in a natural state and falls within a Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA). While the proposed development is located within a degraded CBA, this does not imply reduced sensitivity. We do not support the specialist's view that the degraded CBA is a preferable option, as its management objectives clearly state: *"Maintain in a functional, natural, or near-natural state, with no further loss of natural habitat. These areas should be rehabilitated."* Degraded CBAs must be managed in line with these objectives, including rehabilitation, unless a qualified rehabilitation specialist confirms that restoration is not feasible.
2. The presence of invasive alien species on the property indicates that it has not been managed. In terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004)<sup>6</sup> and its associated Alien and Invasive Species Regulations<sup>7</sup>, landowners are legally obligated to control and remove listed invasive species from their properties. The presence of these species should not be used to justify the proposed development, as it reflects non-compliance with existing environmental obligations rather than a reduced ecological value.
3. CapeNature does not support the currently proposed development location, as it lies within 100 metres of the High-Water Mark. We recommend that the development be relocated further inland within the forested area. Consultation with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) is advised to identify the most ecologically appropriate site. The development should be sensitively positioned to avoid impacting the forest and should be designed to retain and build around the protected milkwood trees<sup>8</sup>.
4. The site is steep, and we remind the applicant that steep slopes increase the chance of erosion and siltation which can also result in land slipping. Also, heavy rainfall events may also exacerbate the soil condition.
5. As noted, the property falls within the Wilderness Lakes Protected Environment, is bordered by the Lake Pleasant Private Nature Reserve, and lies within a Priority Focus Area of the National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy. We recommend that the landowner consider placing the remaining portion of the property under formal conservation through a biodiversity stewardship agreement in perpetuity. This would, in the long term, contribute to linking the property with the Goukamma Cluster of the Garden Route Complex World Heritage Site and Nature Reserves<sup>9</sup>.
6. The Basic Assessment Report (BAR) identifies a Biodiversity Offset Agreement as a proposed mitigation measure. However, biodiversity offsets should only be considered as a last resort, after all other steps in the mitigation hierarchy have been fully applied. The BAR must clearly outline how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, step-by-step. As per the National Biodiversity Offset Guidelines (2023)<sup>10</sup> (hereafter NBOG). The NBOG also stress that offsets should not be applied in areas with irreplaceable biodiversity,

---

<sup>6</sup> National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004), Government Gazette No. 26436

<sup>7</sup> Regulations under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004): Alien and Invasive Species Regulations, Government Gazette No. 43735

<sup>8</sup> Notice of the List of Protected Tree Species under the National Forest Act, 1998 (Act No. 84 of 1998).

<sup>9</sup> CapeNature. 2023. Garden Route Complex World Heritage Site & Nature Reserves: Protected Areas Management Plan 2023-2033. Internal Report. CapeNature. Cape Town.

<sup>10</sup> National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998): The National Biodiversity Offset Guideline. 2023. Government Gazette No. 48841.

including Critically Endangered ecosystems. While the mapped vegetation type is classified as Least Concern, the property includes patches of indigenous forest, which have high biodiversity value.

7. It is important that the service infrastructure be included to determine whether they will cause any other additional habitat loss. The applicant must demonstrate that there is sufficient municipal capacity to support the proposed development, specifically in relation to potable water supply, sewage treatment, and waste management services. Given ongoing water security challenges, the development should incorporate water conservation measures, including the installation of rainwater harvesting systems (e.g., water tanks). In addition, the development should adopt energy-efficient design principles, such as passive solar orientation, energy-saving appliances, and potentially renewable energy sources (e.g., solar panels).

CapeNature reserves the right to revise initial comments and request further information based on any additional information that may be received.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan Simons', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Megan Simons**  
**For: Manager (Conservation Intelligence)**

**physical** 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, York Park Building,  
York Street, George, 6530

**website** [www.capenature.co.za](http://www.capenature.co.za)

**enquiries** Megan Simons

**telephone** 087 087 3060

**email** [msimons@capenature.co.za](mailto:msimons@capenature.co.za)

**Reference** LE14/2/6/1/6/4/205-79\_Residential\_Sedgefield

**date** 18 December 2025

Eco Route Environmental Consultancy,  
P.O. Box 1252,  
Sedgefield,  
6573

Attention: Ms Bianca Gilfillan  
By email: [admin@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:admin@ecoroute.co.za)

Dear Ms Bianca Gilfillan

**THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT: PRE-CONSULTATION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY DWELLING AND ACCESS ROAD ON PORTION 79 OF FARM 205, RUYGTE VALLEY, SEDGEFIELD, KNYSNA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, WESTERN CAPE.**

---

CapeNature would like to thank you for the opportunity to review the above report. Please note that our comments only pertain to the biodiversity related impacts and not to the overall desirability of the application. CapeNature wishes to make the following comments:

CapeNature would be favourable to a conservation outcome; however, this should not be regarded as a mitigation measure. Furthermore, the biodiversity value of the property should be assessed by CapeNature to determine the most appropriate stewardship option.

CapeNature has previously provided detailed comments on this application and maintains its objection to the proposed development, specifically to the proposed location of the development, and reiterates that the development should be relocated further inland.

CapeNature reserves the right to revise initial comments and request further information based on any additional information that may be received.

Yours sincerely,



**Megan Simons**  
**For: Manager (Conservation Intelligence)**



## forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X 447· Pretoria · 0001· Environment House ·473 Steve Biko Road, Arcadia, Pretoria

**EDMS Reference:** 268125  
**Enquiries:** Ms. Tabisile Mhlana  
**Telephone:** (021) 493 7049  
**Email:** [OCEIA@dffe.gov.za](mailto:OCEIA@dffe.gov.za)

Ms Bianca Gilfillan  
**EcoRoute Environmental Consultancy**  
P.O. Box 1252  
Sedgefield  
6573

**Tel:** 0791895060  
**Email Address:** bianca@ecoroute.co.za

Dear Ms Gilfillan

### **COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY DWELLING AND ACCESS ROAD ON PORTION 79 OF FARM 205, RUYGTE VALLEY, SEDGEFIELD, WESTERN CAPE.**

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE), Branch Oceans & Coasts (O&C) appreciates the opportunity granted to comment on the Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) for Proposed Development Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape. This Branch has provided recommendations in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) ("NEMA") and the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 24 of 2008) ("ICM Act").

The Branch O&C has the mandate to ensure the holistic management of the coast and estuarine areas as an integrated system and promote coordinated coastal management. It ensures that the ecological integrity, natural character, and economic, social, and aesthetic value of coastal zones are maintained to ensure that people, properties, and economic activities are protected against the impacts of dynamic coastal processes.

Guided by the principles of integrated coastal management, this Branch promotes developments that promote socially justified sharing of benefits derived from a resource-rich coastal area and strives to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are upheld.

Based on the submitted Draft BAR, the Branch presents the comments stipulated below for consideration. Please note the **recommendations for your consideration**:

1. As discussed during the site visit, the subsequent reports must clearly indicate the measured distance from the high-water mark to the proposed location of all structures. Figure 4 illustrates the 100 m setback from the high-water mark and indicates that the entire development footprint falls within the 100 m zone. However, Figure 1 depicts two red shaded features located within areas mapped as Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) to the north of the property, which appear to be outside the 100 m from the high-water mark.
2. The report must therefore clearly clarify whether the proposed ancillary structures, namely the staff accommodation and equipment shed, correspond to the two red shaded features shown in Figure 1, or whether these ancillary structures are instead located within the main dwelling house footprint. This distinction is critical to accurately assess the consideration of the coastal processes and biodiversity constraints.
3. Page 13 of the draft BAR indicates that the additional units are not intended for commercial or tourist accommodation. However, the Town Planning Report presents a different intent, stating that it is the applicant's aspiration to construct three small self-catering tourist accommodation units, each measuring approximately 65 m<sup>2</sup>, to supplement their income. Clarity is therefore required on whether the three self-catering units are intended for private family use or for tourism accommodation. The draft BAR contains conflicting information in this regard, and the intended use of the units has a direct bearing on the nature and significance of potential impacts, including but not limited to traffic generation, service demands, and cumulative tourism-related impacts
4. The Branch supports the proposed elevated timber boardwalks for pedestrian access to the house and private units, as this design measure will minimise soil compaction and disturbance, thereby allowing shade-tolerant indigenous vegetation to persist and thrive beneath the structures.
5. A detailed Site Development Plan must be provided, clearly indicating the location and spatial layout of all proposed structures, associated infrastructure, and internal access roads.
6. It is stated that the proposed development will operate off-grid and that conservancy tanks will be utilised for sewage management. The Site Development Plan must therefore clearly indicate the location of all proposed conservancy tanks, and details regarding their capacity and design specifications must be provided, including how the conservancy tanks will be operated and managed during the operational phase (e.g. maintenance, monitoring, and emptying arrangements).
7. The proposed limited upgrades to the existing public servitude road (Bushy Way), intended to provide safe vehicular access without the need for new municipal infrastructure, must not in any manner result in the privatisation, restriction, or exclusive use of the public servitude, as such outcomes would be inconsistent with the principles and objectives of the Integrated Coastal Management Act..
8. The applicant should remain cognisant of Sections 14 and 15 of the ICMA, namely: Section 14 – Position of the high-water mark *(1) No person may replace the high-water mark curvilinear boundary with a straight-line boundary in terms of section 34 of the Land Survey Act. (5) If the high-water mark is landward of a straight line boundary of a coastal land unit when this Act took effect, or the high-water mark moves landward of a straight line boundary of a coastal land unit due to the erosion of the coast, sea-level rise*

*or other causes, the owner of that coastal land unit— (a) loses ownership of any portion of that coastal land unit that is situated below the high-water mark to the extent that such land unit becomes coastal public property; and (b) is not entitled to compensation from the State for that loss of ownership, unless the movement of the high-water mark was caused by an intentional or negligent act or omission by an organ of state and was a reasonably foreseeable consequence of that act or omission.*

9. Section 15 - Measures affecting erosion and accretion (1) *No person, owner or occupier of land adjacent to the seashore or other coastal public property capable of erosion or accretion may require any organ of state or any other person to take measures to prevent the erosion or accretion of the seashore or such other coastal public property, or of land adjacent to coastal public property, unless the erosion is caused by an intentional act or omission of that organ of state or other person. (2) No person may construct, maintain or extend any structure, or take other measures on coastal public property to prevent or promote erosion or accretion of the seashore except as provided for in this Act, the National Environmental Management Act or any other specific environmental management Act*
10. Vegetation clearing should be limited to only the development footprint.
11. Section 63 of the ICM Act states that when environmental authorization for coastal activities is applied for in terms of Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act, the competent authority must take into account all relevant factors, including whether coastal public property, the coastal protection zone or coastal access land will be affected, and if so, the extent to which the proposed development or activity is consistent with the purpose for establishing and protecting those areas, the socio-economic impact of the proposed activities and the likely effects of coastal processes on the developmental proposal.
12. The proposed development should consider the Garden Route National Park Coastal Management Lines.
13. The applicant is reminded of the Duty of Care and the remediation of environmental damage, in terms of Section 28(1) of NEMA, which, specifically states that: “...*Every person who causes, has caused or may cause significant pollution or degradation of the environment must take reasonable measures to prevent such pollution or degradation from occurring, continuing or recurring, or, in so far as such harm to the environment is authorized by law or cannot reasonably be avoided or stopped, to minimize and rectify such pollution or degradation of the environment...*” together with Section 58 of the NEM: ICMA which refers to one’s duty to avoid causing adverse effects on the coastal environment.
14. The ICM Act advocates for reasonable coastal access to the coastal and estuarine resources. Therefore, the applicant must take note of the provisions of Section 13 of the ICM Act which states that “(1) *Subject to this Act and any other applicable legislation, any natural person in the Republic – (a) has a right of reasonable access to the coastal public property; and (b) is entitled to use and enjoy coastal public property, provided such use – (i) does not adversely affect the rights of members of the public to use and enjoy the coastal public property; (ii) does not hinder the State in the performance of its duty to protect the environment; and (iii) does not cause adverse effect. (1A) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), no person may prevent access to coastal public property.*” During the construction and operational phase, the applicant should ensure that the public can safely use and enjoy the coastal zone.

15. The applicant is reminded that no person may discharge effluent that originates from a source on land into coastal waters and or dump any waste or other material at sea without authorization from the Minister.
16. You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no other additional activities outside the scope of this application may commence before an Environmental Authorization is granted by the Department.

Kindly note that the Branch Oceans & Coasts reserves the right to revise its comments and request further information based on any additional information received. All correspondence, documentation, and/or requests (hard copy and an electronic copy) should be submitted to our office via email to [OCEIA@dfpe.gov.za](mailto:OCEIA@dfpe.gov.za) / or **Physical Address: Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment (DFPE), Branch: Oceans and Coast, 2 East Pier Building, East Pier Road, Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Cape Town, 8001.**

Yours Sincerely,



**Mr Ryan Peter**  
**Director: Coastal Development & Coordination**  
**Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment**  
**Date: 9/01/2026**

**NIEL DE VILLIERS**

devilliers@law.co.za

15 December 2025

**NO DEPARTMENTAL REFERENCE**

**NUMBER MADE AVAILABLE**

**TO: Eco Route Environmental Consultancy**

Attention Bianca Gilfillan and Janet Ebersohn

By e-mail to:

janet@ecoroute.co.za

bianca@ecoroute.co.za

admin@ecoroute.co.za

Dear Madam

**Comments on Draft Basic Assessment Report - The proposed development of a primary dwelling, three cottages, additional structures and access road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape**

**Introduction**

1. I write on behalf of myself and for the benefit of a voluntary association with legal personality to be formed in 2026, Sedgefield Accountability and Environment Forum (SAEF), or Garden Route Environment and Accountability Team (GREAT), or such other name as may be decided upon its establishment.
2. I am a resident of Sedgefield, and I walk on the unspoilt beach that runs from the edge of Sedgefield to Buffels Bay. This pristine coastline is of unparalleled beauty. It is a piece of scenic coast for more than ten kilometres which is under threat by this application that will set a development precedent.

3. I fully align myself with the objection by Cape Nature,<sup>1</sup> the questions raised by SANParks,<sup>2</sup> Prof AT Lombard's detailed objection,<sup>3</sup> the issue raised by Ms M White and her objection,<sup>4</sup> and the detailed objection raised by Mr S Stead<sup>5</sup> to this application.
4. I am not an expert in dealing with DBAR applications, I accordingly may err in overlooking matters raised therein. Any error is not deliberate, and is brought about by time pressure. I had almost no time to prepare this objection, as the notice advertising the process omitted to state the material fact that the development of four dwellings would take place on the foredune, at the highest point of the property, in a coastal area unspoilt for kilometres. I learnt of this fact in the last few days, by chance. This time pressure also means that document will contain typing errors, for which I apologise.
5. I may be no expert, but I have lived experiences on this continuous beach and in this town.
6. I did ask Eco Route Environmental Consultancy for an extension in which to submit this report on 12 December 2025, by e-mail. A copy of this email is attached and marked "A". I received notice that the offices of Eco Route Environmental Consultancy are closed from 12 December 2025 to 15 January 2026. A copy is attached and marked "B". An extension would have had no impact on its work. I forwarded annexure "A" by WhatsApp to the contact number provided in annexure "B", requesting a response to my e-mail. The response that I received on 12 December 2025 by WhatsApp merely read "*Thank you you have been registered*". This response did not answer my queries.

---

<sup>1</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report, starting at P1

<sup>2</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report, starting at P5

<sup>3</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report, starting at P29

<sup>4</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report, starting at P55. Especially: "*This EIA seems not to give enough information and clarification about how it's going to look. This looks like one of the first developments along that stretch of coastline and if an intrusive, aesthetically jarring development ( I'm not implying that this is what the proposed development will be, but there is not sufficient information in the report to know this) is approved - there exists the potential that a worrying precedent could be set - 'uglifying' that stretch of pristine coast and ultimately damaging our landscape heritage in the area. I hope additional effort will be put into providing additional information and clarity*". She did not have access to the first report referred to later herein.

<sup>5</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report, starting at P59.

7. My own comments focus on:

7.1. Legal compliance;

7.2. Visual compliance;

8. I had insufficient time to address:

8.1. Statements of fact in the DBAR are not factual at all.

[I give a few examples.

A primary dispute in this matter is that the development will take place where visible from the continuous beach, on the ridge, and intrude on the skyline. The maps show that it will. Mr S Stead says so,<sup>6</sup> and did say so in his draft report of 24 October 2024.<sup>7</sup> (I have not seen the report of 18 November 2024 referred to later herein).

The response is a theme in the DBAR that he had evaluated the wrong property. I show later herein that Mr S Stead had evaluated the correct property.

BUT THE ISSUE IS NOT ONLY THE SKYLINE, BUT ALSO THE PRISTINE FRONT DUNE. IT IS NO ANSWER TO SAY THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WILL SAY BE TEN METRES IN FRONT OF THE RIDGELINE WHERE IT IS RELATIVELY FLAT, AS IT WILL STILL SPOIL THE PRISTINE COAST.

Another theme in the DBAR is that Paul Buchholz prepared a Visual Impact Statement in favour of the development. He did no such thing. His alleged report is a proposal about methodology to be followed **IF** appointed.<sup>8</sup> If there was a second report, it was not made available to the public. The

---

<sup>6</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report, starting at P59.

<sup>7</sup> Appendix D1 VRM Visual Impact Assessment Wrong site

<sup>8</sup> Appendix D1 Initial Visual Statement

version in DBAR at Page 101 and further, does not appear on the report provided.

A theme in the DBAR is that the development will not be visible from the beach. Yet photograph 3 of the bundle<sup>9</sup> shows that one can see the beach from ground level, even before clearing of the site, erecting a raised platform, and erecting a building raised from the ground, more than six metres in the air. If you can see the beach, the people on the beach can see you. In direct conflict with common cause facts, the visual impact assessment preferred by the applicant,<sup>10</sup> states without any doubt that: *“The development will also not be visible to viewers on the beach due to the highly elevated and eroded cliffs.”* This is clearly not true. Now the applicant states: *“The previous statement suggesting that undulating topography fully obstructs views from Groenvlei Beach has been revised. Updated site-specific modelling confirms that portions of the proposed structures may be visible from certain limited beach vantage points, particularly at lower elevations where vegetation density is reduced.”* Then why is that modelling not made available to the public for comment? It is now common cause that there will be a visual disturbance.

A theme in the DBAR is that the development will be **behind** the ridge line. The issue is not if it is **behind** the ridge line viewed from the N2, but from the ocean. It is **in front** of the ridgeline on the applicant’s own version, in a flatter area. The line is clear on its own documents, but please note the contours.<sup>11</sup> Clearly a structure on that area is built at the highest point of the property, as is confirmed by the second visual assessment referred to later.

---

<sup>9</sup> Appendix C Site Photographs

<sup>10</sup> Appendix D1 Visual Compliance Statement

<sup>11</sup> Appendix B2 Environmental Sensitivity Mapping

A theme in the DBAR is that the four dwellings will be screened by vegetation. But in fact, it will be situated on the sea facing slope, in an area that it is heavily invaded by rooikrans, and/or wind-pruned vegetation.]

- 8.2. The material missions in the DBAR, omissions that also result in a picture that is not a true picture.

[I address some of them, briefly.

The version about a very small development footprint omits to refer to predictable additional disturbances. Several of photographs on the visual impact assessment relied upon by the applicant, in my view are deficient and for example do not take into account a building raised from the ground, more than six metres in the air. They were also not taken from the beach at various distances to the eastern side of the property, and similarly at various distances to the western side of the property, at low-tide as well. A photograph that gives a glimpse why photograph and modelling are necessary. It is in a different report, figure 4 on page 11 of Appendix D3 Agricultural Compliance Statement:



Imagine a property six metres higher at that point or even higher. This is a photograph taken in a western direction.

Photographs from the beach should be taken at low-tide, that is when one walks on a beach on dry, compacted sand. No one walks on the beach at high-tide in soft sand.

The defective photographs presented is illustrated from another one taken at high tide (only directly in front of the site) in a different report, photo 7230 on page 23 of Appendix D3 Agricultural Compliance Statement Appendix D4 Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment. Imagine it being taken at low-tide:



Imagine structures breaching that skyline by 6 metres.

One more example, photograph 6,<sup>12</sup> what would the view be only four metres closer to the ocean?

---

<sup>12</sup> Appendix C Site Photographs



On the matter of photographs, it is common cause that that there is a change in vegetation at about the ridgeline. See Appendix B2 Environmental Sensitivity Mapping. See the photographs “*Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan: Sensitive Areas*”, “*Map Indicating Proposed Development Area Within 100 meters of High-Water Mark*”, and the actual satellite imaginary “*Proposed Development Area of Primary Dwelling*”. Then please turn to the “*Appendix C Site Photographs*” and endeavour to see a depiction of these changes. In fact, the vegetation tapers down to shrubs as one crosses over the ridgeline.<sup>13</sup> That low vegetation is depicted in another report as typical site conditions.<sup>14</sup>

I am not aware of any 3D and other visual simulations provided to the public for comment, yet they seem to exist.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the fact that there are no finalised Site Development Plan or any actual designs for which approval will be sought, prevents the public from commenting on the actual development.

---

<sup>13</sup> Appendix D2 Preliminary Geotechnical and Geomatic Report Page 36

<sup>14</sup> Appendix D3 Agricultural Compliance Statement Page 11 Figure 4

<sup>15</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report Page 67 (“*Updated sitespecific modelling confirms that portions of the proposed structures may be visible from certain limited beach vantage points, particularly at lower elevations where vegetation density is reduced.*”)

Similarly, the submitted building plans referred to in the DBAR have not been made available.

To make this matter worse, is the fact that DBAR is dated “November 2025”. That is almost at the end of the fourth quarter of 2025. The following documents have not been disclosed-

- The building plan approval that was sought in Q3 of 2025;<sup>16</sup>
- Proof of registration of a conservation easement (± 4.25 ha) with the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board by Q4 2025;<sup>17</sup>
- Proof of application for rezoning to Open Space III (Nature Conservation Area) by Q3 2025;<sup>18</sup>
- Proof of formalising long-term stewardship and limited private residential rights (by Q3 2025?);<sup>19</sup>
- Proof of implementing an Alien Invasive Species Management Plan by Q3 2025, with annual monitoring by a registered ecologist.<sup>20</sup>

9. I am deeply concerned about these aspects that I had insufficient time to address.
10. I am not against development; I am against inappropriate development. As such I am fully against the approvals sought, but I align myself with the view that the owner may erect a single dwelling on the northern side of the property, preferably near the road access. This would result in a proper compliance with the aim set out in section 2(4)(b) of the **National Environmental Management Act**, 107 of 1998, namely that degradation of the environment is to avoided, or, where it cannot be altogether avoided, is minimised. It also would result in

---

<sup>16</sup> DBAR Page 4

<sup>17</sup> DBAR Page 5

<sup>18</sup> DBAR Page 5

<sup>19</sup> DBAR Page 5

<sup>20</sup> DBAR Page 5

compliance with section 2(4)(c) of **NEMA**, namely that the disturbance of landscapes is avoided, or where it cannot be altogether avoided, is minimised.

11. I was not only hampered by insufficient time to formulate my views, but I also did not have access to any of the documents that preceded the publication of the DBAR. Accordingly, I reserve the right to add to my objections in an appropriate forum, or when I gain access to such material.

### **Legislative framework**

12. The application is made “*in terms of the **National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended).***”<sup>21</sup>
13. In my view, one should state clearly on which sections and regulations the applicant relies to enable members of the public to consider the matter and formulate any objection to the application. If this is not done, the public participation process becomes a box ticking exercise in futility.
14. I assume that the applicant seeks permission to undertake listed activities determined in terms of section 24D(1) of **NEMA**.<sup>22</sup>
15. According to the applicant’s advertisement in the EDGE newspaper of 21 May 2025, the following listed activities are applicable:
  - 15.1. Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 17 (which includes development within the littoral active zone, and also a development within a distance of 100 metres inland of the high-water mark).

[I have seen no limitation of height of the structures sought, and believe that unlimited height is sought. I have referred to the building plans that have not been disclosed.

I dispute the number of structures that will be build. It is suggested that the owner will reside on the property, and park his vehicle(s) in an open parking area in front of the ridgeline,<sup>23</sup> subjected to sea spray, and harsh sunlight, and rain. Or alternatively, he will park vehicles several hundred metres away in a shed at the entrance to the property,<sup>24</sup> facing an uphill walk to the four dwellings each time, in the heat of the day, in the

---

<sup>21</sup> Cover page of the DBAR

<sup>22</sup> **National Environmental Management Act, 107 of 1998**

<sup>23</sup> Appendix B2 Environmental Sensitivity Mapping

<sup>24</sup> Appendix B2 Environmental Sensitivity Mapping

cold and wet of stormy nights. I do not accept such a version as true reflection of his intent (or subsequent owners' intent).

For some reason the intent to build four garages once was included in the development, but it was removed from the application after 24 October 2024. It is still referred to in the first visual impact assessment addressed later herein];

- 15.2. Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 19A (which includes the infilling or depositing of any material of more than five cubic metres into, or the excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, grit, pebbles or rock of more than five cubic metres from the littoral active zone or a distance of 100 metres inland of the high-water mark).

[I have seen no submission about what infilling or excavation permission is sought for. The first visual impact assessment states that significant excavation will be necessary for the construction of the four dwellings. It seems to me that unlimited permission is sought.

All I could find is in the DBAR Page 23, that more than five cubic metres would have to be excavated for the main dwelling. I have no information about the other construction activities.

One cannot form a view of how much road building (levelling of ground and infilling) would be required for heavy vehicles and ordinary cars to reach the dwellings.

One cannot form a view of how much levelling of ground would be required for the activities not dealt with in the application, some of which are listed later herein.

I list a few of the omitted activities, which although their first impact would be on the extensive area where the vegetation will have to be removed, but they may also impact on the levelling of ground-

Access by machinery to the building site of each of the structures. As a matter of logic, they will flatten all vegetation at the top of the ridge where the four dwellings are intended to be erected. A theme in the DBAR is about the non-intrusive construction methods that allegedly will be used. The engineer calls for construction that requires concrete in foundations and thus machinery;<sup>25</sup>

An area where excavated soil is to be dumped;

No plan has been submitted where sewerage tanks would be situated to be accessible by a sewerage removal vehicle with (in Sedgefield) a reasonably short hose;

An area where this excavated soil is to be dumped;

The massive bulk of vegetation to be removed is likely to require a dumping area in excess of the cleared area;

If a nursery is planned, more vegetation will have to be removed;

A large area is required for construction purposes, such as-

An area for one or two containers for storing of cement, tools, and accessories, and for a site office must be provided;

An area for more than one toilet must be provided (for the 20-strong workforce alleged in the DBAR);

---

<sup>25</sup> Appendix D5 Civil and Structural Engineering Confirmation Page 7

An area for a skip or skips must be provided;

An area for the storage of building materials such as sand, bricks, timber, and steel must be provided;

A large area must be added for very large delivery and large concrete mixing and water trucks to arrive, park, and turn around, and more than one may be on site at the same time;

An area must for parking of the bakkies and vans of the construction crews and supervisors must be provided;

An area for tanks for water during construction must be provided;

The road must be widened for very large delivery and large concrete mixing and water trucks, and other vehicles to be able to pass each other, and the proposed width of the road of a maximum of 3 m is too narrow to allow for this. This need will remain in perpetuity. Even the outside access road, Bushy Way, is too a narrow one-lane road, as can be seen below.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report Page 56



*Narrow one-track access road towards site*

In fact, the DBAR at Page 24 states that-

Construction of both the primary dwelling and an access road may require the removal of the indigenous Goukamma Dune Thicket of more than 1 Ha.
---

An area to store topsoil must be provided;

A working area around every construction site must be provided;

No provision has been made for clearing any areas around the dwellings to reduce fire risk and to provide some protection against access by snakes into the dwellings. (I live in this area and snakes are active);

Nothing has been stated about erecting any fence for security purposes in a rural area, and to prevent dogs from roaming the remainder of the property];

No provision has been made for access to a site to drill a borehole (one is planned it seems, despite rainwater harvesting being the theme in the DBAR).]<sup>27</sup>

- 15.3. Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 27 (which includes the clearance of an area of one hectare or more, but less than 20 hectares of indigenous vegetation).

[I have seen no submission about what the extent of the permission is that is sought. It seems to me that unlimited permission is sought.

The suggestion is the DBAR is that an area of only 1 175 m<sup>2</sup> will be cleared, allegedly less than 0.03% of the property and that more than 99.9% of the property will be preserved. This is clearly incorrect, as I have shown already as not all areas have been included in the DBAR. I show below that the DBAR calculation is incorrect.

It is with respect clearly not correct to state that *“the total disturbance footprint (of 1 175 m<sup>2</sup>) includes all areas that will be cleared, excavated, or otherwise impacted by construction activities and infrastructure”*.<sup>28</sup>

It cannot be correct, ever. This is what is stated:<sup>29</sup>

*“The proposed development entails a main dwelling (± 200 m<sup>2</sup>), three small self-contained units (± 65 m<sup>2</sup> each) for private family use, staff housing (± 50 m<sup>2</sup>), an equipment shed (± 80 m<sup>2</sup>), and associated parking and access infrastructure.*

*A 3 m-wide gravel access road (± 200 m long) will lead to a parking area of ± 660 m<sup>2</sup>. Pedestrian access to all units will be via timber boardwalks, reducing soil compaction. The total disturbed area*

<sup>27</sup> Appendix D2 Preliminary Geotechnical and Geomatic Report Page 3

<sup>28</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Responses Report P14. I would appreciate to be provided with a copy.

<sup>29</sup> DBAR Page 5

*is estimated at ± 1 175 m<sup>2</sup> (0.1175 ha)— less than 0.02 % of the property—ensuring that 99.98 % remains in its natural state.”*

The sum of all of those estimates is not 1 175 m<sup>2</sup>, but 1 785 m<sup>2</sup>. In addition, it is a matter of logic that the disturbed area around a building will be larger than the building’s size. I have dealt with earlier in some detail with omitted space for foreseeable activities. But in any event, even the wrong figure of 1 175 m<sup>2</sup> is also not 0.02% of the property of 5.1576 hectares, it is hundred times more 2.28%. The area will have to be four or five times larger than this corrected figure.

In fact, earlier in the Eco Route Pre-consultation Basic Assessment report, March 2025, pg.23 it was stated that more than 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> (1ha) indigenous vegetation will be cleared.<sup>30</sup> Those calculations have not been shown in the report to which I have had access. I submit that this was the correct estimate, or the more correct estimate.

It is to my mind obvious that the DBAR failed to apply for permissions that are entirely foreseeable. I am concerned about the assurances given in the DBAR despite this, such as:

*“All service components have been included in the development footprint of ±1,175 m<sup>2</sup>, and the remaining ±5 ha will be retained in a natural state.”*<sup>31</sup>

The wrong statement that fails to take into account foreseeable activities cannot be more express than this statement more express than this statement. It concerns me:

---

<sup>30</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Responses Report P14

<sup>31</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report Page 8

*“To clarify:*

- *The building footprint refers to the physical base area of all proposed structures, including the main dwelling (200 m<sup>2</sup>), three chalets (3 × 65 m<sup>2</sup>), staff housing (50 m<sup>2</sup>), and an equipment shed (80 m<sup>2</sup>), which together total approximately 525 m<sup>2</sup>.*
- *The total disturbance footprint includes all areas that will be cleared, excavated, or otherwise impacted by construction activities and infrastructure. This includes the building footprints, gravel access road (approximately 200 m in length × <3 m wide), designated parking area, boardwalks, platforms, vegetable gardens (if any), service lines, embankment works, and construction margins. Based on the Environmental Impact Report prepared by Eco Route Environmental Consultancy and the Site Development Plan extracted from the Visual Compliance Statement (Fig. 9), the total disturbance footprint has been calculated at approximately 1,175 m<sup>2</sup> (0.1175 hectares). This value includes the areas for the buildings and essential service infrastructure and was verified spatially in coordination with the appointed landscape architect and GIS mapping consultants.<sup>32</sup>*

I deny these calculations in the strongest terms. They simply cannot be correct. The spatial verification referred to was not made available];

- 15.4. Government Notice No. R324 (Listing Notice 3): Listed Activity 4 (being The development of a road wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13.5 metres).

---

<sup>32</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report Page 14

[I have seen no submission about what the extent of the permission is that is sought. It seems to me that unlimited permission is sought.]

16. If indeed the applicant omitted to include listed activities in the DBAR, or if there were a material understatement, it should be the end of the matter. This is so as it was obliged to bring one application listing all activities. See regulation 11(3) of the **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations**, 2014.
17. In my view, one should clearly define what permission is sought. In this case, the property is adjacent to the sea and thus parts of it fall within 100 metres from the high-water mark and parts of it fall within 1 kilometre from the high-water mark. It is thus also a littoral active zone as defined in the **National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act**, 24 of 2008 for being "*land forming part of, or adjacent to, the seashore that is-*
  - (a) *unstable and dynamic as a result of natural processes; and*
  - (b) *characterised by dunes, beaches, sand bars and other landforms composed of unconsolidated sand, pebbles or other such material which is either unvegetated or only partially vegetated*".
18. **NEMA** and the regulations thereunder are not the only legislation applicable to the environmental protection of the property.
19. The property in issue as it falls within the coastal protection zone in terms of section 16 of the **National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act** as it at least (a) falls within a littoral active zone, (b) is situated wholly or partially within one kilometre of the high- water mark which, and when the act came into force (1 December 2009) was zoned for agricultural use, and/or was not zoned and was not part of a lawfully established township, urban area or other human settlement, and/or is situated wholly or partially within 100 metres of the highwater mark.
20. As such, falling within the coastal protection zone, the property falls within the coastal zone, an area enjoying protection under the **National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act**. This act recognises in its preamble that everyone has the constitutional right to have the environment,

(including the coastal environment) protected for the benefit of present and future generations. Section 63 of the **National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act** states amongst others that in considering an application such as the present one, additional factors need to be considered.

21. These factors include:

21.1. The extent to which the applicant has in the past complied with similar authorisations [section 63(1)(b)].

[I do not know, if it has made similar applications, but it is clear that the owner has taken no real steps since he has acquired the property to preserve the property by, for example, removing the rooikrans or entering into a stewardship agreement with say Cape Nature. Now that this application is made, he undertakes to take such steps.

According to the DBAR various environmental positive steps would be completed by the end of 2025, a few days from now. Have they been taken?];

21.2. The socio-economic impact if the development is authorised or is not authorised [section 63(1)(e)].

[This has been addressed by the applicant in figures that to my mind, are not correct. It is all based on alleged employment opportunities in the construction phase and thereafter.<sup>33</sup>

The applicant alleges that the owner residing in a 200 m<sup>2</sup> house will have 3-5 employees in permanent employ. My question is, to do what? I struggle to think of anyone in Sedgefield (not needing fulltime care), with even one permanent employee at home.

---

<sup>33</sup> DBAR Page 112 and further

[I am alive to the argument that employing someone for say a day a week on a full-time basis could be called a permanent employee from a labour law perspective. But to calculate economic impact, a permanent employee is someone working full-time.]

The only employers of 3-5 employees in permanent employment, are people who run commercial enterprises (such as short-term rentals on Airbnb or Lekkeslaap, or guesthouses), which the applicant denies is the owner's intent with three cottages (the main dwelling too?).

[Perplexingly, the applicant also relies on figures of the impact of the accommodation industry on the Knysna economy to justify the development in circumstances where, on the applicant's version, the owner does not intend to use the property for commercial purposes.<sup>34</sup>

The social economic value of the activity is also disputed. It is alleged that the whole building process would be undertaken by previously disadvantaged individuals,<sup>35</sup> but no enforceable obligation to do so is suggested. Nothing stops the owner to disregard this. It is therefore of no value in the evaluation of the application.

The social economic value of the activity is disputed for another reason. It is alleged that a person who reside permanently in the

---

<sup>34</sup> DBAR Page 113

<sup>35</sup> DBAR P112

dwelling, and who will not let the cottages, will employ three to five fulltime employees at R1.8 Million over ten years.<sup>36</sup> I dispute this, no one needs even one fulltime employee for a dwelling of 200 m<sup>2</sup>. But let us take the calculation at face value, the applicant alleges that it will pay R180 000 per year to five people. That is R3,461.54 per week for all five. That is R692.30 per week per employee, R138.46 per day.<sup>37</sup>]

- 21.3. If the development is situated within the coastal protection zone and is inconsistent with the purpose for which a coastal protection zone [section 63(1)(h)(ii)].

[I submit that it is, as it will protrude above the skyline and breach an uninterrupted, pristine skyline of the beach that runs between Buffels Bay and the edge of Sedgefield for more than 10 kilometres];

- 21.4. If the development is would be contrary to the interests of the whole community [section 63(1)(h)(vii)].

[It does, for the same reason];

- 21.5. If the development is likely to cause irreversible or long-lasting adverse effects to any aspect of the coastal environment that cannot satisfactorily be mitigated [section 63(1)(h)(iv)].

[It does, for the same reason];

---

<sup>36</sup> DBAR P112

<sup>37</sup> DBAR Page 112

- 21.6. If the very nature of the proposed development requires it to be located within the coastal protection zone [section 63(1)(i)].

[The real question is however if the applicant's desire to erect a dwelling should be met by allowing a development at the highest point of the property, and to do so for four dwellings];

- 21.7. If the development is likely to be significantly damaged or prejudiced by dynamic coastal processes [section 63(1)(h)(v)].

[The answer is that there is at least a significant risk, due to increases in the high-water mark, and the undercutting of the foredune. The competent authority would take notice of the photographs herein. This could be exacerbated by an increase in adverse weather conditions. In this regard the principles set out in section 2 of **NEMA** applies-

- That a risk-averse and cautious approach is applied, which takes into account the limits of current knowledge about the consequences of decisions and actions [section 2(4)(vii)]; and
- That negative impacts on the environment and on people's environmental rights be anticipated and prevented, and (only) where they cannot be altogether prevented, are minimised and remedied [section 2(4)(viii).]

## Legality matters

22. The applicant has not addressed compliance with timeframes and prescribed steps in the DBAR or in any document accessible to me. These are set out especially in **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014**, in regulations such as 3, 19, 21, 23, 40, 41, and possibly others.
23. I request that this matter be carefully considered. I submit that if compliance (taking into account weekends and public holidays) cannot be shown, the application stands to be dismissed.

## Legality matters (continued)

24. I did not know of the real purpose of the application as the notice of the public participation process did not inform me that the applicant seeks permission for four dwellings to be erected on the foredune. This is the notice of the public participation process that appeared in the EDGE newspaper on 21 May 2025:

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

Notification of Public Participation:

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY RESIDENTIAL DWELLING ON PORTION 79 OF FARM 205, RUYGTE VALLEY, SEDGEFIELD, WESTERN CAPE**

Notice is hereby provided in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998), the National Environmental Management Act: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014, as amended, of a 30-day Pre-Application Public Participation Process to be undertaken under the authority of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE). The Public Participation Process will run from **21/05/2025 – 23/06/2025**.

DFFE Reference Number: TBC

**Project Proposal:** The construction of a primary residence, three cottages, a vehicle parking area, and a garage/store room. Additionally, it is necessary to create an access road through the existing dense vegetation on the property to the development.

**Location:** Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygite Valley, Sedgfield, Western Cape



The following EIA Listed Activities are applicable:

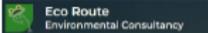
- Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 17
- Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 19A
- Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 27
- Government Notice No. R324 (Listing Notice 3): Listed Activity 4

A Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report and relevant appendices will be made available to all registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) for public review and comment. All relevant documents may be accessed via our website during the public participation period.

Should you wish to gain further information regarding the project or wish to register as an Interested and Affected Party please contact the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (details below).

Please provide written comments with your name, contact details and an indication of any direct business, financial, personal, or other interest which you may have in the development. Please note that information submitted by I&APs becomes public information. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA), no personal information will be made available to the public.

Environmental Assessment Practitioner: Bianca Gillian (EAPASA Reg 2023/7929)  
[www.ecoroute.co.za](http://www.ecoroute.co.za)  
 Email: [bianca@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:bianca@ecoroute.co.za) / [admin@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:admin@ecoroute.co.za)  
 Cell: 079 189 5080



25. The notice merely stated: *“Project Proposal: The construction of a primary residence, three cottages, a vehicle parking area, and a garage/storeroom. Additionally, it is necessary to create an access road through the existing dense vegetation on the property to the development.”*
26. The notice, with respect, does not begin to give notice to the members of the public that four dwellings are intended to be erected at the highest point of the property to breach an uninterrupted, pristine skyline that runs between Buffels Bay and the edge of Sedgefield (for more than 10 kilometres). It was a material omission and thus failed to inform the public.
27. The purpose of a notice to the public is not a box ticking exercise, but to give proper notice of the material facts so that the public can state their views. In this regard the EAP, in law, must perform the work relating to the application in an objective manner.<sup>38</sup>
28. This obligation to carry out a fair process is further spelled out in that the person conducting the public participation process also had to ensure that information containing all relevant facts in respect of the application or proposed application was made available to potential interested and affected parties.<sup>39</sup> The notice in the EDGE did not do that.
29. If I may add, it is not only the advertisement in the EDGE newspaper that did not alert the potential readers as to the development of the four dwellings at the highest point on the foredune, but this is how it is how the DBAR is described on page 2 thereof.

**DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT:**  
**The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape**  
**DFFE REF: TBC**

30. No mention is made of the three cottages.

---

<sup>38</sup> Regulation 13(d) of the **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014**

<sup>39</sup> Regulation 6(a) of the **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014**

31. The application stands to be dismissed.

**Legality matters (further continued)**

32. The DBAR is stated to have been prepared on behalf of a company: “*Daniel Senster and Partners Inc.*” It is not a typing error. I point out that on page 12 of the DBAR it is also stated that the applicant is Daniel Senster and Partners Inc., and it stated that D Sevenster represented this company (and not himself) in his capacity as a director. It is stated that the trading name of the company is The Optical Center Sandton.
33. Daniel Senster and Partners Inc have no right to the property, as the property is owned by an individual, Daniel F Senster. In law, the difference between a company and a person is a material difference. The title deed reflecting ownership is an annexure to the Town Planning Report.<sup>40</sup> I again attach it as “**C**”. This is the owner:

**DANIEL FRANCOIS SEVENSTER**  
**Identity Number 660401 5164 08 3**  
**Unmarried**

34. Nowhere in the application is it stated that the company, Daniel Senster and Partners Inc., has any right to the property. In any event such a right would contradict the version presented in the DBAR that the owner and his “family” will use the property solely for residential use.<sup>41</sup> The DBAR only refers to the cottages, and clarity needs to be obtained about the main house.
35. Regulation 12(1) of the **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014** requires that the EAP be appointed by the proponent or applicant. Where the application is made by someone who is not in control of the land or who is

---

<sup>40</sup> Appendix D6 Town Planning Report

<sup>41</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report Page 57: “*The three cottage structures reflected in the Site Development Plan are intended exclusively for private use by the landowner and family members. These will not be rented out, marketed, or operated as short-term or long-term tourism facilities. As such, no commercial visitor turnover, staff commuting for hospitality purposes, or external guest vehicle traffic is expected.*” And

“*The three cottage structures included in the development layout will be used exclusively by the landowner and their immediate family, not by the general public or tourists*”.

not the owner, it must be accompanied by a written consent from the owner [Regulation 16(b)(i)].

36. DBAR Page 64 states expressly that no consent was obtained:

1) If the proponent is not the owner or person in control of the land on which the activity is to be undertaken, the proponent must, before applying for environmental authorisation in respect of such an activity, obtain written consent of the landowner or person in control of the land to undertake such activity on that land	The proponent (applicant) is the landowner and therefore consent is not required.
<i>2) The person conducting a public participation process must take into account any relevant guidelines</i>	

37. No written consent has been provided and the application stands to be dismissed.

### **Legality matters (further continued)**

38. I refer below to indications that a visual assessment report of 18 November 2024 may not have been disclosed. I do not state that the report(s) as a matter of fact exist(s) and/or has/have not been disclosed. The only persons who would know that are the applicant and Mr S Stead. I merely state that there are indications.
39. The first indication is that the disclosed report was a draft, and is dated 24 October 2024.

## **Visual Impact Assessment: Site Sensitivity Report**

**Draft V1**

DATE: 24 Oct 2024

40. He then objects on 22 June 2025 to the exclusion of his report of 18 November 2024.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Appendix E1 PPP Page 36. [*VRM Africa was initially requested by Ecoroute to undertake the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the proposed development. The Draft Baseline Report was submitted to Ecoroute on 18 November 2024. This report highlighted significant landscape planning risks based on a literature review of National and Provincial planning guidelines. However, VRMA's baseline report was excluded from the assessment and replaced by an alternative visual statement undertaken by Kathin Hammel. While differing expert opinions are valuable within a peer-review process, both reports should have been submitted, or a facilitated consultation undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to resolve the differences. An email was sent to Janet Ebersohn requesting that the VRMA report should also be submitted, and VRMA should be registered*

VRM Africa was initially requested by Ecoroute to undertake the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the proposed development. The Draft Baseline Report was submitted to Ecoroute on 18 November 2024. This report highlighted significant landscape planning risks based on a literature review of National and Provincial planning guidelines. However, VRMA's baseline report was excluded from the assessment and replaced by an alternative visual statement undertaken by Kathin Hammel. While differing expert opinions are valuable within a peer-review process, both reports should have been submitted, or a facilitated consultation undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to resolve the differences. An email was sent to Janet Ebersohn requesting that the VRMA report should also be submitted, and VRMA should be registered as an I&AP. This did not occur even though this was requested and agreed upon in writing (by email 03 March 2025, janet@ecoroute.co.za, bianca@ecoroute.co.za).

41. Although it appears that there was a second report, I have no knowledge if it was more extensive than the draft report of 24 October 2024, but it probably was if the need existed to change the draft report.
42. I am also concerned by the references to visual simulations that on my reading of the DBAR. Has not been produced. This is what is stated at Page 67 of Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report in reaction to the following objection:

Objection: *“Erroneous claim that views from the beach are obstructed by undulating topography. A basic Google Earth block extrusion clearly shows that all four of the proposed dwellings would be clearly visible from the beach. No viewshed modelling was provided to substantiate the claim, and selective photographs failed to show the actual visual incidence from beach vantage points.”*

Response: *“•The previous statement suggesting that undulating topography fully obstructs views from Groenvlei Beach has been revised. Updated site specific modelling confirms that portions of the proposed structures may be visible from certain limited beach vantage points, particularly at lower elevations where vegetation density is reduced.*

*• A new, site-specific Digital Viewshed Analysis (DVA) has been generated using accurate topographic contours, LiDAR-derived elevation datasets, and the updated Constraints Map.*

---

*as an I&AP. This did not occur even though this was requested and agreed upon in writing (by email 03 March 2025, janet@ecoroute.co.za, bianca@ecoroute.co.za).”*

*This corrects the earlier reliance on qualitative assumptions and replaces it with a quantitative visibility assessment.*

*•The updated Visual Compliance Statement (Outline Landscape Architects, 2025) now includes additional cross-sections, block modelling, and height analyses illustrating potential visibility from Groenvlei Beach, Groenvlei Beach Road, and the residence located 250 m east of the site.”*

43. I can find no such modelling in any expert report. The visual compliance statement upon which the applicant relies is dated 25 March 2025.<sup>43</sup> It contains no such modelling and it does not contain any admission that the development would be visible from the beach. Instead, it states:

*“The development is proposed on the highest point of the site and is on a cliff approximately 70m above the beach.*

*From the site visit, it was established that the site is not visible from the N2 and Lake Pleasant Resort due to the higher topography and dense vegetation of the site. The development will also not be visible to viewers on the beach due to the highly elevated and eroded cliffs.”*

44. This statement is now admitted to be wrong, but the modelling has not been submitted. And on this point, the applicant relies on alleged statement by a third visuals impact expert, Paul Buchholz (January 2025), but has only addressed his proposal to undertake the work and did not attach any report by him.

45. The relevant parts of regulation 40(2) of the **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations**, 2014 read:

*“The public participation process contemplated in this regulation must provide access to all information that reasonably **has or may have the potential to influence any decision with regard to an application** unless access to that information is protected by law and must include consultation with-*

*(a) the competent authority;*

---

<sup>43</sup> Appendix D1 Visual Compliance Statement.

*(b) every State department that administers a law relating to a matter affecting the environment relevant to an application for an environmental authorisation;*

*(c) all organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the activity to which the application relates; and*

*(d) all potential, or, where relevant, registered interested and affected parties.”*

46. It appears to me that material information was not made available. I submit that the application stands to be dismissed.

### **Visual compliance**

47. In this matter there are at least two visual compliance reports, the first report was allegedly done in error on the “wrong property”, the second report was allegedly done on the correct property. I have referred to them. As I have stated, the applicant refers to a third, but it has not been disclosed. All that has been disclosed a proposal by Paul Buchholz, but it contains no findings. It is, not a report. It carries the misnomer “*Appendix D1 Initial Visual Statement.*” It is a misnomer on two fronts, it is not initial (as it is dated 19 January 2025), and as it is a mere proposal and carries no expert views on the suitability of the site.
48. The first report is by Visual Resource Management Africa (Stephen Stead) and the disclosed version is dated 24 October 2024. It is “*Appendix D1 VRM Visual Impact Assessment Wrong site*”. It is a misnomer too, as it is not about the wrong site at all, as will appear below. The actual document pertaining to the first report is called “*Visual Impact Assessment: Site Sensitivity Report*”.
49. The second report is by Outline Landscape Architects and is dated “March 2025”. It is “*Appendix D1 Visual Compliance Statement*”. It is of the same site as the first report. I have dealt with the fact that the applicant admits that it is now being accepted as being wrong pursuant to undisclosed modelling.
50. I first address the aspect of the first report allegedly being of the wrong site. There are numerous instances where this incorrect statement is made in the DBAR.
51. The fact that the first report was made about the correct site appears from a number of facts.
52. I have referred to the fact that Mr S Stead objected to the exclusion of the first report, in the Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report. He clearly knew, and so does everyone else, that the study that he undertook and the study that Outline Landscape Architects undertook was of the same property.<sup>44</sup> He assessed Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley. It is preposterous to state otherwise. He objected to its exclusion because it was relevant.

---

<sup>44</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report Page 59

53. The evidence that the correct site was assessed is overwhelming. The first report itself states that it is in respect of the correct property. At page 6 of the first report, it commences with:

Visual Resource Management Africa CC (VRMA) was appointed to conduct a Visual Impact Assessment for the proposed development residential development and three cottages on Farm 205/79 in the Knysna Municipality.

54. The visual evidence is overwhelming as well. There is one undeveloped property between it and the edge of Sedgefield. The locality map, Appendix A1, shows this clearly:



55. Note the form/shape of the property marked in red. The property marked in red was the property that was evaluated in the first visual assessment, the one that the applicant describes as “*Appendix D1 VRM Visual Impact Assessment Wrong site*”.
56. The assessment was done on the right property as set out in figure 6 on page 18 of the first report:



57. Note the form/shape of the property marked with the blue arrow. It is the same property marked in red The locality map, Appendix A1. See too figure 9 on page 21 of the first report, it reflects that the property is adjacent to undeveloped land, with exactly the same features as the property on which the second report was prepared. (This figure is useful as it shows contour lines.) Note the form of the property, the set back on the property to its eastern boundary, and the layout that follows the same contours as the one used in the second report.



Figure 9: Overlay of proposed Site Plan on to ESRI OpenSource satellite imagery.

58. This accords with the applicant's other reports, for instance see Figure 12 at Page 25 of Appendix D4 Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment:



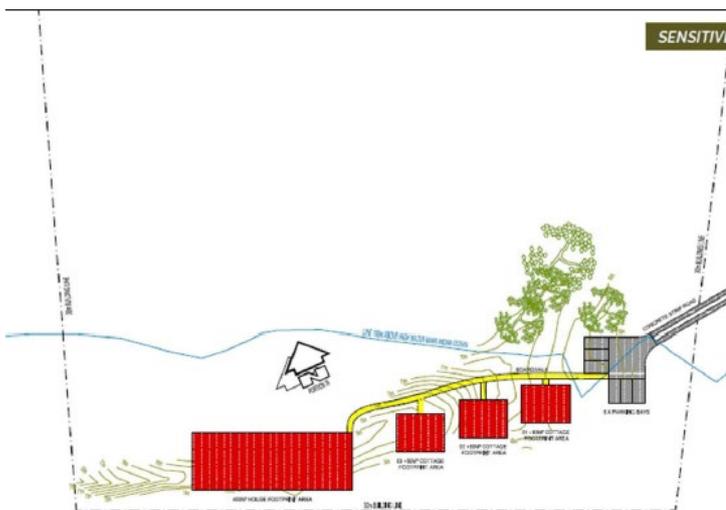
59. Please also see the contours and the layout of satellite image on page 3 of Appendix D2 Preliminary Geotechnical and Geomatic Report:



60. That the correct property was evaluated, is even clearer on figure 10 on page 23 of the first report, the property reported on is the one that is adjacent to Lake Pleasant Private Nature Reserve Section No. 5:



61. It is no coincidence that the proposed layout follows the same contours as the one in the second report. It is outrageous to state that the first report dealt with the wrong property.
62. See first figure 8 on page 20 of the first report, the zoomed view of Site Plan and concept design provided by Olivier Architects. The very same sketch is included in the second report as Figure 2 on Page 5. Why the same sketch, BECAUSE IT IS THE SAME PROPERTY,





- 67.1. *“Lies inland from the coastal cliff, approximately 700 m east of Cola Beach”;*

[Cola Beach is the suburb that is situated at the eastern end of Sedgefield. This property indeed is a distance away from the edge of Sedgefield, as was illustrated in the first report. It is one property removed from the eastern end of Sedgefield.

What is the actual cliff that is talked about? Please have regard to figure 9 at page 21 of the first report, it shows the step contours. It also shows that the proposed site was inland from the cliff, at a height of 60-70 metres.



**The first report and the second report was about the exact same site];**

- 67.2. *“Occupies stabilised consolidated dunes at elevations of 65–75 m above sea level”.*

**[I have already shown that the that the proposed site was inland from the cliff, at a height of 60-70 metres, a common cause fact (unless someone wants to quibble about 5 metres).**

How stabilised the dune is, is not of great importance in the visual assessment, **and does not show that the wrong site**

**was evaluated.** But the one value of the first report is that its photographs are telling. The keys thereto are at figure 11 at page 28 of the report.

This is what the cliff looks like photographs 13, 14, 16 and 17 (in my view potentially taken from too close to the cliff):





Nowhere did the original report suggest that the development would be right above the beach on this collapsing cliff/dune.]

67.3. *“Is covered by dense Goukamma Strandveld and coastal thicket vegetation”;*

[I see no material difference between the two reports in this regard, and **it and does not show that the wrong site was evaluated. The same vegetation covers the whole area.**

The vegetation will not prevent skyline intrusion. The alleged height of this vegetation at the sites are not stated or compared to the height of the development to be built are not addressed, and neither were the following findings in the original report addressed (at page 12):

Main residence-

High risk, *“not suitable due to steep slopes, skyline intrusion and possible sea cliff collapse”;*

Cottage 1-

Medium risk, *“not located on prominent terrain. existing veg provides visual screening and slopes med low. suitable with mitigation*

*4m above average ground level. wooden structure. no garden”;*

Cottage 2 -

High risk, *“steep slope area that will require cut fill or high pole platform extending the structure above the tree line”;*

Cottage 3-

High risk, *“not recommended due to steep slopes and skyline intrusion”;*

Landscape-

High risk, **“existing precedent for no skyline intrusion on the top of the sea cliff that should be retained”.**

I have already dealt with the rookrans and wind pruned vegetation.]

67.4. ***“Has no direct visual exposure to Groenvlei Beach or the N2”.***

[The reference to the N2 is a red herring; it is irrelevant to the issue, **and does not show that the wrong site was evaluated. But this statement is wrong, as I have already illustrated in dealing with undisclosed modelling.**

There is visual exposure to the beach, which may even be more than what was pictured at photograph 6 on page 13 of the original report



If you can see the beach, you can be seen from the beach. How much more will be visible after clearance of vegetation, excavation and elevating the structures, and building a structure 6 metres into the air? Only the first report attempted to show it at page 11.



As I have stated, what no one has done, is to take photographs from the eastern side of the property where there is an unspoilt, panoramic view if one were to walk from Buffels Bay towards Sedgefield at low tide (when people walk on the compacted sand close to the water's edge.). Similarly, no photographs have been provided to show the approach from the Sedgefield side, at low tide. The original report makes the correct point, that the first category of landscape modification is

- i. **Foreground / Middle ground**, up to approximately 6km, which is where there is potential for the sense of place to change;

- 67.5. “Lies **behind** the dune ridge, not on an active cliff edge. The actual development footprint, covering  $\pm 1\,175\text{ m}^2$  (0.02% of the property), will be screened by vegetation and topography, and will not result in skyline intrusion or beach visibility.”

[This statement contains several misstatements, but and **it does not show that the wrong site was evaluated.**

Starting at the end, the figure of 0.02% is a hundred times greater, on the applicant’s version. The real figure is likely to be 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>, as already dealt with at some length.

The development is not **behind** the dune ridge (i.e. on the northern side of the ridge, away from the sea), but on top of the dune ridge, at the highest point itself, as the second report expressly records. The issue is not if the development is hidden from view from the N2, but from the coast. It is not **behind**, it is on top and **in front**, visible form the beach.

See again figure 9 at page 21 of the first report, it shows the step contours. It also shows that the proposed site was inland from the cliff as it flattens out, at a height of 60-70 metres, the highest point. No one has ever suggested that the intent was to build where the cliff is being eroded.



68. The slight differences in the contour lines shown by some of the experts, is something that ought to have been put to them, and they ought to have resolved it. I assume that someone used a fixed point a few metres away from the point used by someone else. The differences in contour are small.
69. I applaud the author of the first report. The report commences by stating in the executive summary. It is so well set out, that I need to repeat it:

*“The preliminary findings of this site sensitivity report is that the proposed development in its current layout would be a Fatal Flaw as **mitigation would not be able to significantly reduce the very high levels of visual intrusion.** Twelve High Risk issues were identified during the site visit as tabled in Table 10. The following reasons are provided as motivation and mapped in Figure 1:*

- ***The proposed structures are situated in a highly prominent location on the edge of sea cliffs, an area currently devoid of man-made visual disturbances, and characterized by exceptional scenic quality. The sensitivity of receptors to manmade changes in this coastal region is likely to be very high.***

[I wholeheartedly agree.]

- ***The proposed dwellings would be clearly visible from the beach, establishing a negative precedent for future structural developments along the sea cliffs. Additionally, these structures would disrupt the skyline as viewed from the beach below.***

[I wholeheartedly agree.]

- ***The sites are located on steep slopes with gradients exceeding 1 in 4, necessitating significant cut and fill operations and pole foundations that would require the development platform to be raised off the ground.***

[It is a simple matter of logic that were disruptions of the skyline is in issue, that there should be absolute clarity on these matters. Such clarity must be provided in a manner that enforceable obligations to comply be established.]

- ***There is clear evidence of erosion affecting the sandstone cliffs, with the erosional cut-back exceeding 60 meters above ground level, coinciding with the elevation of the proposed main residential building's base. With anticipated sea level rise, this erosion is expected to worsen (subject to geotechnical specialist findings). This concern is explicitly addressed in the DEA&DP Western Cape Climate Change Response Strategy and the Garden Route District Climate Change Adaptation Response Implementation Plan. While the proposed dwellings are positioned 100 meters above the high-water level (HWL), the DEA&DP is currently reviewing the HWL based on climate change risks.***

*"For instance, an erosion setback line established as safe under current coastal conditions (i.e., present seawater levels and storm intensities) cannot be assumed to remain safe under more extreme climate change scenarios (i.e., elevated seawater levels and increased storm severity). The identification of long-term safe coastal management lines requires a thorough understanding and quantification of risks, resource mobilization, solid policy guidelines, planning, and appropriate legislation (Department of Science and Technology, 2010)" (p. 67).*

[These are simple truths.]

- *The potential destabilization of the sea cliffs due to structural development could lead to slippage, resulting in visual scarring and property loss."*

70. The author also made the point and made the following points clearly:

***"Additionally, the straight design of the road represents a critical flaw, as a strong linear clear-cut through the Goukamma Dune Thicket (CBA rating) would set a negative precedent for development in this ecologically significant area. The final recommendation is to relocate the garage and workshop closer to the main development area, and ensuring they are situated behind the dune near the garage and parking areas to minimize landscape fragmentation."***

71. The negative precedent would not only be the clear-cut through the Goukamma Dune Thicket, but the visual disturbance on the foredune too. This application is the thin edge of the wedge in as far as that pristine beach is concerned.
72. I now turn to the second report, Appendix D1 Visual Compliance Statement.
73. In a sense I have to say little, as the applicant has conceded that Outline Landscape Architects was wrong in declaring at page 6 "*the development will also not be visible to viewers on the beach due to the highly elevated and eroded cliffs*". (Note the omission of any reference to vegetation.)
74. The first defect in this report is the complete absence of 3D Modelling. One needs to see what will be built, at what height, and how high it would intrude in the skyline.
75. In addition, the photographs used in this report, in my view, are highly selective too, and are unhelpful. I discuss them briefly.
  - 75.1. The first six photographs depict something of little moment. Between the N2 and the is Groenvlei/Lake Pleasant. From the N2 one drives on a narrow road past a camping site and what once was a hotel. Thereafter one follows a narrow gravel road towards Platbank. One turns off to the right on a narrow track (it seems to me to be too narrow for large trucks and machinery) until one gets to the property, where the new road will have to be constructed through thick vegetation. That is what the first six photographs depict.

2.4. SITE PHOTOS



Entrance to Lake Pleasant Resort

Groenvlei Road from RD leading to the site

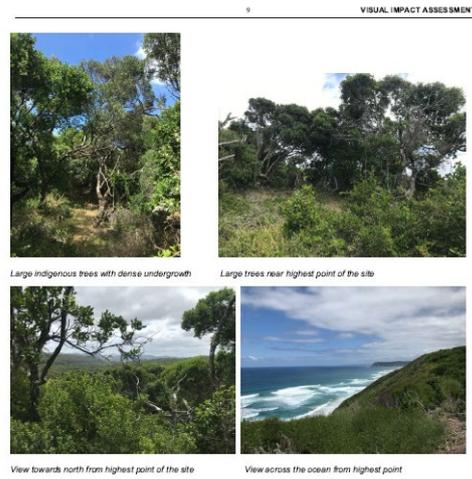
View towards Groenvlei

Narrow one-track access road towards site

End of existing road, that will be extended to site

View towards site, dense thicket vegetation

75.2. The next three photographs are all on the northern side of the foredune. They really add nothing of value about the main issue, the view from the coast.



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Large indigenous trees with dense undergrowth

Large trees near highest point of the site

View towards north from highest point of the site

View across the ocean from highest point

75.3. The three pictures that follow, were all taken from behind bushes. I cannot ascertain at what height they were or where on the property they were taken.



We know that the beach is visible from the construction site, but this has not been shown. Neither were photographs taken at the height of the proposed structures, on an elevated platform, six metres in the air. The photographs really add nothing of value about the main issue, the view from the coast.

- 75.4. The last two photographs are equally unhelpful. One is of a cliff where the photographer stood right against the cliff. The relevant place is at the low-water mark from where one sees the top of the cliff. I have already included this one as more accurate. Please compare it to the two photographs that were used in the report:



versus



- 75.5. The last photograph was taken in a western direction, from some point on the beach. What it does not show and cannot show, is how much that beach changes. It is unbelievable to witness how sand is removed and the added again over time. As a result, the distance between the lower-water mark and the cliff changes markedly over time. The tides too play a major role. The high-water mark, it seems to me are influenced a lot by spring tides, and storms.
76. The report contains no photographs taken from the beach at low tide as one would walk from Buffels Bay direction Platbank/Sedgefield. The report contains no photographs taken from the beach at low tide from the opposite side, as one would walk from Sedgefield direction Platbank/Buffels Bay. It contains no photographs taken from the beach at low tide directly in front of the site. To this must be added the modelling of the structures, which has not been done.
77. It is not only the photographs in this report that are unhelpful, but the “*Architectural Concept Ideas for the Proposed Building Designs*” (figure three on page 5) are unhelpful too. Amongst the examples it shows a dwelling in a forest. It shows two other dwellings from up close, also in an area with large trees. The structures appear to be wooden structures, but I have seen no commitment to use that building method. I do not see any transparent houses where I live, but I am no expert.

Figure 3: Architectural Concept Ideas for the Proposed Building Designs



78. Having dealt with the visual defects in the report, I also take issue with the reasoning in the report.

78.1. The author states at Page 6 that:

*“The proposed development will be situated **on top** of a stabilized coastal dune that allows for beautiful vistas over the ocean and towards Gericke’s Point. The property is located on low sloping areas **behind** the front dune edge. The site rises to about 70m above sea level.”*

78.2. I have dealt with the fact that **behind** is an inaccurate description for something that is on top and in front of the dune as viewed from the coast. It is on top, as the authors says so on Page 6 too:

*“The development is proposed **on the highest point** of the site and is on a cliff approximately 70m above the beach.”*

78.3. I have dealt with the fact that it is now common cause<sup>45</sup> that the development will be visible from the beach. Hence it is common cause that the following statement at Page 6, is untrue:

*“The development will also not be visible to viewers on the beach due to the highly elevated and eroded cliffs.”*

78.4. How does the author rate a property built on highest point of the site?

78.4.1. The author gives it full marks (three) for being able to be absorbed by screening allegedly provided by “landforms,

---

<sup>45</sup> Appendix E2 Comments and Response Report Page 67

*vegetation cover and/or structures such as buildings*". Is even one applicable? It is now common cause that landforms will not hide the structures. The vegetation is wind pruned and low, or rooikrans to be removed. The point is that there are no other buildings. The score should have been 0. Yet the author scores the development at full marks;

78.4.2. The author gives it full marks (three) for being absorbed by "*the magnitude of topographic elevation and diversity in slope variation*". Is one even slightly applicable? The ground height will be below 70 metres. There is no slope diversity, the contour lines show that. The score should have been 0. Yet the author scores the development at full marks; and

78.4.3. The author gives it high marks (two) on land cover ("*the perceivable surface of the landscape and the diversity of patterns, colours and textures*"), in an area largely uniformly green, as seen in the photographs. The author ] gives it two out of three. Not one, or zero, out of three. Why?

78.5. The net finding at Page 7 is a high VAC rating. I disagree, this scoring is not based on fact and are incorrect in my view.

78.6. I point out that the height of the vegetation was not addressed in this report.

78.7. This statement is made at Page 7 of the report:

*"The building materials are envisioned to be natural materials, with a combination of light steel and glass structures, to easily blend into the natural environment."*

78.8. Why would steel and glass not be reflective? Why would it blend or integrate into the environment? Why does the author not state the fact the engineering requirement is for concrete foundations<sup>46</sup> and that

excavation of more than five cubic metres for the main house alone is planned.

Key recommendations include:

- Use reinforced raft or piled foundations suitable for low-bearing soils (G7–G9).

- 78.9. Under visual influence on Page 10 the author only named “*nearby residents, motorists and tourists*”, but the users of that beach are all residents of Sedgefield and often from towns in the area too. I encounter them. It is not true that our focus is sideways on the ocean as we walk that beach, we look ahead and admire the unspoilt beauty.
79. The list of references upon which the author allegedly relied, are not linked to footnotes or endnotes. I question what role studies of renewable energy, Namaqualand vegetation, or urban land played in preparing the report.
80. The whole stretch of beach between Buffels Bay and Platbank/Sedgefield is undeveloped, unspoilt wilderness. It is of rare beauty and is priceless to society. The report makes out no case that the development should be allowed.

**Some questionable statements**

81. Time did not permit me to address all questionable statements in the DBAR. I mention a few obvious (to me) ones.
82. The off-grid representations appear to be wrong too. This is what is stated:<sup>47</sup>

All infrastructure will be off-grid, incorporating rainwater harvesting tanks, conservancy tanks, solar power generation, and off-site waste disposal to the municipal collection point.

The architectural design adopts an environmentally sensitive approach using timber, steel, glass, and natural stone, blending with the natural landscape and reducing excavation requirements.

83. I live in Sedgefield and have a solar system, being off-grid for about 75% of our needs. The rainy days at times lasting several days mean that solar power and batteries cannot ensure off-grid living, unless a truly massive solar system is installed, requiring even more land to be cleared than what is presented in the DBAR. Much more likely is the use of a generator.

84. The version of the building using timber, steel, glass, and natural stone, integrating visually, says nothing at all. A brick-and-mortar home use timber, steel, and glass, and may use natural stone. A wooden home use timber, steel, and glass, and may use natural stone. A house build of concrete use timber, steel, and glass, and may use natural stone. On what basis can anyone state that such a house will integrate visually with the white and green dune landscape? What is even more jarring, is that the building plans have not been disclosed.
85. I seriously question the version that the property will be used by the owner and his immediate family. These are some of the statements:

The DBAR states at Page 38:

The development on Portion 79 is both needed and desirable within the context of sustainable rural development and conservation-based land use. The project no longer includes any eco-tourism component and consists solely of a single private dwelling for the landowner and family members, serviced entirely off-grid.

This version of one dwelling is continued in DBAR at Page 39

Current Application

The current application seeks to exercise the primary land use right under the existing Agricultural Zone I zoning, allowing the construction of a single private dwelling and associated infrastructure (access, services, and rehabilitation).

See too DBAR Page 54:

The proposed development will not set a precedent for similar activities in the area. The applicant seeks only to exercise an existing primary land-use right permitted under the Agriculture Zone I zoning, which allows the construction of one dwelling house. The proposal does not introduce any new or intensified land use, nor does it involve subdivision, tourism, or commercial development that could influence future applications in the vicinity.

But we know this is not true, four dwellings are intended. Once the cottages have been built, and the Open Space III zoning have been obtained, a mere consent use application is needed to convert the cottages for tourism use. Zoning for agricultural use seems to me to be of greater protective value (as it allows for one dwelling only), and it is being removed. That the tourism intent is still alive appears also from DBAR. It states at Page 43:

town's reliance on seasonal tourism. The SDF also highlights the need for sustainable tourism practices that preserve Knysna's natural and cultural heritage. This includes promoting responsible tourism activities, enhancing public access to natural areas, and ensuring that tourism development aligns with environmental conservation efforts. The proposal to conserve 99.8 % of the land and to create a small but authentic tourism component aligns with this vision of the SDF.

86. Sceptical as I am, time forces me to conclude my objection.

### **Conclusion**

87. I humbly request the competent authority to dismiss the application. I have raised a number of grounds:

87.1. I have humbly requested that compliance with timeframes and prescribed steps be checked, as I had insufficient information to do so.

87.2. I have raised a number of legality matters, ranging from an unauthorised process by a non-owner, to a defective public participation notice, to omitted documents, to omitted listed activities.

87.3. I have taken serious issue with several factual averments and gave my reasons. These issues range from the size of the development, to omitted listed activities, to alleged socio-economic benefits (to the best of my knowledge not supported by an expert).

87.4. But in the end, the visual impact assessment relied upon by the applicant is clearly defective, with respect.

Yours faithfully

N de Villiers



**From:** [Neil de Villiers](#)  
**To:** ["janet@ecoroute.co.za"](#); ["colleen@ecoroute.co.za"](#)  
**Cc:** ["nieldevilliers1@gmail.com"](#)  
**Subject:** Draft Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape  
**Date:** 12 December 2025 14:02:00

---

Dear Madam

I want to submit an objection to the above.

Please advise me as to the process to do so.

I have responded on your website earlier this morning, but have not had a response.

My objection will be in the form of a PDF document.

I did not know of the application, and has heard about the matter a few days ago. I really would appreciate an extension to object until 15 January 2026.

I wait to hear from you.

Niel de Villiers

**Contact Details**

Telephone number: +27 (0)82-385-7096

E-mail address: [devilliers@law.co.za](mailto:devilliers@law.co.za)



**From:** [janet@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:janet@ecoroute.co.za)  
**To:** [Neil de Villiers](#)  
**Subject:** Christmas Holiday Closure  
**Date:** 12 December 2025 14:04:27

---

Thank you for your email, please note our offices are closed from 12/12/2025 to 13/01/2026. For any urgent queries please phone Janet on 0825577122

"C"

11

STBB  
2nd Floor  
Buchanan's Chambers  
Cnr Warwick Street & Pearce Road  
Claremont  
7708  
Docex 9

Prepared by me,

CONVEYANCER  
Tashreeq Jaffar  
LPCM Number 96092

Deeds Office Registration fees as per Act 47 of 1937		
	Amount	Office Fee
Purchase Price	R. 3 250 000, 00	R. 2014, 00
All other		
Reason for exemption	Category Exemption.....	Exemption I to. Sec/Reg..... Act/Proc.....

**VERBIND MORTGAGED**

VIA FOR R. 1 950 000. 00

B 000024394 / 2023

09 NOV 2023

REGISTRATEUR/REGISTRAR

T 000047871 / 2023

## DEED OF TRANSFER

BE IT HEREBY MADE KNOWN:  
THAT **INGE JOHNSON**  
**LPCM Number 96036**  
appeared before me, REGISTRAR OF DEEDS at **CAPE TOWN**, he/she, the said  
Appearer, being duly authorised thereto by a Power of Attorney granted to him/her by

**MILKWOOD ON SEA CC**  
**Registration Number 1997/034004/23**

DATA / CAPTURE  
13 -11- 2023  
YOLANDI OLIVER

dated 10 October 2023 and signed at CLAREMONT

STBB

LegalSuite (Version 4.5609)  
DeedOfTransferConventional.doc

Form E

CA

AND the said Appearer declared that his/her principal had on **25 July 2023** truly and legally sold by Private Treaty and that he/she, the said Appearer in his/her capacity aforesaid, did, by these presents cede and transfer to and on behalf of:

**DANIEL FRANCOIS SEVENSTER**  
**Identity Number 660401 5164 08 3**  
**Unmarried**

his heirs, executors, administrators or assigns in full and free property:

**PORTION 79 (a portion of portion 70)**  
**OF THE FARM RUYGTE VALLY NO 205**  
MUNICIPALITY OF KNYSNA  
DIVISION KNYSNA  
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

**IN EXTENT: 5.1576 (FIVE COMMA ONE FIVE SEVEN SIX) HECTARES**

**FIRST TRANSFERRED** by Deed of Transfer No. T.754/1965 with Diagram No. 6532/51 relating thereto and **HELD BY** Deed of Transfer No. T17637/1998.

**A. SUBJECT** to the conditions referred to in Certificate of Registered Title No. T.297/1952.

**B. SUBJECT FURTHER** to the following condition contained in Certificate of Amended Title dated 16<sup>th</sup> May 1913, (Knysna Quitrents Volume 11 No. 12) :

“Subject to all such duties and regulations as are already or shall in future be established respecting lands held on similar tenure.”

**C. ....**

**D. ENTITLED** to benefits under the terms of the servitude referred to in the endorsement dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 1949 on Deed of Transfer No. T15875/1944, which endorsement reads as follows:-

“By Notarial Deed No. 128/49 dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1949, the property held under Deed of Transfer No. 287 dated the 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1949 has been made subject to certain restrictive conditions which operate in favour of the owner of the remainder of the property held by para. 2 hereunder, all of which will more fully appear on reference to said Notarial Deed a copy of which is hereunto annexed.”

Q

E. ENTITLED to the benefits in terms of the servitude referred to in the endorsement dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 1949 on the said Deed of Transfer No. 15875/1944, which endorsement reads as follows:

“By Notarial Deed No. 129/49 dated the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1949, the property held under Deed of Transfer No. 288/49 dated the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1949 has been made subject to certain restrictive conditions which operate in favour of the property held by para. 2 hereunder, all of which will more fully appear on reference to said Notarial Deed, a copy of which is hereunto annexed.”

F. ENTITLED to the benefits under the terms of the servitude referred to in the endorsement dated 29<sup>th</sup> July 1949 on the said Deed of Transfer No. 15875/1944, which endorsement reads as follows :

“By Transfer dated 29.7.1949 the ppty thereby conveyed is made subject to the following conditions in favour of the remainder of para. 2 held hereunder :

- 1. ....
- 2. prohibition against hotel, bottle store, store or place of business.
- 3. prohibition against slaughter poles, soapworks, bone or hide repository or tannery.”

G. ENTITLED to certain conditions created by Notarial Deeds Nos. 201/1949 and 202/1949 relating to:

- 1. ....
- 2. prohibition against hotel, bottle store, store or place of business.
- 3. prohibition against slaughter poles, soapworks, bone or hide repository or tannery.”

H. SUBJECT FURTHER to the terms of the servitude referred to in the endorsement dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 1952 on the said Certificate of Registered Title No. T297/1952 which, endorsement reads as follows :

“By Notarial Deed No. 20/52 dd 5-9-1951, the property Ptn 38 (called Lake Pleasant Estate) hereby conveyed is subject to servitudes of rights of way, as indicated (1) by the letters B.C.D.E.F and (II) A.B.F.G.H.J.K.L. on Diagram 9771/1949 annexed hereto, in favour of the general public. As will more fully appear on reference to the said notarial deed, a copy whereof is hereunto annexed.”

STBB

I. **SUBJECT FURTHER** to the following special conditions contained in Deed of Transfer No. T754/1965 imposed by LAKE PLEASANT ESTATES (PROPRIETARY) LIMITED for its benefit and for the benefit of its successors-in-title as owners of :

“The redeemed quitrent land, situate in the Division of Knysna, being the remaining extent of Portion 70 of the farm RUYGTE VALLY, held by the said Certificate of Registered Title No. 297/1952” namely :

- (b) No hotel, bottle store or place for the sale of liquor and no store of place of business whatsoever other than for the sale of farm products or produce, shall be opened or conducted on the said land.
- (c) No slaughter poles, soapworks, bone or hide repository or tannery shall be allowed, conducted or carried on the land or any portion thereof.
- (d) Plans of buildings to be erected on the land shall be approved by the Local Authority and the Seller.
- (e) Only one residence with the relative outbuildings and farm buildings may be erected on the land without the written consent of the Seller, its successors-in- title or assigns.

**WHEREFORE** the Appearer, renouncing all the rights, title and interest which the said

**MILKWOOD ON SEA CC**

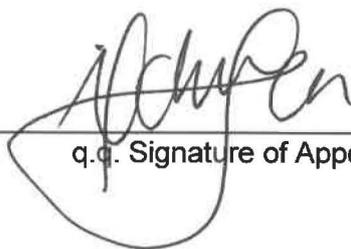
heretofore had to the premises, did, in consequence also acknowledge it, to be entirely dispossessed of, and disentitled to, the same; and that, by virtue of these presents, the said

**DANIEL FRANCOIS SEVENSTER, Unmarried,**

his heirs, executors, administrators or assigns now is and henceforth shall be entitled thereto, conformably to local customs, the State, however, reserving its rights, and finally acknowledging the purchase price of the property hereby transferred to be the sum of **R3 250 000,00 (THREE MILLION TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND RAND).**

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** I, the said Registrar of Deeds together with the Appearer, have subscribed to these presents, and have caused the Seal of Office to be affixed thereto.

**THUS DONE AND EXECUTED** at the Office of the REGISTRAR OF DEEDS at **CAPE TOWN** on **09 NOV 2023**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
q.q. Signature of Appearer

In my presence:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Registrar of Deeds

57



**Re: [Public participation] The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Val**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Date** Wed 14/01/2026 10:11  
**To** katemuller77@gmail.com <katemuller77@gmail.com>  
**Cc** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Dear Kate,

Thank you for your email and comments received. You have been registered as an I&AP.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
www.ecoroute.co.za

---

**From:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za> on behalf of Eco Route <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Sent:** Sunday, 14 December 2025 11:39  
**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Subject:** [Public participation] The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Val

Kate (not verified) (katemuller77@gmail.com) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.ecoroute.co.za/node/116>.

The sender's name  
Kate

The sender's email  
katemuller77@gmail.com

Subject  
The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Val

Message

To ensure a landscape appropriate and sustainable development precedent, full detail on the earthworks, steep slope areas, archi well as photomontages from the beach should be provided. This would allow civil society and the competent authority to be proper risk posed by the proposed landscape change, thereby supporting responsible and sustainable decision-making.

thank you



Outlook

---

## **Fw: Comments on Basic Assessment Report – Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

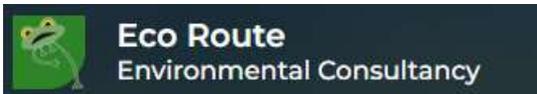
**Date** Wed 07/01/2026 10:52

**To** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

 1 attachment (21 KB)

1A Comments Portion 79 Farm 2005 submitted.docx;

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
[www.ecoroute.co.za](http://www.ecoroute.co.za)



---

**From:** darryl beck <darrylgita@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, 15 December 2025 18:39

**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>; Janet <janet@ecoroute.co.za>; Knysna Municipality <knysna@knysna.gov.za>

**Subject:** Comments on Basic Assessment Report – Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield

Please find comments in attachment below.

Kind Regards

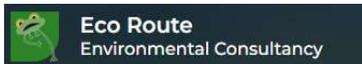
Gita Beck 0712788601

**Fw: [Public participation] Portion 79 Farm 205 Ruygte Valley Sedgfield**

---

**From** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Date** Wed 07/01/2026 10:52  
**To** 'bianca@ecoroute.co.za' <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Carina Leslie  
Personal Assistant/Admin  
Office: 064 691 4394  
www.ecoroute.co.za



---

**From:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za> on behalf of Eco Route <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Sent:** Monday, 15 December 2025 18:30  
**To:** admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>  
**Subject:** [Public participation] Portion 79 Farm 205 Ruygte Valley Sedgfield

Gita Beck (not verified) (darrylgita@gmail.com) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.ecoroute.co.za/node/116>.

The sender's name  
Gita Beck

The sender's email  
darrylgita@gmail.com

Subject  
Portion 79 Farm 205 Ruygte Valley Sedgfield

**Message**

Comments on Basic Assessment Report – Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgfield consists of 2 pages Submitted by B. G. BECK Paul Kruger Street. I am an interested and affected party. Our tourism industry is based on the natural environment,

A. The Environmental Consultants, botanists and ecological experts who contributed to the document concerning this proposal i.e. Assessment Report – Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, have drawn attention to the fact that the ecosystem on farm 205 is under disturbance. The proposed activities will have a detrimental effect on the fauna and flora of the area. Importantly the area already contains invader plants, this is the reason why this farm needs to be placed under the custodianship of SANPARKS, CAPE NATURE and other environmental bodies.

B. If the proposed developments are approved it will set a precedent for others to follow, resulting in a negative impact on sensitive vegetation. Proposed development will form part of a cumulative trend that will lead to possible disruption of ecological processes on farm 205 at an important point.

C. With reference to the statement below

"Biodiversity Assessment (2025) and Agricultural Compliance Statement (2025), it is proposed that the entire property be rezoned to a Nature Conservation Area. No fences and a handover or partnership with SANParks for the management of the property."

This should indeed include the whole of Farm 205. Farm 205 should be classified as a Conservation area in the form of a protected area to be handed over to SANParks and Cape Nature to be preserved for future generations. (Cape Nature already manages the Goukan which is in close proximity to farm 205). A trust could be formed between SANParks, Cape Nature and other influential environmental bodies that the area in question remains an important part of the Western Cape Green Heritage).

D. Below see some relevant quotations from Draft Basic Assessment Report – Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley.

- A recent assessment of coastal dune ecosystems (Cowling et al. 2023) suggests that this vegetation type needs re-assessment as components should be a high priority for protection."
- "An impact assessment assessed that potential impacts associated with the proposed development could have MODERATE and significant, primarily because of the high conservation value of the forest habitats on site and the value that this area has for current conservation. Although relatively small in extent, the proposed development will form part of a cumulative trend that will lead to possible disruption of ecological processes."

- "Given the environmental sensitivity of the site and its limited agricultural potential, as confirmed in the Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment Agricultural Compliance Statement (2025), it is proposed that the entire property be rezoned to "Open Space III" (Nature Conservation).
- "The entire site is in a natural state and also falls within CBA1 and CBA2 areas, as well as being an indigenous natural forest. All therefore have VERY HIGH sensitivity with respect to the Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme. According to the "Protocols", a Specialist / therefore required." Please note a specialist assessment is required first however independent parties like SANParks and Cape Nature used.
- "The proposed development is almost entirely within areas of natural habitat that have high biodiversity value. .... is an indigenous under the National Forests Act 84 of 1998, is adjacent to protected areas and therefore falls within the buffer zones of these, and has as being desirable for future conservation."
- "The vegetation on site is dominated by the protected tree species, *Sideroxylon inerme*." Although it is therefore not clear whether on site falls under Western Cape Milkwood Forest (protected under the National Forests Act), it is dominated by the Milkwood Side is protected under the same Act"

Keeping the above quotations in mind, the whole of farm 205, should become a protected area.

E. I could find no information on the fauna of the area and how any proposed development will affect them. There should be no boundary fences on any portion of Farm 205. It must be delegated that responsible and effective environmental bodies must enforce the important fact that boundary fences must never be allowed, around any of the portions on Farm 205. This is important to allow for the safety of any animals in this area.

"Mrs Smith is the first to develop in this area," , this and the proposed development will form part of a cumulative trend that will lead to the disruption of ecological processes.

Agricultural 1 state that owners have the right to build one dwelling. Not 5.

See below

- Construction of a residential home of 200m<sup>2</sup> in footprint area.
- Construction of 3 free-standing cottages of 65m<sup>2</sup> in footprint area.
- Construction of a shed of 80m<sup>2</sup> in footprint area.
- Construction of a staff quarter building of 50m<sup>2</sup> in footprint area

All rights to elaborate on these comments and to raise new issues at a later date are being reserved.

Ms Brigitte Beck  
 8 Paul Kruger Street  
 071 278 8601  
 Email darrylgita@gmail.com

15 December 2025

Att: Carina Leslie [admin@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:admin@ecoroute.co.za)

**Re: NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Basic Assessment Report- The Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape**

## Objection to the Proposed Development

### 1. Nature of the Objection and Risk of Precedent

I oppose the proposed development as it involves the rezoning of a sensitive coastal property in a manner that sets an undesirable precedent and undermines the long-term protection of the surrounding natural environment.

### 2. Inconsistencies in the Stated Purpose of the Development

The original environmental assessment clearly described the proposed development as tourism-related, including references to accommodation pricing, town planning reports and tourism use. Following public objections, a revised version of the assessment claimed that there had been a “misunderstanding” and that the chalets were intended for private use only. This explanation is unconvincing. The original intent to enable tourism was clearly articulated, and the revised documentation continues to contain multiple references to tourism-related activities. These inconsistencies raise serious concerns and give the impression that the original intent has been downplayed rather than substantively changed.

### 3. Precedent and Cumulative Impact on Coastal Zoning

Allowing a tourism-related rezoning on this property would set a precedent for neighbouring coastal properties and other rural coastal areas in the Western Cape to seek similar rights. Over time, this would result in the gradual erosion of the remaining coastal forest and thicket areas through incremental, low-density development. Such outcomes run counter to established land-use planning objectives, particularly outside the urban edge and in close proximity to protected and conservation-sensitive areas.

### 4. Sensitivity of the Location and Conservation Context

The property is situated within a highly sensitive coastal zone of the Garden Route, close to the Goukamma Nature Reserve, and within or adjacent to areas recognised for their conservation value, including biodiversity priority areas. The coastal forest and thicket on this site form part of a diminishing natural corridor that supports a range of wildlife and ecological processes.

## 5. Impacts on Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat

Species known to occur in this coastal zone include forest-dependent bird species, small antelope, reptiles, amphibians and a variety of invertebrates that rely on intact, quiet and low-light habitats. These ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to disturbance. Increased human activity associated with tourism, including noise, artificial lighting, vehicle movement, foot traffic, waste generation and servicing infrastructure, would have a detrimental impact on these species and their habitats.

## 6. Limitations of the Site to Support Tourism Activities

Given the mostly closed canopy structure of the vegetation and the existing pressure along habitat edges, the area is especially sensitive to further disturbance. It cannot sustainably support tourism-related activities without causing lasting environmental harm.

## 7. Appropriate and Responsible Development Option

For these reasons, limiting development to a single residential dwelling, as currently permitted on agricultural land, is the most appropriate and responsible option. This approach respects the rights of the landowner while safeguarding the public interest, maintaining the integrity of existing environmental zoning, and supporting the long-term conservation of the Garden Route's coastal ecosystems.

## 8. Conclusion and Legal Considerations

I trust that these concerns will be carefully considered in accordance with the principles and requirements of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA).

Kind Regards,

Sasha Mentz  
Advocacy researcher, local resident  
[sasha@nicheunity.com](mailto:sasha@nicheunity.com)  
064 922 3532

15 December 2025

Att: Carina Leslie [admin@ecoroute.co.za](mailto:admin@ecoroute.co.za)

**Re: NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Basic Assessment Report- The Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape**

## Objection to the Proposed Development

### 1. Nature of the Objection and Risk of Precedent

I oppose the proposed development as it involves the rezoning of a sensitive coastal property in a manner that sets an undesirable precedent and undermines the long-term protection of the surrounding natural environment.

### 2. Inconsistencies in the Stated Purpose of the Development

The original environmental assessment clearly described the proposed development as tourism-related, including references to accommodation pricing, town planning reports and tourism use. Following public objections, a revised version of the assessment claimed that there had been a “misunderstanding” and that the chalets were intended for private use only. This explanation is unconvincing. The original intent to enable tourism was clearly articulated, and the revised documentation continues to contain multiple references to tourism-related activities. These inconsistencies raise serious concerns and give the impression that the original intent has been downplayed rather than substantively changed.

### 3. Precedent and Cumulative Impact on Coastal Zoning

Allowing a tourism-related rezoning on this property would set a precedent for neighbouring coastal properties and other rural coastal areas in the Western Cape to seek similar rights. Over time, this would result in the gradual erosion of the remaining coastal forest and thicket areas through incremental, low-density development. Such outcomes run counter to established land-use planning objectives, particularly outside the urban edge and in close proximity to protected and conservation-sensitive areas.

### 4. Sensitivity of the Location and Conservation Context

The property is situated within a highly sensitive coastal zone of the Garden Route, close to the Goukamma Nature Reserve, and within or adjacent to areas recognised for their conservation value, including biodiversity priority areas. The coastal forest and thicket on this site form part of a diminishing natural corridor that supports a range of wildlife and ecological processes.

## 5. Impacts on Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat

Species known to occur in this coastal zone include forest-dependent bird species, small antelope, reptiles, amphibians and a variety of invertebrates that rely on intact, quiet and low-light habitats. These ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to disturbance. Increased human activity associated with tourism, including noise, artificial lighting, vehicle movement, foot traffic, waste generation and servicing infrastructure, would have a detrimental impact on these species and their habitats.

## 6. Limitations of the Site to Support Tourism Activities

Given the mostly closed canopy structure of the vegetation and the existing pressure along habitat edges, the area is especially sensitive to further disturbance. It cannot sustainably support tourism-related activities without causing lasting environmental harm.

## 7. Appropriate and Responsible Development Option

For these reasons, limiting development to a single residential dwelling, as currently permitted on agricultural land, is the most appropriate and responsible option. This approach respects the rights of the landowner while safeguarding the public interest, maintaining the integrity of existing environmental zoning, and supporting the long-term conservation of the Garden Route's coastal ecosystems.

## 8. Conclusion and Legal Considerations

I trust that these concerns will be carefully considered in accordance with the principles and requirements of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA).

Kind Regards,

Sasha Mentz  
Advocacy researcher, local resident  
[sasha@nicheunity.com](mailto:sasha@nicheunity.com)  
064 922 3532